



July 2024

the Messenger

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Manchester Legal Awards 2024

MIL AWARDS 2024

In an evening of recognition, inclusion and revelry the Manchester Legal Awards 2024 celebrated a shortlist of over 80 firms and individuals who competed in 21 categories to highlight the best of the Manchester legal sector.

Guests were treated to a busy and bustling drinks reception in The Midland Hotel's grand foyer, sponsored by *Docutech Office Solutions* [↗](#), before being led to the main event in the Alexandra Suite.

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MIL AWARDS 2024

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www.manchesterlegalawards.co.uk @MLAwards



From the President

David Anderson, President

It is not the first time, and is sure not to be the last, that someone says to me “Shut up you d*ck!” But, when Fran Eccles-Bech said it to me in response to my slightly panicked “Where’s my introduction speech for the lifetime achievement award?” as I stood on the stage at the Manchester Legal Awards, it was exactly the message I needed and a totally appropriate response. Totally appropriate because, of course, Fran and the team had it all completely under control, as they did the entire rest of what was a fantastic evening.

The change we had made this year, to have the full meal before turning to the awards, seemed to work well. It felt like people were able to stop and focus on the awards without a break after every three or four winners and it felt like the celebrations built with each announcement, which created a very uplifting atmosphere. The awards passed smoothly, with a number of incredible winners and, equally incredible, gracious losers. As was repeated throughout the night - the standard of those present and those shortlisted was truly excellent. Thank you to everyone who attended and well done to everyone who was shortlisted and who won on the night.

What many attendees probably do not know is that the event, a dinner for 600+ attendees at a city centre hotel, with PA system, lighting engineers, a band, a drinks reception, charity auction, sponsors, guests, the Business Desk as our news partner and trophies is all organised by a team of three people at Manchester Law Society.

Yes, they have several helpers (Fran’s son Jack and soon to be daughter-in-law Cindy, Ruth Shearn’s daughter Alexis and RMS team members Dara and Izzy and Nick and Farhana from We Love Manchester), but the vast majority of the legwork to ensure we have great nominees, a fantastic panel of judges, a sumptuous dinner and glitzy event that hundreds of people enjoy more than any other awards event (yes, I’m biased) all comes from a team of three, so thank you Fran, Carla and Chandre.

This edition will carry lots of information about our winners. I just want to say a particular well done to our Lifetime Achievement Award winner Hugh Potter. Hugh was a worthy winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award for his exceptional contribution to the area of complex injury law, his commitment to the region, and for devoting his career to helping those with life-changing injuries. Like so many of the Manchester legal community, he makes an incredible difference to the people of Manchester.

Making a difference to the people of Manchester brings me nicely around to the next engagement I attended to represent MLS, that being the STEP Manchester annual dinner. At that event I was sat next to Raymond and Professor Erinma Bell. Prof. Bell gave an amazing after-dinner speech about the work she and her husband do to help reduce gun crime in South Manchester, and Moss Side in particular. From inspirational lawyers to inspirational peace activists, I am fortunate to have the opportunities presented to me as President of Manchester Law Society.



the Messenger

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Manchester Law Society

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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

2 July 2024

MLS Council Meeting

3 July 2024

Communications Committee Meeting

4 July 2024

Employment Law Forum Meeting

4 July 2024

Property Law Committee Meeting

16 July 2024

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting

16 July 2024

MLS Officers Meeting

17 July 2024

Private Client Committee Meeting

07 August 2024

Communications Committee Meeting

20 August 2024

MLS Officers Meeting

04 September 2024

Communications Committee Meeting

04 September 2024

Family Law Committee Meeting

05 September 2024

Crown and Magistrates Court Committee Meeting

10 September 2024

MLS Council Meeting

11 September 2024

Civil Litigation Committee Meeting

12 September 2024

Property Law 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

7 November 2024

Property Law Committee Meeting

12 November 2024

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting

19 November 2024

MLS Officers Meeting

20 November 2024

Private Client Committee Meeting

28 November 2024

Crown and Magistrates Court 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

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?

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Saturday 24 August 2024

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



**Trafford Suite, Midland Hotel,
Manchester, M60 2DS**



£48.00 including VAT per guest

Includes a drink on arrival, brunch, glitter bar,
specially discounted cocktails, and access to the
exclusive viewing space on the steps of The Midland

To book email

ChandreMay@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk

Denovo Q&A



Denovo have seen a surge over the past few years with hundreds of law firms turning to the Glasgow-based software provider to help them run their business more efficiently.

We reached out to [Steven Hill](#), Denovo's Managing Director and accredited Legal Technologist, to find out why he thinks so many solicitors are choosing Denovo over other legal tech providers...

Who are Denovo?

That's actually quite a common question we get in England and is one of the main reasons we want to introduce our brand to a new audience. In short [Denovo Business Intelligence](#) are a legal software company who are all about making lawyers lives easier.

Our founder, George Blair, set out to achieve that goal over 40 years ago. The journey began in the early 80's providing law firms and other businesses with legal accounting machines, printers and personal computers. The business expanded to software solutions exclusively built for law firms in the early noughties, and then moved to full cloud-based software solutions from around 2011. Step forward into 2024 and we continue to help lawyers innovate and push the boundaries of efficiency within their businesses. Nowadays we believe we have the most customisable legal case management and accounts software platform in the market, which we developed right here, in the UK.

Our market leading legal software is the considered to be the operating system



for hundreds of law firms across the country. Our efforts listening, working, and innovating with law firms, particularly over the past 5 years, mean we have integrated our technology into the DNA of practices in ways that even surprise the law firms we partner with.

When we launched our latest case management platform, [CaseLoad](#), back in 2019, we set out with one purpose in mind - remove the repetitive, admin tasks associated with legal work. The objective is and has always been to give lawyers more time to spend with their clients, automate their processes to help grow their businesses, have a more productive working day and to get some of their personal time back.

Why have a lot of English law firms never heard of Denovo?

We've spent the majority of our time working with firms in Scotland. We're based in Glasgow and in the past, we have grown strictly on a referral basis so our reach into England has been very limited. Since the launch of CaseLoad, our all-in-one practice management software, we have grown very quickly, and word has started to spread over the border. Firms from all across the UK are now using CaseLoad, so we felt we must be doing something right. Along the journey we decided - what if we actually did some marketing in England - many more firms



would be able to enjoy the benefits of our software, just like firms up north.

What's different about Denovo?

Our software is very much solicitor led, meaning we collaborate with solicitors and treat them as the innovators, to help design and develop innovative solutions and services for their businesses. We base the features of our software in reality. To do this we need to work closely with solicitors and their support teams to understand exactly what their challenges are and how they would prefer to work.

By doing this we have worked collaboratively with our clients and built a software platform that is dynamic, fully customisable, and ever evolving. We're really proud to say the time spent listening to our law firm partners and their support teams seems to be paying off as we are now the software of choice for thousands of solicitors.

I'm sure there are plenty of other legal software companies that talk to firms but the feedback we get is that we truly listen. And not only that, we act on what we are told. That seems to be the biggest point of difference.



We have a unique offering in that we offer a fully customisable case management and fully compliant [legal accounts software](#) system built into one platform. We are told by many of the firms we work with in England that this is a point of difference, so we hope more firms will take a chance and look at what we can offer them.

I would also say that we have been working with a lot of frustrated lawyers over the past few years. The ones that approach us are always looking for the same thing – they want to make the change to a more customisable, reliable, and more supportive platform. Many also like that our HQ is here in the UK. The most interesting thing is that users of other platforms have been approaching us and joining the Denovo community. None are going in the opposite direction, that's really testament to our team and how much time they spend

Continued on page 10

denovo

Our Software. Your Way.
Let's Make Your Life Easier!

Want to get to know us?



Fully customisable
Case Management &
Legal Accounts Software
built into one system.



Working in partnership with
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Also, unlike many software providers a lot of firms in the city will have dealt with, all the development, implementation, training, and support is provided by Denovo, so you work with our team throughout your partnership with us. We work with you to customise the software to fit your actual working practices. That personal approach and knowing that it is actually the **Denovo team** you will be dealing with is a major reason so many firms choose to use our software.

What's your ambition for working with lawyers in Manchester?

The tech world is evolving. It's only a matter of time before everyone adapts and uses new tools. Legal tech is no different. As client needs change law firms need a partner who is flexible. We know that the legal market is adopting tech at pace. We genuinely believe that we are well placed to ensure that we help law firms in Manchester keep up with this pace, innovate, and provide an infrastructure that is built for the future. With CaseLoad, we'll ensure your legal practice is never left behind.

How would people get in touch?

I would encourage anyone interested in finding out more about us to visit denovobi.com. There is a lot of info on there about our software, ourselves, and some of the law firms we partner with. If anyone reading this has a spare 5 minutes, I would say, check out the site and have a look around. You might just find the software platform and provider you've been searching for! And if anyone would like to reach out to me directly for a chat, my email is stevenh@denovobi.com.

ensuring our law firm partners get the most out of our software.

Moreover, the feedback that we're getting is not all about the software, our continual innovation, and our kaizen approach. What is most prevalent when firms are telling us why they eventually moved to Denovo from other providers is that we treat the lawyers as the innovators – they tell us what they want and what they need. We then work in partnership with them to get the software platform that works for them and their firm.

You say you've primarily worked with Scottish firms; do you think that will stop English firms using your software?

No. It's really just that we haven't announced ourselves to the English market. We have had English law firms partnering with us and using our case management and accounts software very successfully. In fact, we have [firms across the north of England have been working with us for over 20 years](#). It has been our English clients who are the ones encouraging us to properly come into the market.

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The Power of Pro Bono: UK Pro Bono Week reveals 2024 themes

Pro Bono Week 2024 to focus on the Power of Pro Bono, highlighting the stories of how pro bono has helped those who are barred from justice.

Organisers of the 23rd annual [Pro Bono Week](#), taking place from 4-8 November 2024, will this year focus on the Power of Pro Bono as its guiding theme. Pro Bono Week will bring together the UK legal community to promote collaboration and encourage more legal professionals to provide free of charge qualified legal assistance to those most in need. This year, to showcase the real-world impact of pro bono, events during the week will focus on the following three topics:

- **Barred from justice:** the powerful, everyday stories of the impact of lawyers and law students who give their time to protect the rights of those most disadvantaged in society.
- **Embedding pro bono in your organisation and career:** placing pro bono at the heart of everyone's practice and hearing from those at the forefront of establishing business structures for pro bono within law firms, chambers, in house, universities and charities,
- **How technology can enhance access to justice:** existing and new tools to ensure pro bono is innovative and effective.

By focusing on the Power of Pro Bono as the central theme for Pro Bono Week 2024, events will highlight the important and impactful pro bono work already

taking place in the UK, and create new opportunities to increase participation across the country. Across the UK, demand for legal advice has never been greater, with the cost-of-living crisis biting and creating serious financial hardship for many.

Pro Bono Week 2023 saw over 60 events take place across the UK, involving an estimated 3,000 people participating to shine a spotlight on the UK legal sector's rich history of – and modern commitment to – pro bono initiatives.

Pro bono work is legal advice or representation provided free of charge by volunteer lawyers to those who cannot pay for legal services but are not eligible for legal aid. Pro Bono Week seeks to recognise, showcase and raise awareness of the voluntary commitment of solicitors, barristers, advocates and chartered legal executives across the UK to help those in need. It also aims to encourage more legal professionals to undertake pro bono work.

Commenting on the themes of Pro Bono Week 2024, Toby Brown, chair of UK Pro Bono Week said: "Across the country there's a wealth of valuable pro bono work being done every day by the UK's legal professionals. This year's events will focus on recognising and celebrating the difference pro bono makes to the lives of those who otherwise would be barred from accessing justice.

With less than six months to go until Pro Bono Week 2024, we look forward to supporting our colleagues across the sector to finalise their plans and events in the coming months."



Employment Legal Advice Service

Join the Employment Legal Advice Service – Supporting Greater Manchester Residents with Free Employment Legal Advice

Many people run into difficulties in their job, but do not know where to turn for guidance.

When faced with worries about rights, redundancy proceedings, pay issues, contractual terms, or ongoing disputes, the Employment Legal Advice service (ELAS) supports people to get back on track.

The service is a joint venture by the Growth Company, Citizens Advice Manchester, Citizens Advice Bolton, Citizens Advice Salford, and a network of local legal partners. It aims to help people across Greater Manchester access free, tailored, and timely employment-related support provided by experts in the field.

ELAS relies on the valuable contribution of a network of legal practices, who donate their expertise by committing to as little as one hour per week on a pro-bono basis.

All appointments are conducted remotely and arranged by a team of friendly legal

advisors who handle initial enquiries, complete administrative tasks, and triage all calls. This ensures that only genuine cases reach our legal partners and allows them to spend their time focusing solely on providing legal advice.

Since launching in November 2020, the service has supported over 700 people facing employment issues from discrimination to pay disputes, providing users with the information they need to understand their legal rights and options.

To build on our offer and expand our reach across Greater Manchester, the Employment Legal Advice service is growing. We welcome all solicitors specialising in employment law who can commit to as little as one hour per month.

If you are interested, would like further information, or to arrange an informal chat, please visit our website [here](#) or email info@employmentlegaladvice.org.

Employment Legal Advice

Free employment related legal support in Greater Manchester





LawtechUK and University of Manchester Unite for Groundbreaking Law and Tech Event

The [Manchester Law and Technology Conference 2024](#), delivered by LawtechUK and The University of Manchester's Law & Technology Initiative (MLaTI), is set to be a landmark event, bringing together legal professionals and technology experts to discuss the transformative potential of technology in the legal industry. This conference, scheduled for 4 July 2024 at No.1 Circle Square, provides a platform for insightful discussions, networking, and collaboration among peers in law and tech.

The event is open to anyone interested in learning more about the North West lawtech ecosystem. Whether you're a startup founder, legal professional, investor, government representative, student, or academic, everyone is welcome! This event follows LawtechUK's previous successful visit to Manchester in November 2023, highlighting the commitment to fostering the growth of lawtech across the UK.

"Manchester and the North-West are rapidly emerging as the leading hub for legal and tech companies outside of London, fostering an environment of innovation and collaboration. The engaged community here demonstrates the growing interest in LegalTech, highlighting the region's potential to lead in this dynamic sector. Uniquely the University of Manchester hosts a Law & Technology Initiative bringing a number of law firms together with academic researchers to explore how tech-developments are impacting legal services delivery. This partnership exemplifies the collaborative nature of the Manchester LawTech scene, bridging the gap between cutting-edge research and practical application through partnership and shared

learning. This now-annual conference marks a significant step forward in solidifying Manchester's position at the forefront of the LegalTech revolution." Says Rachel Kenyon, Business Engagement Lead for Fintech, LegalTech, and Digital Trust & Security, University of Manchester.

Key Speakers and Sessions:

Prof. Sophia Ananiadou: The School of Computer Science, The University of Manchester will be speaking in a session entitled *Applications of NLP in Finance and Legal Services*

Alex Herrity: Director of Legal Solutions, Adidas: will be speaking in a session entitled *Tech and Knowledge Management for In-House Teams*

Jay Dunning: Ignition Consultant & Lead Facilitator, KPMG – will be speaking in a session entitled *Designing Technology-Led Solutions*

Professor Claire McGourlay, University of Sheffield: will be the Panel Chair for the session: How Technology tools can improve Access to Justice. The panel includes Dr Philip Drake, Director of the Justice Hub, The University of Manchester; Dr Francine Ryan Director of the Open Justice Centre, OU and Christopher Howard, University Partnerships Director at BARBRI.

"LawtechUK's Ecosystem Tracker Report in April 2024, highlights the growth and dynamism of the UK's lawtech sector, with the North West emerging as a pivotal region driving the future of legal technology. We've seen from the Tracker that with nine lawtech companies marking their

presence, the North West is supported by consistent interest from investors. This event is exciting because it allows us to engage further with the ecosystem in the North West, showcasing its contributions to the sector's national and global reputation." Says Beth Fellner, Director, LawetechUK.

In addition, the event will see a selection of lawtech companies showcasing their products to Manchester participants:

- **North-West based Niftyz** which powers businesses and content creators to use NFTs as 'keys that unlock content that is either stored on-chain or off-chain and monetise it accordingly.
- **Alderley Edge based ShareDo** a legal case management platform, housing data and processes for a law firm all under one software.
- **Nikita Patel: Customer Success Manager, Definely** – will be showcasing what Definely, the only unified solution that helps lawyers at every pre-execution stage of the contract lifecycle, can do to support lawyers.
- **Cristian Gherhes: Founder & CEO, Lexverify** – will be showcasing what Lexverify, the lawtech that helps companies achieve proactive compliance at scale by leveraging the power of AI, is all about.

To find out more or to book your ticket [click here](#).

Digital developments in applying for criminal legal aid

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) are developing new digital replacement in-house services to replace the current CRM forms when the eForms contract ends in September.

Forms to be replaced are:

- Apply for criminal legal aid (CRM14 and 15)
- Claim a non-standard magistrates' court payment (CRM7)
- Apply for prior authority to incur disbursements (CRM4)
- Apply for extension of upper limits (CRM5)
- Accessing historic eForms information

Providers will need to transition to the replacement services in summer 2024.

Providers will no longer be able to submit eForms on Equiniti from Tuesday 6 August 2024.

The LAA will continue to process claims that are currently within the e-forms service until Tuesday 20 August to ensure any pending eForms are processed.

Data from 2009 until 19 March 2024 has been migrated and restored from existing eForm submissions. A further data migration and restoration will need to occur between Tuesday 20 August and Friday 6 September for any new or updated data.

Providers are encouraged to use the new services as soon as they become available. Doing so will bring more stability to service provisions. Direct access to historic eForms data will only be available for LAA Caseworkers from Tuesday 20 August. From 20 August 2024, access to historical data from providers will require a request to LAA Customer Service Team.

Find out more [here](#).



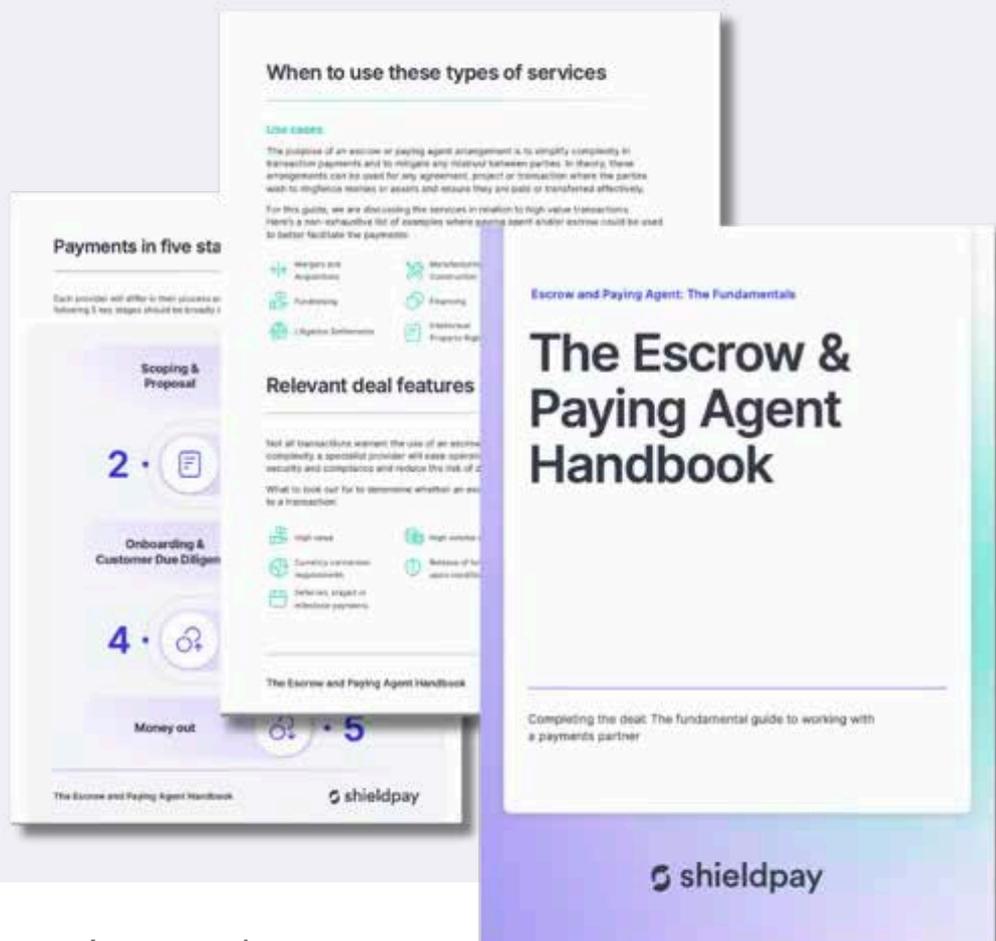
Shieldpay launches essential guide to Escrow and paying agents for legal sector

New publication provides key information for legal professionals on how to use payment services to create advantage and mitigate risk.

[Shieldpay](#), the payments partner for the legal sector, has released [The Escrow & Paying Agent Handbook](#) to equip legal professionals with a thorough understanding of escrow and paying agent services. The handbook aims to guide legal professionals on when to use these services, what to look for in a payments partner, and how the payment process works at every stage of the engagement.

With growing concerns over regulatory change and administration, security and compliance risks within the legal sector,

the guide outlines the benefits of using specialist payment providers to mitigate the risks associated with transactional payments, such as in mergers and acquisitions, real estate transactions, litigation settlements, and intellectual property rights. Throughout the eBook there is also a key focus on the advantages of digital solutions and explains how technology-led payment solutions benefit legal service providers by providing a more efficient and seamless transaction process for clients.



The Solicitors Regulatory Authority (SRA) recently launched their consumer protection review in response to firms' failure to comply with their AML obligations, Accounts Rules infractions and the Axiom Ince scandal which saw £66 million being misappropriated from its client account. With the handling of client money under close scrutiny, law firms need, more than ever, to demonstrate that they have secure and robust processes in place. Firms must ensure that client funds go to and from the correct individuals, or entities, and look to new ways of working and specialist tooling to reduce any risk of fraud, money laundering and terrorist financing.

Although there is a focus on escrow and paying agent services, the guide explains that not every deal warrants their use; every transaction requires a slightly different approach depending on its unique risks and requirements. There is a chapter outlining different options to completing deal payments and the merits and limitations of each. However, for transactions of a greater risk profile and more complexity, a specialist payment provider can ease the operational and administrative burdens, improve security and compliance, and reduce the risk of delayed or erroneous payments.

Ed Boal, Head of Legal at Shieldpay, and former law firm COLP, said: "Paying agents and escrow providers work hand in hand with legal professionals to ensure the secure and timely execution of complex payment transactions. Given the evolving threat landscape, which includes cyber risks and increased scrutiny on the handling of client money, it is more essential than ever for law firms to look more closely at alternative options for the handling of client monies and how they deal with payments in the course of projects and transactions.

“

The handbook equips legal professionals with a thorough understanding of escrow and paying agent services”

“Engaging with technology-led third-party providers to facilitate a safe and seamless payments process for high-value transactions is no longer a ‘nice to have’, it’s crucial for continued success. Misallocated funds and regulatory breaches damage reputations and erode trust in legal advisers. Our guide helps legal providers fully understand the advantages of using different payment services.”

Handling client money in-house is clearly a widespread concern in the legal sector, with almost three quarters (73%) of legal professionals stating they are worried about the risks and time costs associated with holding client funds, according to Shieldpay’s [Time is Money](#) report.

To close significant corporate and commercial legal transactions, legal teams often have the responsibility of managing deal payments. However, this financial aspect is often far from simple and has to be carried out under significant time and budgetary constraints. Shieldpay’s guide explains the payments process in clear stages including due diligence, document collection and bank account verification checks.

For a copy of [The Escrow & Paying Agent Handbook](#), visit www.shieldpay.com



Landmark Information Group and Net Zero Now strategic partnership sets a clear path for sustainability in the property sector

An innovative collaboration aiming to empower firms on their path to Net Zero emissions.

[Landmark Information Group](#) announces a new strategic partnership with carbon action specialists, [Net Zero Now](#), to support businesses across the property sector in their pursuit of sustainability success.

This collaboration aims to empower property professionals on their sustainability journey and help businesses to achieve net zero emissions, whilst also nurturing the culture of environmental responsibility within the sector and beyond.

This announcement marks an exciting new chapter in Landmark Information Group's mission to lead the industry toward Net Zero. Building on the success of last year's launch of [Landmark's Sustainability Training Services](#) – which equips firms with a deep understanding of climate change, empowering them to advise clients on climate-related issues, and develops essential skills for transitioning to a lower carbon economy – the partnership with Net Zero Now, brings expert support for meeting reporting requirements.

Net Zero Now is a climate action platform built on a series of industry-endorsed Sector

Landmark.
Information Group

netzeronow



Protocols, providing a clear and consistent methodology for measuring, reporting and reducing carbon emissions. For law firms for example, this is based on a methodology developed in partnership with Greener Litigation.

The climate action platform completes the service package needed to facilitate a Net Zero pathway. From initial training, education and support on knowing where to start, right through to platform delivery to quantify and manage a company's carbon footprint and follow on consulting support. Together, Landmark and Net Zero Now are setting a dynamic new standard for sustainability in the property industry.

"Our partnership with Net Zero Now is a significant step forward in our commitment to the property and land sector and supporting property professionals on their sustainable journey. By combining our expertise and resources, we are not only helping to reduce carbon footprint but also foster a broader culture of environmental

responsibility. This collaboration underscores our dedication to leading the industry towards a more sustainable future," said Christopher Loaring, Group Sustainability Director, Landmark Information.

Neil Ross Russell, Managing Director of Net Zero Now, said: "We are delighted to partner with Landmark Information Group, a pioneering company who are playing a critical role as the world transitions to a more planet-positive future. Not only are they important advisers that can influence business leaders, but they also have all the skills and much of the knowledge to undertake or advise others as we move towards a Net Zero economy. Having an understanding of carbon accounting is the crux of getting to grips with emissions for most organisations. Good management of greenhouse gas emissions can only come after good measurement."

Upcoming events: **Social Events**

12 July 2024 – "It's Not The Euros!" MLS Football Tournament in aid of We Love MCR Charity - SOLD OUT!

24 August 2024 – Manchester Pride Brunch 2024 in aid of Out Together



Legal Education

18 September 2024 – Property Law Conference

25 September 2024 – Private Client Conference

9 October 2024 – Family Law Conference



Law Society announces special general meeting

The Law Society of England and Wales announced on 20 June it will hold a special general meeting (SGM) on Tuesday 23 July.

It follows the receipt of a requisition from 100 members under bye-law 22(1).

Following the release of the [TA6 Property Information Form \(5th edition\) \(2024\) in March](#), the Property Lawyers Action Group (PLAG) called for a SGM of Law Society members to debate and vote on a motion of no confidence in our ability to represent members who undertake conveyancing.

"It is disappointing that PLAG has felt it necessary to take this step," said Law Society chief executive officer Ian Jeffery.

"However, the SGM is an opportunity for members to discuss with us the future of the home buying and selling process and how the Society can best represent its members, as changes are made over time to that process, to enhance the experience of consumers.

"There will be a vote on the no confidence motion if one is required on the day, but in any event, we will listen to and carefully consider the views of our members, expressed at the meeting and more widely.

"We have already taken steps to address the strength of feeling expressed by members by postponing compulsory implementation of the updated TA6 form. This allows for six months consultation to ensure we understand the full range of member views."

The special general meeting will take place in-person at our headquarters at 113 Chancery Lane, London at 2pm and online.

Only Law Society members can attend and vote at the SGM. To register to attend the SGM, they will need to complete the registration form no later than 9am on Monday 15 July.

Read the Law Society's statement in response to the statement from PLAG [here](#).

Upcoming events: **Virtual Events**

11 July 2024 – Maximise Your Firm's Online Potential

18 July 2024 – Virtual Menopause Café

13 September 2024 – Managing Relationships Upwards

17 October 2024 – Presentations – YOU be YOU

22 November 2024 – Management – Closing the Gap



[CLICK FOR MORE INFO](#)



Manchester Law Society

Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

Private Client Conference

25 SEPTEMBER 2024

09:30 to 15:30

Manchester Hall, 36 Bridge St, Manchester
M3 3BT

Members £100.00 + VAT (£120.00)

Non Members £125.00 + VAT (£150.00)

Join us on 25th September for the Private Client Conference 2024. This year we will be exploring all things tax!

Topics covered will include:

- Taxation of Estates
- Taxation of Trusts
- Lifetime Tax
- Inheritance Tax

[Book Now!](#)



Unhelpful thinking styles

We can all develop unhelpful thinking patterns over time, like those described below. If you can recognise your unhelpful thinking patterns, you can start to notice them. This awareness can help you challenge or distance yourself from those thoughts and view your situation in a more positive or helpful way.

All or nothing – Sometimes called black and white thinking, this is believing that something or someone can only be good or bad, or everything has to be perfect and if it isn't you've failed; rather than anything in between or shades of grey.

Mental filter – Only paying attention to certain types of evidence, for example ignoring the times you have been praised in favour of times you've been criticised, or focusing on your failures rather than your achievements.

Jumping to conclusions – assuming you know what others are thinking, or that you know what the outcome of a situation will be, none of us can predict the future.

Emotional reasoning – assuming because you feel a certain way it must be true. For example, just because you think 'my boss hates me' doesn't mean she does. Feelings are just a reaction to thoughts.

Labelling – Assigning unhelpful labels to yourself or others such as 'weak' or 'stupid'.

Over-generalising – Seeing a pattern based on a single event. For example, having a difficult meeting with a client and then assuming future interactions will be similar.

Tips for dealing with unhelpful thinking styles

- Focus on the here and now - what is actually happening in this moment. Is there another perspective?
- Talk to people about your feelings – ask them for feedback.
- Keep a list or folder of your achievements and look at it when you need to.
- Talk to yourself as you would a friend.
- Distract yourself from your thoughts – read a book, take some exercise, see a friend, do something you enjoy.

Disqualifying the positive – Discounting the good things that have happened to you as if they were a one-off or a fluke.

Catastrophising/minimisation – blowing things out of proportion and believing the worst possible thing will happen or shrinking something to make it seem less important.

Shoulds and musts – thinking or saying 'I should' and 'I must' puts pressure on ourselves and sets up unrealistic expectations.

Personalisation – taking responsibility or taking the blame for something that wasn't your fault.

If you need support, call the LawCare helpline on 0800 279 6888, email support@lawcare.org.uk, or visit www.lawcare.org.uk to use the live online chat. LawCare's website also has lots of information (articles, stories, videos and podcasts) on mental health and wellbeing.



Virtual Menopause Café

18 July at 10:30 Via Teams

What is it?

The Menopause Café is a simple yet powerful concept that enables people to learn about the menopause over a cup of coffee! It's a safe space where participants share questions, stories, and tips. By joining, you'll gain insights, realize you're not alone, and find your voice and agency.

Why attend?

- Empowerment: Learn from each other's experiences.
- Community: Connect with others who understand.
- Support: Discuss without judgment or agenda.
- Inclusivity: All ages and genders are welcome.

Let's break the taboo around menopause together!

The coffee morning will be hosted by MLS Chief Executive Fran Eccles-Bech and by Lisa Wright, a member of the International Menopause Society, Newson Health Menopause Society and founder of Menopause the Wright Way.

[To book your free place please click here.](#)



Manchester Law Society

Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

Do your homework or you're in trouble!

Imagine driving down a road and you see a speed camera. Naturally you'll slow down. The only reason you're slowing down is because you risk getting a ticket and points on your licence. This is controlled motivation.

Why do you comply to the processes and procedures at work? For many, it boils down to controlled motivation. The only reason you're doing it is because if you don't, you may feel the wrath of HR!

Controlled motivation isn't just about punishment. Reward is also controlled. Your manager might ask you to do a task at work and in return you can finish early. You aren't doing the task because of the love of it, you're doing it for the reward.

You see controlled motivation with teenagers. "Do your homework or I'll take your phone off you" or "Do your homework and we'll go to McDonalds" Either way, they are only completing the homework due to the carrot or the stick.

But what if we could move away from controlled motivation. What if people at home and at work could do things because they genuinely wanted to? What if they were autonomously motivated.

What would make you autonomously stick to the speed limit? There could be lots of reasons. You or someone you know might have been in an accident. You might have children in the car. Of course, you might be a law-abiding citizen!

What about at work? You might choose to treat people properly, complete your tasks, follow all the process and processes because you love your job and the people you work with. You do it because ethically it's the right thing to do.

Think about your own team and the people you work with. How are they motivated? How can you get them more autonomously motivated? Here's a few tips:

- Meet their values & motivational drivers
- Involve your team in problem solving and decision making. Get them involved
- Attempt to understand, recognise, and acknowledge their perspectives
- Engaging in active listening and show interest
- Avoid pressurising individuals to think, feel or behave in a certain way
- Create Psychological Safety
- Communicate reasons for change & help them to understand
- Show high levels of trust and support
- Being careful not to use controlling language such as "have to," "must," and "should"

Whilst there will always be an element of controlled, by shifting your team to autonomous motivation, you'll be helping to create trust, rapport and engagement across your team

Need a hand tapping into the motivational drivers of your team? Contact Mike on 07825301660 or email him direct on mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk

What to hear more from Mike? Join us for one (or all) of his free webinars in the autumn:

- 13th September [Managing Relationships Upwards](#)
- 17th October [Presentations – YOU be YOU](#)
- 22nd November [Management – Closing the Gap](#)

PotentialUnearthed
Personal Development



Manchester Law Society
Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

Personal Development Webinars

We are thrilled to announce we are back with a series of free personal development webinars, with Mike Ode in partnership with Potential Unearthed.

These popular sessions will explore managing relationships upwards, presentation skills and closing the gap between the team and the manager.

Join us and Mike as we look at how best to face these challenges.

13th September Managing Relationships Upwards

17th October Presentations – YOU be YOU

22nd November Management – Closing the Gap

Times: Each webinar will run from 13:00 to 13:45

Location: Online via Teams

Cost to Attend: Free but you must register

How to book: Book your place by clicking on the session title above



Maximise your law firm's digital impact: Turn your website into a revenue machine

In today's digital battleground, a well-optimised website is your law firm's secret weapon for attracting clients and boosting revenue. Yet, many firms are missing out on this goldmine. To help you harness the full power of your online presence, the Manchester Law Society is hosting a webinar, [Maximise Your Firm's Online Potential](#), on 11th July 2024. This session is a must-attend for any firm serious about improving their digital profile.

The Race Against Time: Strengthen Your Online Brand Now

Law firms are under relentless pressure to generate more work and outshine competitors. The race is on to leverage your brand's strength and secure more clients. Traditional methods are losing ground, making it crucial for law firms to pivot to digital strategies. This webinar will arm you

with the tools to not just keep up but surge ahead in this competitive arena.

Digital Marketing: Your Firm's Lifeline

B2B law firms, it's time to wake up to the digital reality. Relying solely on offline business development is a strategy of the past. Today's decision-makers are online, researching, and vetting potential partners. Without a robust digital marketing strategy, you're invisible. Our webinar will show you how to build a compelling online presence that drives business and fortifies your firm's market position.

Technology's Onslaught: Be Prepared or Be Left Behind

The technological landscape is evolving at breakneck speed. Innovations like artificial intelligence and advanced analytics



are setting new standards for client expectations and service delivery. Law firms must adapt or risk obsolescence. A strong online brand is your defence against these developments, ensuring you remain relevant and competitive. Join our webinar to learn how to future-proof your firm in this tech-driven world.

Why Your Law Firm Should Attend

Our upcoming webinar will delve into practical techniques to transform your website from a mere informational tool into a dynamic client acquisition and revenue-driving machine. Key topics include:

1. Improving Page Speed

Website speed is crucial for user experience and search engine rankings. We will explore strategies to enhance your website's speed, ensuring a smooth and engaging user experience.

2. Structuring Your Website for Success

Learn best practices for website architecture, including intuitive navigation, clear calls-to-action, and user-friendly design principles that convert visitors into clients.

3. Avoiding Common Mistakes

Identify and avoid common pitfalls such as overly complex designs and poor mobile optimisation, ensuring your website performs optimally across all devices.

4. Dos and Don'ts of Law Firm Websites

Understand what your website should include to attract and retain clients, focusing on content strategy, visual appeal, and user engagement techniques tailored to the legal industry.

5. Optimising Client Inquiries

Turn website visitors into clients by effectively handling inquiries, ensuring potential clients feel valued and are more likely to choose your firm.

Other Key Takeaways

Additionally, the webinar will cover the importance of SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) in driving organic traffic, the role of high-quality content in establishing authority, 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 transform your website into a powerful business growth tool. Join us for a comprehensive webinar packed with practical tips and expert advice tailored specifically for law firms. All attendees will receive a complimentary website analysis and competitor benchmarking report.

How to Register

Registration is open now [here](#) . Secure your spot and take the first step towards maximising your firm's online revenue potential. We look forward to seeing you there!

By attending this webinar, you will gain valuable insights and practical knowledge to help your law firm thrive in the competitive digital landscape. Ensure your firm is at the forefront of technological advancements and digital marketing trends by enhancing your online presence.

28 Regulation Update & News

By **Andrea Cohen**, Compli, Weightmans



The sun may not have yet arrived this summer but, fear not, we are back to raise the temperature with our usual overview of what has been happening in the last month in the world of risk and compliance, including recent SRA warning notices, regulatory and disciplinary decisions, and look ahead to what's on the horizon.

LSB approves SRA fee caps

On 14 June the LSA approved the SRA's application for approval of new regulatory arrangements: the SRA (Claims Management Fees) Rules 2024, which will impose fee caps for matters relating to financial services mis-selling claims, mirroring those applied by the FCA to CMCs, with maximum fees of £420 for claims less than £1500, to £10,000 for claims more than £50,000, with exceptions for complex or novel claims, to be determined by the SRA on an individual case basis. New information transparency requirements for firms handling financial services claims will be introduced. The fee caps do not apply to the BSB or CILEx and the SRA said it will be monitoring firms switching regulators to avoid the caps. The new rules will come into force on 26 July 2024. New guidance will be issued, with case studies, which will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

SRA updated statement on Post Office investigation

On 20 June the SRA updated its January 2024 statement (which, in turn, was an update on the October 2022 statement) on its investigation and advised that there are more than 20 live investigations into solicitors and law firms who were working on behalf of the Post Office/Royal Mail Group. The SRA is looking into a range of issues, including: management and supervision of cases; the strategy and conduct of prosecutions and of litigation; duties relating to expert witnesses; disclosure obligations and improper application of privilege to protect

communications from disclosure; issues relating to the operation of the Post Office Complaint Review and Mediation Scheme, including overcharging of claimants, use of non-disclosure-agreements and labelling of correspondence. In addition it is considering conduct in relation to the ongoing public inquiry. The statement confirms the SRA will take action where it finds evidence of misconduct, and new issues are coming to light. It does not have evidence at present that urgent action is needed.

Compensation fund contributions increase

The SRA launched a public consultation on its 2024-25 business plan, budget and fee levels on 28 May which includes a proposed threefold increase in contributions to the compensation fund to £2220 for firms and £90 for individuals from October 2024. It is hoped this will deal with the shortfall from recent large interventions. Practising certificate fees will stay the same. Consultation on the practising fee and compensation fund contribution ran until 24 June 2024 and the consultation on the wider business plan closes on 2 July 2024.

Money missing from client account – warning notice

On 21 June the [SRA published a warning notice](#) in relation to money missing from client account, confirming that it 'must be replaced with extreme urgency', and managers are jointly and severally responsible for replacing the shortage. The firm's insurer and the SRA need to be



notified. Even if the money is replaced, there is a risk of intervention by the SRA if there is reason to suspect dishonesty or serious breaches of the rules, and there may be offences committed under the Fraud Act 2006 if, once on notice money is missing, you do not act properly.

Mergers, acquisitions and sales of law firms – SRA warning notice

The [SRA has issued a warning notice](#) to firms and solicitors involved in acquiring, selling or merging their firm, including pre-pack sales/acquisitions. This follows a number of high profile firm failures, including Axiom Ince and Metamorph, and precedes the results of the LSB review into the conduct of the SRA regarding Axiom DWFM takeover of two much larger firms and the £60m + 'shortfall'. On 24 May the LSB announced that, as a public body, it has to adhere to General Election guidance and the report will not be published until after the General Election. The notice reminds firms of their regulatory requirements, including ensuring that protecting clients' interests is at the forefront of considerations and are clearly documented, carrying out proper due diligence, prioritising urgent client matters, contacting testators for instructions regarding storage of wills and review of residual client account balances. If a firm is going through financial difficulties, the SRA expects that in most cases a solicitor manager will be appointed (and if not, clear justification for why it was not thought necessary) to ensure client money, assets, confidential and privileged information is safeguarded and overall compliance with regulatory arrangements.

The Compli team is on hand if you need any advice or assistance, so please do get in touch if we can help you.

SLAPP issues

Following last month's update, the SRA have updated its November 2022 [warning notice](#) to solicitors regarding involvement in abusive litigation aimed at silencing legitimate critics, strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs), providing more detailed guidance and examples of circumstances when the SRA might take regulatory action. It includes further detail on the definition of a SLAPP, as outlined in the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023, information gleaned from SRA casework, the recent thematic review and also covers scenarios e.g. the 'right to reply' process.

The SRA has had over 70 reports of potential SLAPPs and, to date, has referred two matters to the SDT.

New practice notes and guidance SRA guidance

In addition to the warning notices referred to above, since our last update the SRA has published the following updated guidance:

[Transparency in price and service](#) Law Society practice notes

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

- [File closure management](#)
- [Consumer Protection regulations in conveyancing](#)

Disciplinary and regulatory decisions:

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

Continued on page 30



Notable decisions include:

Solicitor who coerced vulnerable client into sending explicit images struck off by SDT

A solicitor was struck off for manipulating a client for whom he was acting in divorce proceedings, into sending explicit images, saying they were required for legal reasons to support a non-molestation order application. The SDT made a finding of dishonesty and said his conduct was 'clearly inappropriate.' He was also ordered to pay costs of over £32,000.

Solicitor struck off for taking client's money

In an agreed outcome, a solicitor who had been convicted of fraud and sentenced to 18 months in prison, having made 39 withdrawals totalling £7,850 from a client's bank account over a four-year period while acting under an LPA, has been struck off by the SDT.

Solicitor rebuked for breach of client confidentiality

A solicitor was rebuked and ordered to pay costs of £300 in accordance with a regulatory settlement agreement. He failed to attend a reinstated hearing relating to a child arrangement order, having not applied to come off record or adjourn, and later sent a copy of a privileged email regarding non-payment of fees, issues regarding appointment attendance and preparing the case to the opposing solicitors without the client's consent.

Paralegal banned for discontinuing claim without instructions

A paralegal who filed a notice of discontinuance without the client's consent and then lied to the client and her employer has been disqualified from working in the profession.

Firm fined for failure to notify SRA of material change

A firm has been ordered to pay a fixed financial penalty of £750 and £150 costs for failing to promptly notify the SRA of a material change to the information it had previously provided to the SRA about its COFA and not remedying the breach after being given notice and reasonable time to rectify the breach.

Firm fined for failure to maintain accurate and compliant books of accounts

Under a regulatory settlement agreement a firm has been fined £7,658 and £600 costs for breaches of the SRA Accounts Rules, including a shortfall on client account, not completing client account reconciliations and failure to submit two years accountants reports on time, submitting them both together, 13 months and one month late, both of which were qualified.

Office manager banned from working in regulated firm without SRA permission

An experienced office manager has been made subject to a section 43 order, preventing her from working for a regulated firm without SRA permission. The manager transferred nearly £180,000 from client to office account on two matters to pay office expenses, including salaries and loans. She accepted her actions were dishonest and expressed remorse, stating that she was trying to stop the firm failing.

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.

CLICK FOR MORE INFO



Manchester Law Society
Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

Property Law Conference

WEDNESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2024

Don't miss our annual Property Law Conference returning on 18th September!

This half day conference is a great opportunity to network with colleagues while receiving an update on the latest developments in the sector.

Topics covered will include:

- VAT, Capital Allowances, environmental reliefs
- International Property Measurement Standards
- Case Law update
- Environmental searches
- Structural warranty insurance cover for defects in residential and commercial premises

The conference will end with a networking lunch at 13:40 where attendees can continue the conversations of the day.



**WEDNESDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER
09:00 TO 14:30**



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



**MLS MEMBERS £75.00 + VAT (£90.00)
NON MEMBERS £100.00 + VAT (£120.00)**

BOOK NOW!

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Manchester Legal Awards 2024

(continued)



President David Anderson



Fran Eccles-Bech

From page 1

The ceremony opened with a welcome from Michael Taylor, Editor of [TheBusinessDesk.com](#) and David Anderson, President of Manchester Law Society, who both spoke of the difficult judging process and how impressive they found all the shortlisted nominations.

The crowd of over 600 were then introduced to the President's Charitable of the Year [We Love MCR Charity](#) by Manchester Law Society CEO Fran Eccles-Bech. Fran highlighted the excellent work We Love MCR Charity do to support the young people and communities of Manchester, helping to keep the city the exciting melting pot we all enjoy.

Fran must have done a sterling job as over the evening we raised £941.25 in donations and £6,780.98 from the silent auction making a total of £7722.23 raised for We

Love MCR Charity! Thank you so much to all who donated – this money is transformative for the charity. If you would like to donate you can do so [here](#).

After enjoying a delicious meal guests saw the presentation of all 21 awards in a ceremony hosted by John Hyde, Deputy news editor for Law Society Gazette. John did an amazing and unenviable job of keeping everyone in line and on track for the raft of awards.

The final award was the prestigious Lifetime Achievement award which went to Hugh Potter, founder and senior partner of Potter Rees Dolan, now part of national firm Hugh James

We would like to take a moment to give a massive thanks to all our sponsors and partners! Especially our headline sponsors [Azets](#), [Excello Law](#), [Interlink Recruitment](#) and [Sparkle Capital](#).



Fran Eccles-Bech said: “Year after year, I’m staggered to hear about the outstanding work undertaken by the legal community in our region.

“We know that Manchester is home to some of the best legal talent in the UK, and the awards are an opportunity to share and celebrate this work.”

Michael Taylor, editor at TheBusinessDesk.com, said: “We’re really excited to be working with the Manchester Law Society once again as the media partners for this year’s Manchester Legal Awards.

A big shout out to our media partner [TheBusinessDesk.com](https://www.thebusinessdesk.com) and our PR and marketing partner [RMS PR](https://www.rmspr.co.uk) for making sure everyone knows Manchester has the best legal community in the country!

Thanks so much to our judging day sponsor [Squire Patton Boggs](https://www.squirepattonboggs.com) who hosted a full day of interviews for four panels of judges and looked after us so spectacularly well.

“Legal practices continue to demonstrate their agility and innovation that places them at the forefront of Manchester’s economy, something that was evident from the outstanding range of entries in these excellent awards.

On the night the fabulous [Sterling Events](https://www.sterlingevents.co.uk), our AV partners, kept everyone looking and sounding brilliant.

“Fran Eccles-Bech and her team at the Manchester Law Society have done an incredible job putting together this year’s

Continued on page 34





awards. Every single team and individual that has made the shortlist can be rightly proud of what they've achieved."

Ruth Shearn, founder of RMS PR, Marketing & Design, which has worked on the awards since they first launched, said: "We're proud to have worked on the Manchester Legal Awards since they were an idea on a page 15 years ago."

"I still get a buzz when I see the design work and website created by my team each year, not to mention the social and media coverage."

Once all the prizes were distributed revelers enjoyed dancing the night away to our live band Hustle, kindly sponsored by [Document Direct](#).

Not had enough?

See the brochure for the evening [here](#)

Look at and download all the photos from Carl Sukonik from The Vain from the evening [here](#)

See a video of highlights [here](#)

Please also read on to hear the winners reactions as interviewed by Michael Taylor on the night!

Event host



Manchester Law Society
Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

Media partner



Marketing partner



Charity partner



Headline sponsors



Band sponsor



Welcome drinks reception sponsor



Judging day sponsor





Congratulations to all our winners

CSR Champions of the Year

★ Winner ★

**Eversheds Sutherland (International)
LLP – Robert Gray, Partner**

Sponsor

**RMS - PR DESIGN MARKETING –
Ruth Shearn, Founder**

RMS

Robert Gray said: “It’s the culmination of two or three years work to get to this. It’s also the work that we have had from our charity partners allowing us to work in the community.”

Ruth Shearn added: “This was a brilliant entry that wasn’t just a tick box exercise, and we actually felt the passion.” this specific award. We truly believe that the remarkable work of everyone trying to improve the health and well-being of others is vitally important, not only for the individual but also their wider circle of family, friends and colleagues, and is something to be celebrated.



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Champions of the Year

★ Winner ★

**Brabners LLP – Steven Appleton,
Partner**

Sponsor

**Denovo Business Intelligence –
Steven Hill, Managing Partner**

denovo

Whole Practice Management Software

Steven Appleton said: “This award is an external validation of the huge amount of work that goes into all of the different aspects that feed into what makes us a great firm.”

Steven Hill added: “We’re keen to work with Fran and the Manchester Law Society and support the awards.”





Reece Hobson-Adams said: We've put colleague wellbeing at the heart of everything we do. So it's not just a nice thing to do, it's actually now front and centre."

Michaela Zilkova added: "If we can make everyone feel happy, healthier, and at the centre of it all with a healthy work life balance, it means people come to work happier and motivated."

Health & Wellbeing Champions of the Year

★ Winner ★

Fletchers Solicitors – Reece Hobson-Adams, Responsible Business Manager

Sponsor

MFL Insurance Group Ltd – Michaela Zilkova, Finance Manager

MFL
INSURANCE GROUP

**Team of the Year –
Corporate/Commercial**

★ Winner ★

**Pannone Corporate –
Mark Winthorpe, Partner**

Sponsor

**Sparkle Capital – Paul Gibson,
Managing Director**

 SparkleCapital

Mark Winthorpe said: “This is the culmination of 10 years work since we started the firm when we spun out of Pannone. It’s been so great to see the team grow, and represent the Manchester market around the world.”

Paul Gibson added: “I was involved in judging this category and it was very highly contested, a very difficult decision.”





Matthew Cloughton said: "We've now won three years in a row. I thought it might have been someone else's turn, but I do think we're the best and have been putting things in place for five or six years now, from when I took the practice over and bought out my former directors."

Jason Dixon added: "We're proud to be a sponsor again, this is a great event and we've really enjoyed ourselves here tonight."

Team of the Year – Crime

★ Winner ★

**Olliers Solicitors – Matthew Cloughton,
Managing Director**

Sponsor

**Docutech Office Solutions Ltd –
Jason Dixon, Group CEO**



Team of the Year – Employment

★ Winner ★

**Myerson Solicitors – Joanne Evans,
Head of Employment**

Sponsor

**The Employment Legal Advice Centre
at The Growth Company –
Gary Beasley, Partnership and
Integration Team Manager**

**Employment
Legal Advice
Service**

Joanne Evans said: “The team’s grown 40% in the last year, and we’re still recruiting. The pendulum is perhaps going to swing again in employment law, and we anticipate employment rights are going to be ever more important.”

Gary Beasley added: “I think it’s good to be recognised because sometimes in Manchester things get lost, because Manchester is so big. So it’s really good, especially tonight, to really recognise excellence, especially in an area like employment law.”





Nick Hodson said: "I think we're almost unique in the fact that we have a contract with Lancashire County Council running cases for them, and we do private work too. We have a large legal aid team, which I'm head of, where we represent children in care and adoption cases. I'm very passionate about the work we do and very proud this is the third year in a row that we've won this award."

Louis Rosenthal added: "We've been supporting these awards for 10 plus years, and Manchester's my home, is our base, and we love the awards. It's getting better every year."

Team of the Year – Family

★ Winner ★

**McAlister Family Law –
Nick Hodson, Partner**

Sponsor

**Interlink Talent Solutions –
Louis Rosenthal, Founder &
Managing Director**





Nick Ashcroft said: "We've got an exceptional team, a young team, and everyone in the team are entrepreneurs who realise that Addleshaw Goddard gives you the platform to build a career and to build a practice and to build your own business. We've got a bunch of really young, ambitious and talented people that means our practice has become pretty special, offering first class service."

Robert Parry added: "I've sponsored this award for 12 years running, but never before have I presented it to Addleshaws as it's the first time they entered. It's great that they are getting more engaged in the Manchester market as well as these awards."

Team of the Year – Litigation

★ Winner ★

**Addleshaw Goddard LLP –
Nick Ashcroft, Partner**

Sponsor

**Quantuma – Robert Parry, Managing
Director, Disputes, Investigations and
Valuations**





Team of the Year – PI/Clinical Negligence

★ Winner ★

**Fletchers Solicitors – Peter Rigby,
Director of Clinical Negligence**

Sponsor

**Kain Knight Costs Lawyers – Gary
Redfern, Head of Legal Operations,
Manchester**



Peter Rigby said: “Our recent acquisitions have had a bearing on the strength of our departments, but also the real value we’re bringing people. We have a shared culture that we’re really keen to build upon and expand. It gives us room to help more people get access to justice.”

Gary Redfern added: “I wasn’t a judge in this category, but we see a lot of stuff on the back end, and we see the sort of things that Fletcher’s are doing. The firm is such a strong player in the market it wasn’t a surprise the judges chose them out of a strong field.”



Team of the Year – Private Client

★ Winner ★

**Weightmans LLP – Richard Bate,
Partner**

Sponsor

**Fletchers Solicitors – Zoe Holland MBE,
Chief Commercial Officer**



fletchers
solicitors

Richard Bate said: “We’ve gone out of our way to ensure we give top quality service to clients in a consistent way. We’ve gone digital but we’ve also tried to be a little bit more than lawyers for our clients, to be the family friend and the person that you can speak to about your business or about your personal life.”

Zoe Holland MBE added: “We wanted to sponsor Private Client, because it’s often the less sexy part of law. It’s an area that a lot of the larger firms are moving away from. So it’s great to see a firm like Weightmans still doing it, and doing it well.”





Kirsty Tinsley-Fenney said: "I never expected to win this award, despite all the hard work we've put in. Manchester Law Society does something that's fundamental in our industry. It's a real moment to celebrate."

Allie Parsons added: "Landmark facilitates the whole property chain sector. I want to support these people, because property goes up and down and we want to be there consistently."

Team of the Year – Property

★ Winner ★

**Fieldfisher LLP – Kirsty Tinsley-Fenney,
Partner**

Sponsor

**Landmark Information – Allie Parsons,
Customer Success Consultant**

Landmark●
Information



Rebecca Lowe said: “We’re doing a lot of really significant work that’s genuinely having an impact on the actual landscape of Manchester in terms of what we’re licensing, be it alcohol and entertainment, the bars, restaurants, pubs, clubs, etc. But we do a lot of public realm stuff as well.”

“We’ve done the licence for Factory, that’s now Aviva Studios, and played a small part by getting the licence that it needs as they create a new neighbourhood in the city. The work that we’re doing is having a real impact on how the city is going to look.”

Nick Ellinson added: “It’s very exciting and a privilege to be able to get to meet Rebecca and the Kuits team and given the amount of talent we have in this city, and the pedigree of our colleagues in this part of the world, it’s great to be part of that journey.”

manchesterlawsociety.org.uk

Team of the Year – Regulatory

★ Winner ★

**Kuits Solicitors – Rebecca Lowe,
Partner**

Sponsor

**Kroll Advisory Ltd – Nick Ellison,
Senior Director**





Trainee/Paralegal/ Apprentice of the Year

★ Winner ★

Martha Odysseos, Olliers Solicitors

Sponsor

**Manchester Law School, Manchester
Metropolitan University – Helen Chalk,
Deputy Head**



**Manchester
Metropolitan
University**

Martha Odysseos said: “I’m just really grateful, to be honest, it means a lot because it means that my hard work has actually been appreciated, and my firm put me up for the award without me knowing. So it was nice to be shortlisted and I even got some good advice during the interview process.”

Helen Chalk added: “We’re just so happy to support the awards, and we really enjoy sponsoring the trainee/paralegal category. We’ve got students on our table, and so I’m saying to them, I want to see you on the stage in a few years time. So it’s really inspiring for our students.”



Solicitor of the Year

★ Winner ★

Ryan Bradshaw, Leigh Day

Sponsor

**Azets - Noel Hankinson,
Office Managing Partner**



Ryan Bradshaw said: "It's always nice to get recognition from your peers, and particularly as a claimant lawyer, not one of the big corporate firms doing big flashy, multi million pound deals. We're about representing people in need. And that's what I've been doing this year, hopefully making a difference and so this award is for all the work that I've done with charities like the National AIDS Trust, so setting up an advice service with them, and winning cases that are setting new ground in employment status."

Noel Hankinson added: "We do a lot of professional services work within the legal community, but particularly our focus is to put something back into the Manchester legal community. Because we're accountants and business advisors, there is a hell of a crossover with so many of the services we do and what the legal guys do."





Ruth Hetherington said: "I really wasn't expecting it at all, but I think for me, it's just about being recognised as a family lawyer, and very much for the children's law I practice, which I'm very, very passionate about. It's really, really good that it's been recognised, and what I've done to progress with the team at McAlister Family Law. Fantastic."

Julie Mogan added: "We're a national law firm sponsoring the awards in Manchester, truthfully, it has really raised our profile, and it's also a thank you to Manchester Law Society for everything they've done for us as a firm since we joined, they've supported us massively. So yes, it's a thank you and a pleasure."

Partner of the Year

★ Winner ★

**Ruth Hetherington,
McAlister Family Law**

Sponsor

**Excello Law – Julie Mogan, Partner
and Regional Director**

Excello Law



Sophie Cartwright said: "I suspect I won because of the national public inquiries that I'm involved in. But at the moment I'm counsel on the Covid Inquiry and the Andrew Malkinson inquiry."

Historically, I was counsel on the Manchester Arena Inquiry, and it has been the greatest privilege of my professional career to be able to support all of the families."

Andrew Bradley added: "I think as solicitors, we obviously recognise how important the bar is and the valuable work the KCs do on behalf of our clients, and hearing the kind of fantastic work that Sophie's been involved in, I was just delighted it was her."

Barrister/KC of the Year

★ Winner ★

Sophie Cartwright KC

Sponsor

**Leigh Day – Andrew Bradley,
Partner and Head of Leigh Day's
Manchester Office**

LEIGH DAY
LAWYERS AGAINST INJUSTICE



Barristers Chambers of the Year

★ Winner ★

**23ES (23 Essex Street) – Colin Perrin,
Senior Commercial Clerk**

Sponsor

**Weightmans LLP – Carole Spiller,
Regional Office Head**



Weightmans

Colin Perrin said: “We’ve been around for a while, but in Manchester, we’ve only been in Manchester for eight years. This is the first time we’ve applied for the awards, because we want to make sure we’re getting things right.”

Carole Spiller added: “We’re thrilled for Colin and the team and really proud to sponsors these awards. We really enjoy supporting those awards, and it’s fantastic to support local talent in the local barrister community.”



Law Firm of the Year – small (1-5 partners)

★ Winner ★

**Bromleys - Paul Westwell,
Managing Partner**

Sponsor

Lawshare – Stuart Cartwright, Partner

lawshare.

Paul Westwell said: “Our team spirit is second to none, and the fact that we’ve been described for a number of years as that hidden gem outside of the city means a lot. Great clients, great team, and we come together to do a great job.”

Stuart Cartwright added: “We work very closely with most of the firms in this category, so we know them, and I’ve worked with Paul and some of the partners, and we have a professional relationship. They’re nice people and very good at the job, so it’s just a pleasure to hand them the award.”





James Brown said: "We've continued to hugely focus on the retention development of our staff. We did some analysis earlier in the year from an independent organisation and we had a 0% flight risk, as in, no one wanted to leave. That was probably one of the biggest indicators that we were trying to do the right things."

Gary Miller added: "I think that a lot of focus for small and medium sized law firms with regards to staff is staff retention and the keeping the staff and growing the business. I think that's massively important."

Law Firm of the Year – medium (5-20 partners)

★ Winner ★

**Hall Brown Family Law – James Brown,
Managing Director**

Sponsor

**Groundsure – Gary Miller,
Sales Director**





Carole Spiller said: "It was a really good conversation that I had with the judges. I was really enthusiastic and happy to be able to speak about all the good things that have been happening with us over the last year, obviously, we've had huge growth and success, and that's reflected in the numbers. But what was more important was talking about compassionate leadership, the mental health and wellbeing aspect, and also about what we've been doing in relation to innovation and using tech and AI to develop products that work for our clients and provide them with solutions.

"To be able to showcase that and highlight that, it was brilliant."

Peter Haden added: "We're delighted to be sponsoring these awards, it's been a great night."

manchesterlawsociety.org.uk

Law Firm of the Year – large (20+ partners)

★ Winner ★

**Weightmans LLP – Carole Spiller,
Regional Office Head**

Sponsor

**Fletchers Solicitors – Peter Haden,
Chief Executive Officer**



fletchers
solicitors



Lifetime Achievement Award

★ Winner ★

Hugh Potter

Sponsor

Manchester Law Society



Manchester Law Society

Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

In a warm acceptance speech the personal injury specialist thanked “the inspirational” Rodger Pannone his once Senior Partner. Maurice Watkins. The “formidable and wonderful” Joy Kingsley and Katherine Mellor “who kindly offered my Articles – a Training Contract – with Elliott and Company, as long ago as 1985,” which he called “The Who’s Hugh List!”

After thanking colleagues, family, clients and opponents Potter took a swipe at successive governments who have eroded access to justice.

“I do not however want to thank any of our governments over the past 25 or so years for systematically eroding access to justice by removing legal aid and substantially underfunding the Ombudsmen. I see this as fundamentally wrong and as the election approaches I am sure everyone in this room will do what we can to restore what is surely an individual’s fundamental right,” he said.





Access Legal makes landmark acquisition of pioneering mobile app provider, Incase

Last month, [inCase](#), the pioneering mobile app that was one of the first to pave the way for clear communication between legal professionals and clients on a mobile device and awarded for its innovation at this year's Modern Law Awards, was acquired by [Access Legal](#), a division of the [Access Group](#).

Suchet Amin, founder and inCase CEO and former president of the Manchester Law Society developed the inCase from his experience as a solicitor and MD of personal injury firm, Aequitas Legal, where he faced growing client expectations heightened by customers wanting an improved digital experience.

After seeing the positive response from his own clients, he re-developed the inCase platform for other law firms and supports many in the Greater Manchester region including JMW, Fletchers, Gorvins, O'Neill Patient Solicitors to name but a few.

With inCase's focus on helping law firms improve client satisfaction and productivity, joining forces with Access is a natural fit, combining a shared passion for customer excellence.

Suchet shares: "We're delighted to combine our joint passion of customer experience and support so firms can add more value

to their clients. Given its market reputation, Access Legal is the perfect partner for us and the acquisition will also help accelerate our capabilities to maintain a market leading solution alongside offering growth opportunities for our people in a collaborative client centric culture."

Law firms will be able to secure even greater value from the now accelerated innovation and capabilities to deepen inCase's integrations with Access Legal's case management solutions.

Access Legal's managing director, Emma de Sousa shares: "By bringing inCase into Access Legal's ecosystem, we're excited to deliver further value to our customers so they can, in turn, truly delight their clients with an enhanced experience. The acquisition aligns seamlessly with our mission to be the partner of choice in the legal market and brings a powerful offering to help enable our customers with their client-focused strategies. We have been impressed with the strength and experience of the inCase team and look forward to working with our new colleagues."

The trust and support from inCase and Access Legal's customers has played a significant role in the success of both businesses, who now look forward to continuing to help customers with their client focused strategies.



**inCase™ is now part of
The Access Group**



Jersey Cannabis Advisory Board appoints new chairperson

The Jersey Cannabis Advisory Board has appointed [Kings Chambers](#) barrister, Sarah Clover as its new Chairperson.

The independent organisation brings together businesses and other stakeholders from the regulated cannabis industry to develop the sector and its regulation. The Board has an active lobbying and ambassadorial role to promote authorised cannabis businesses in Jersey and ensure quality and standards.

Jersey aspires to replicate its reputation in the financial sector to be a global leader in the regulated cannabis industry; attracting pharmaceutical and development partners to work alongside the cultivation and production experts already on the island, driving further investment and employment.



Sarah Clover

“

I am delighted to be joining JCAB as Chair at this exciting time for the Jersey cannabis sector

Sarah Clover, a barrister at Kings Chambers in Manchester who specialises in the regulation of cannabis farming and production, said:

“I am delighted to be joining JCAB as Chair at this exciting time for the Jersey cannabis sector. JCAB has already made important contributions to the regulation of medical cannabis in Jersey and is set to continue to work closely with Government departments to build on that early success.

“JCAB is also very active in promoting Jersey as a world leading centre for the development of the cannabis sector, which will be an excellent and timely boost for the island’s economy. With effective coordination, cannabis businesses and the regulators can work side by side to ensure Jersey’s reputation as a centre of quality and high standards. Jersey has a number of advantages in this sector and the future is looking very bright indeed.”

JCAB holds regular meetings and provides an important channel for communication between the industry and government regulators. Board members include Caprica, Green Island Growers, Northern Leaf and Oasthouse Ventures, who all hold cannabis licences approved by the Jersey Government. Membership is open to new applicants.



All for a good cause!

Rachel Botterill of Leigh Day gives a round up of the Day One Trauma 3 Peaks Challenge



[Day One Trauma](#) is a charitable organisation who help people affected by major physical trauma to rebuild their lives. This goes hand in hand with the work of many personal injury solicitors, including here at [Leigh Day](#).

According to Day One Trauma, there are around 20,000 major trauma cases in England and Wales every year. The introduction of Major Trauma Centres to the NHS model in 2014 vastly improved the care and clinical outcomes for this group of patients, however there remained a gap between medical treatment and addressing the wider impact of a life changing injury.

Day One Trauma was created to fill this gap and provides a range of services to patients of Major Trauma Centres including advice and support with benefits and welfare, peer support, and signposting to legal and other services. Leigh Day are one of Day One Trauma's panel legal firms.

As part of their fundraising programme, Day One Trauma organised a Yorkshire 3 Peaks Challenge for supporters in June. When I signed up for this event, I envisaged a strenuous but enjoyable day of hiking in the

“

According to Day One Trauma, there are around 20,000 major trauma cases in England and Wales every year”

sunshine, with views across the Yorkshire Dales and Pennines stretching for miles in every direction.

Fast forward to 15 June 2024 and the reality couldn't have been more different. The forecast indicated a 90% chance of heavy rain, a very low chance of cloud free summits, and the risk of thunder and lightning. Our mountain leaders were on high alert and advised we would have to turn back if the lightning materialised.

Laden with heavy rucksacks containing warm clothes, waterproofs, food and drink, our assembled group of Day One supporters set off on our journey at 7am. The aim of

Continued on page 60



the Yorkshire 3 Peaks Challenge is to climb Pen-y-ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough within 12 hours. This is a 40km circuit with over 5,000 feet of ascent. In dry weather, it is an arduous challenge. In pouring rain, you start to question your sanity.

Leaving the village of Horton-in-Ribblesdale, we climbed straight up the steep rocky slopes of Pen-y-ghent (2,280 ft) before stopping for a quick summit selfie. We then descended and walked for miles along the valley bottom to the picturesque Ribblehead Viaduct. On arrival at Ribblehead, the 10 mile point, we were greeted by the Day One Trauma fundraising team and an enticing table of snacks and drinks.

After replenishing our sugar levels, we set off for the second summit of Whernside (2,410 ft), our highest point for the day. This is when the rain really started to fall. It was coming out of the sky in sheets, soaking through our Goretex and turning the paths into rivers. It was on this section that we passed Ian Flatt, an MND campaigner and

wheelchair user, who was being assisted up Whernside by around 50 supporters including the late Rob Burrows' wife Lindsey. The team effort to get Ian to the top was truly awe-inspiring.

We paused for a brief summit photo atop Whernside before descending as quickly as we could on the slippery flagstone path to escape the lashing rain. We knew our next checkpoint was in a café at the bottom of the valley and needed no more encouragement than that to keep moving.

After a quick pitstop at Philpin Farm café, a rustic snack bar on the edge of a sheep farm, we pressed onwards. We were 17 miles in by this point and were dreaming of dry clothes and hot tea back at the event HQ. Despite not being able to see more than a few feet ahead of us, we set off up the final peak.

Shrouded in mist, the rocky summit plateau of Ingleborough (2,370 ft) felt like the surface of the moon. With some help from





“

Shrouded in mist, the rocky summit plateau of Ingleborough (2,370 ft) felt like the surface of the moon”

our guide, we found the trig point and posed for a final, triumphant summit selfie before tackling the steep descent. A famous mountaineer once said “Getting to the top is optional. Getting down is mandatory.” This has never felt more true. We were physically and mentally exhausted by this point and the descent was treacherous. The path had turned into a torrent of muddy rainwater, with steep slippery grass slopes on either side. We inched our way down, one step at a time.

Hayley Ibbotson, Senior Fundraiser from Day One, valiantly ascended Ingleborough from the other side to meet us on the way down. It was lovely to see a smiling face as we emerged from the mist. Buoyed by the thought of changing into some warm, dry clothes, we trotted down the final section of hillside and through muddy fields until we eventually reached the quaint Dales railway station of Horton-in-Ribblesdale. Our event HQ was now in sight on the other side of the tracks, along with the promised barbeque. A sausage bun has never tasted so good!

I have done many fundraising events over the years, but never has the sponsorship felt so hard fought. The Leigh Day team raised £1,391. A huge thank you to Day One Trauma and Overlimits for organising this epic event, and well done to my fellow personal injury solicitors and barristers who took part from Leigh Day, JMW, Sintons, Hudgells, Kings Chambers and Cobden House.

You can still donate to the fundraising for this event [here](#) .



In Discussion With...

Our CEO Fran Eccles Bech starts an occasional series with asking **Martyn Best** of Document Direct why he has just cycled 315kms.

Fran: So, Martyn, I know you cycle a bit, but 315km seems a bit far? Are you all right?

Martyn: Ha – I am now, as it was the night of 14th June and most of the following day.

With a couple of friends, oh, and 28,000 other riders, we took part in the Vatternrundan around a big lake in Sweden. We'd booked it in October, and so had been training hard for this endurance ride.

Fran: But why? It just sounds so unnecessary, cycling 200 miles and ending up where you started!

Martyn: My riders-in-crime Chris Wainwright and Huw Pearson are former rugby players, and in fact Chris's cousin, Rob, captained Scotland and made a British

& Irish Lions tour. One of Rob's teammates was the irrepressible Doddie Weir, who sadly succumbed to Motor Neurone Disease.

We'd been inspired by the work of the My Name's Doddie Foundation, for which Rob received an OBE, which is focussed on MND research, and thought the ride really reflected the grit and determination of both Doddie and the Foundation.

Fran: Ah, and of course, the recent sad news of Rob Burrow passing away with MND reminded us all of that dreadful disease.

Martyn: Yes, they have both been inspiring champions in helping raising funds, and we felt it was a great cause to support.



Huw, Chris and Martyn – looking relieved at the finish line.



VATTERUNDEN 2024

A long ride - with 28,000 around the Vätternrundan in Sweden - in aid of Doddie Weir Foundation with **Chris Wainwright** and @huw-pearson



Congrats! This was your longest ride.

Distance	Elevation Gain
200.25 mi	6,562 ft
Moving Time	Avg Power
14:19:15	98 W
Avg Speed	Calories
14.0 mi/h	12,045 Cal

The Vätternrundan 2024 – the raw Strava stats

Fran: So, how on earth did you manage to stay awake?

Martyn: Well, we'd been up all day, having driven through Holland, Germany and Denmark to get there, and our start time was 21:42. So, around 5am, I'm sure I fell asleep on the bike, and just coasted for a bit. We did have 8 refreshment stops, some loaded with Swedish meatballs, and I did have a 10-minute nap at a couple of them – so it was as much an endurance feat in staying awake than a bike ride.

Once the sun was up, and we were past half-way, and counting down, it did become a bit easier.



Fran: What happened at the end?

Martyn: As you can see, we were dressed in the Doddie tartan, so quite easy to spot, and we were interviewed at the finish line by I think Swedish TV, which was quite good fun. It did delay the inevitable though – and that first beer has rarely tasted better.

Fran: So, what's next?

Martyn: I'm off to Slovenia this week, for more riding, and a few more mountains, and just finishing off our fundraising efforts for My Name's Doddie. So, I really

appreciate this opportunity to talk with you about this and the Doddie and MND cause, and of course I now need to get back to my desk to help with finishing this latest edition of the wonderful *Messenger* for you.

Fran: Well done, though quite mad I think, but a great cause, and I'm sure that some of our members and readers will help you get over the donation finishing line.



Visit the [justgiving page to donate](#)

All donations truly gratefully received.



All-round growth key as Bexley Beaumont advance continues



Karen Bexley

Bexley Beaumont [↗](#) is set for further progress after a remarkable six months which has strengthened its ranks nationwide.

The firm has revealed that it has added 13 partners across its key and emerging services since the start of the year.

Bexley Beaumont Chief Executive Karen Bexley has described how six individuals of “the very highest calibre” have joined in the last month alone.

The latest arrivals include Construction and engineering specialist Earle Brady, Corporate lawyer Toby Adkins and Amy Stirton, who bolsters the firm’s fast-developing Social Housing practice.

That follows the recent appointments of Health and Safety expert Gary Lewis, Real Estate advisor Holly Smith and Zafar Rafiq, who handles a large volume of Corporate and Restructuring cases.

Ms Bexley said: “Our ability to attract senior lawyers of immense talent and more junior

individuals wanting to really make a mark in their careers shows that our approach works.

“We offer the chance to deal with fascinating cases in a collaborative, innovative environment, backed up by an exceptional central support team.

“As a result, the strong growth that we have seen recently is certainly not a blip but pattern of a consistent pattern of performance which augurs well for the future.

“That provides clients with great comfort because they know that they can rely on very capable and very experienced lawyers across a breadth of services and across the country.

“We possess real strength in depth which has already brought a considerable influx of extra cases and underlined Bexley Beaumont as an advisor and workplace of choice.”

Ms Bexley’s comments are justified by the credentials of the firm’s newest recruits.

During the course of more than 20 years, Liverpool-based Mr Brady has worked on behalf of clients in the energy, transport, property and leisure sectors, and previously headed up regional construction teams for two other leading law firms.

Ms Stirton joins after more than a decade working in the Housing Litigation departments of a succession of well-known North West legal practices, while Mr Adkins and Mr Rafiq have both built up enviable reputations in Yorkshire and the Midlands respectively for handling mergers, acquisitions and company reorganisations for in a variety of business sectors.

Whilst Ms Smith has more than 20 years' experience advising local and national housebuilders, developers and property investors, Gary Smith is one of the UK's most experienced Health and Safety lawyers.

His joining Bexley Beaumont is the stop in a 30-year career, during which he has advised industrial clients involved in numerous accident investigations, being described for his efforts as "top notch" and "exceptional" by two of the UK's leading legal rankings.

Together, the new arrivals mean that Bexley Beaumont now has 61 partners with a further five Associate Solicitors despite only opening its doors in 2020.

Its appeal across the legal industry was illustrated by an independent study conducted by Codex Edge last year.

Although many law firms struggled to attract talent during 2023, the research concluded that the partner ranks of Bexley Beaumont had grown by 27 per cent in just a year.

Bexley Beaumont's achievements have seen it claim a succession of important legal industry awards - most recently, the Law Firm of the Year Award at the Modern Law Awards last month.

Kuits Appoint Planning Specialist

Kuits Solicitors [↗](#) has strengthened its property offering with the appointment of Michelle Spark as Planning Partner.

Michelle joins Kuits' Commercial Property team as a planning, highways and compulsory purchase law specialist bringing with her 18 years of experience having worked in local government and global and national law firms. She advises private and public sector clients on complex developments including large mixed-use developments, regeneration projects and nationally significant infrastructure projects involving major highways projects and renewable energy.

Commenting on her appointment Michelle said; "I'm really pleased to be joining such a successful team who advise some of the most exciting clients in the region working on some of the most complex projects. I have had a very warm welcome and I am



Michelle Spark

very much looking forward to working with the team to provide clients with specialist advice."

Nick Nyunt, Head of Commercial Property at Kuits said; "We are delighted to welcome Michelle to Kuits. Her expertise and experience further strengthen our position as one of the most commercial and experienced property law teams in the North West providing a full service offering to our clients."

Michelle is ranked as a Next Generation Partner in Legal 500 and is a ranked lawyer in Chambers UK.



Kuits welcome new head of property litigation

Kuits Solicitors is delighted to welcome Christian Eagle to the team as a Partner and Head of Property Litigation. Christian brings a wealth of experience as a commercial litigator, renowned for his adept handling of intricate property matters. His expertise spans dilapidation, break clauses, easements, and a broad spectrum of landlord and tenant issues.

Commenting on his appointment, Christian said, "I'm delighted to join Kuits, who have an excellent reputation in the market for their highly skilled legal teams, the quality of work they do and their commitment to delivering a high standard of client service."

Steve Eccleston, Managing Partner, added, "We are pleased to welcome Christian to



Christian Eagle

our team at Kuits. His expertise in property litigation and alternative dispute resolution will significantly enhance our service offerings to clients. The last 12 months has been another successful year of growth for the firm which is reflected in the recent appointments of some of the most well-respected legal professionals in the region."

Kuits has one of the largest dispute resolution teams in Manchester following the appointment of Nichola Evans as department head last year.

MSB Celebrates a Raft of Paralegals Qualifying as Barristers

MSB Solicitors is celebrating a raft of team members who have taken the leap from paralegal to the bar. It is not an easy journey, but it is one that is incredibly rewarding.

Anton Doyle in the Manchester team along with his colleagues Leah Gregory, Natasha Johnson, Renn Moucary, Scarlett Gilmartin, Richard Harrington, and Paul Willstead have all gone on to achieve their dreams of becoming barristers after starting out as paralegals. MSB believes that having a diverse background in both solicitors' firms and barristers' chambers can only enhance the skills and understanding that team members bring to the table.

Anton Doyle has secured his pupillage in chambers, showcasing his dedication and hard work.

By supporting its team in achieving their goals, MSB is helping to create well-rounded legal professionals who have a deeper understanding of the needs of the clients it supports together.

MSB is incredibly proud of the achievements of Leah, Natasha, Renn, Scarlett, Richard, Anton, and Paul, and we look forward to seeing all that they will accomplish in their careers as barristers. MSB plans to continue supporting its team members in pursuing their dreams and reaching their full potential in the legal profession.

Personal Injury Solicitor/Fee Earner – With lots of opportunity to progress!

Are you seeking a role in a growing, dynamic, and award-winning Personal Injury practice in Manchester? Are you confident, determined, enthusiastic, and possess a positive outlook? If so, please read on...

We have a fantastic opportunity for an experienced Personal Injury Solicitor/Fee Earner in a permanent full-time role. The successful candidate will have experience in Personal Injury, including RTA, OL, EL, and PL claims. Ideally, you will have 2+ years of experience, as this is a mixed caseload with a focus on EL cases. A passion for providing empathetic and exemplary client care is essential. Strong IT skills (Proclaim experience is advantageous), excellent communication abilities, and superb organisational skills are also required.

Ideal candidates will possess:

- A keen attention to detail
- A passion for helping, supporting, and learning
- The right attitude and aptitude for personal and professional growth
- Team player characteristics

You must align with our core values:

- Respect
- Integrity
- Teamwork
- Dedication
- Trust
- Fun

Key Responsibilities

- Manage a portfolio of personal injury cases, ensuring timely and effective handling from initiation to resolution.
- Conduct case assessments, establish claim viability, and develop case strategies.
- Liaise directly with clients, providing them with regular updates and advice.
- Prepare and review legal documents, including pleadings, witness statements, and court submissions.
- Negotiate settlements when required.
- Work collaboratively with team members to enhance client service and firm capabilities.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legal, regulatory, and firm standards.

We offer wellness programs with a free wellness app, including access to face-to-face counsellors. As a “Gold Award Accredited” firm with the Investors in People Board, we provide a day off for your birthday and a holiday loyalty package increasing to 28 days. Enjoy our free onsite gym, regular social activities, a good bonus scheme, a competitive salary, and pension (if applicable).

Our fee earners benefit from hybrid working, with at least two days in the office and up to three days from home, providing a balanced and flexible work week.

If this opportunity excites you, please apply with your CV, covering letter, and salary expectations by emailing office@aequitaslegal.co.uk , for the attention of Rachel Bird.



Megan Christie-Copeland: the newest member of the JMW Board

Megan Christie-Copeland, Head of Court of Protection (COP) with [JMW Solicitors](#), is only 35 years old but already she has packed more into her career than some manage in a lifetime.

She has just been appointed to the firm's Board, an appointment made while she was on maternity leave with her first child: she joined JMW in 2020 from Linder Myers, bringing her team and caseload with her and merging the two COP teams during lockdown, simultaneously taking over the role of Head of Court of Protection from the retiring 'W' of JMW, Ged Wilson.

"Big shoes to fill," she admits, "but I believed the talents of everyone in the newly merged team would ensure our success, and our subsequent growth in all areas more than demonstrates that belief."

The figures support it. Since joining JMW, when the Court of Protection fee income stood at circa £1million per annum, that figure has grown to £4.7million. The then newly merged team of 28 now numbers 63 people, managing more than 900 cases. This immense growth - and concomitant success - is set to continue at pace.

Megan admits she has always been career-driven, exemplified by the fact that when only in her first year of a law degree at Manchester University, she applied to Pannone for a training contract: she got it, from the then managing partner of the firm, Joy Kingsley, who would later go on to become managing partner of JMW. "I think maybe Joy saw something in me," says Megan with characteristic understatement.

She gained her LLB (as well as a secondment to Melbourne Law School) and LPC and

joined Pannone in 2010. She enjoyed a variety of seats during her training contract, with her first seat in the Personal Injury department, followed by a split seat in Construction and Commercial Litigation, then Clinical Negligence and finally Court of Protection where she felt particularly drawn to the work. On qualifying, she spent two years strengthening her experience in injury work at another firm, also gaining exposure to Court of Protection work, underlining her conviction that Court of Protection was where her future lay.

The chance to work solely in COP came in 2014 when she joined Linder Myers. "Effectively, it was like being a newly qualified solicitor again: I had little COP experience and I had to learn from the ground up. But I wouldn't change that: I knew I'd found my place. It's vital work and I care deeply about it: supporting so many incapacitated, vulnerable clients, from newborns to those suffering age-related conditions, is a privilege. I think it's fair to say that if you're in the fortunate position of not needing the Court of Protection, you probably know very little about it. Our work is all about empathy, relatability, and being there for someone who may well have nobody else, in addition to all the legal and technical work. The role of a deputy is a crucial one; we're there every step of the way for, sometimes, every stage of a person's life."

Moving her team to JMW under a TUPE transfer, was, she says, "a natural progression, and I could not be prouder of the way our ever-growing team has flourished since. I believe, very strongly, in promoting talent, which is why there are no barriers to success here: we made 18 promotions in the COP team this year



Megan Christie-Copeland

and our people come from all kinds of backgrounds, from those with no previous legal experience to people who have not gone down the traditional route to qualification. Ability, dedication and hard work will always be rewarded, and that holistic approach to career development is something which runs through every area of JMW, amply demonstrated, I believe, by my appointment to the Board taking place whilst I was on maternity leave.

“My job is all about delivering excellent client care to those in society who are most in need,” she explains. “The very real joy I feel every time a client flourishes through our support cannot be understated. We are known for being able to help clients who are experiencing the most challenging of circumstances, due to our proven ability to support those with chaotic lifestyles, complex behaviours including self-injurious, sexualised, volatile, paranoid and criminal and those suffering with substance addictions, physical/financial/sexual abuse, victimisation and isolation.”

The team supports more than 50 Local Authorities with their deputyship needs

and provides, on average, fortnightly free training and troubleshooting. “Our team’s unique and bespoke training and support agenda directly improves the level of care and assistance to the most vulnerable in society and encourages implementation of best practice policies and procedures.

“We’re one of the largest, most diversified and specialist deputyship teams in the country, at the forefront of innovating for client-focused cost-saving, efficiencies, risk reduction, best practice and legal change for incapacitated vulnerable individuals, voluntarily taking on many pro bono cases, aiding those who would otherwise be unrepresented.”

The team was most recently recognised in The Legal 500 as one being “very accommodating, friendly and client driven. They go above and beyond to assist you and always put the clients’ best interests first” with Megan named as a Leading Lawyer, described as “a natural leader. She inspires the team through leading by example. She has built a talented client-focused team. Megan is always looking for ways to improve the department and find new, innovative ways to improve the services which they deliver.” The team won the National Court of Protection Team of the Year, Wills and Probate Awards in 2022 as well as Private Client Team of the Year at the Manchester Legal Awards 2022 and in the same year at the Made in Manchester Awards, Megan was named Lawyer of the Year and as well as receiving the accolade of the Chairman’s Rising Star Award.

“Awards are always lovely to receive, of course, but really it’s all about our clients,” she says. “Being able to give back is what drives me, and what drives the team. My success is their success, and I look forward to working with them in the years to come.”



Leading asset based lending partner joins Mills & Reeve's Manchester office

Mills & Reeve [↗](#) has appointed Simon Prendergast to spearhead the growth of its asset based lending practice and the launch of its Manchester banking team.

Simon, one of the UK's leading finance lawyers, has joined as a partner from the London office of Dentons. He was previously a partner in the Manchester banking team at Addleshaw Goddard.

Simon has more than 20 years' experience in acting for UK clearing banks, international financial institutions, challenger banks and independent asset based lenders. He has developed one of the UK's leading practices advising on asset-based lending and receivables financing and has advised on some of the most complex deals in the ABL market in recent years. Simon is ranked as a "Leading Individual" for asset based lending in Legal 500 (being one of only 15 lawyers in the UK with that ranking) and is described as "exceptionally professional but

personable, easy to talk to and stays calm under pressure".

His appointment is designed to both accelerate growth for the Firm in the asset based lending sector and to build a banking practice in Manchester and across the North. Simon will work closely with the corporate, commercial, and real estate teams, which have expanded in recent years, to offer a one-stop, full-service to corporate clients.

Chris Ross, head of the Manchester office, said: "The Manchester office has grown significantly and although we are supported by a wider banking team, having a partner with the calibre of Simon on the ground, is a significant step forward in demonstrating our drive to continue to grow our presence in the city."

"Simon is a welcome addition to the Manchester office and his appointment will enhance the profile of our growing corporate, commercial and real estate teams, open up relationships with local lenders and intermediaries and provide a full service offering to our corporate clients."

Simon said: "Mills and Reeve already has a well-regarded asset based lending team with an impressive roster of clients. I'm looking forward to bringing my experience and relationships in the ABL market to help drive the growth of the national ABL practice.

I'm also excited by the opportunity to launch a banking and finance team in Mills and Reeve's rapidly expanding Manchester



Simon Prendergast

office which will extend the reach of the Firm's national banking and finance practice to cover the North West market."

Will Roles, head of the Mills & Reeve national Finance and Restructuring practice, said: "I am delighted to welcome Simon to our team. His position as an asset based lending specialist, and his complimentary client base, will greatly assist the growth of our existing ABL practice. Adding Simon's

reputation and clients to our practice will position us as one of the leading national ABL teams."

"Additionally, Simon is our first finance partner hire into the Manchester office and his appointment will greatly assist the achievement of our longer-term strategic aim to be recognised as a leading national finance practice."

Meet Mills & Reeve's new chief financial officer

Mills & Reeve [↗](#) has appointed Ruj Dev as its chief financial officer.

In addition to leading Mills & Reeve's finance team, Ruj will be a key member of the firm's senior leadership team. Ruj is a qualified chartered accountant and has worked in the legal sector for more than 12 years. She joins from Brabners where she was chief financial officer.

After training at PwC, Ruj has held financial management roles at several law firms, including Hill Dickinson and DWF, and has also worked for Merseyside Police.

Ruj, who will be based in the Manchester office, has a wealth of experience in project management and has worked closely with senior board members to implement and deliver strategic, commercial and operational change. In 2021 she was named Finance Director of the Year at the North West Finance Awards and in 2022 was shortlisted as CFO of the Year by Women in Finance Awards.

Claire Clarke, managing partner at Mills & Reeve, said: "This is a great time for Ruj to



Ruj Dev

join Mills & Reeve as we look to embark on implementing our new 2030 strategy. As a key member of the senior leadership team, Ruj will have a vital role to play in executing our bold plans for the firm over the next five years."

Ruj added: "I am thrilled to join Mills and Reeve at such an exciting time and am eager to get started in delivering the firm's ambitious national and international growth strategy. I look forward to leading a dynamic team who will drive innovation and excellence, making a meaningful impact on our clients and the industry."

MYSG's Health and Wellbeing Initiatives

Manchester Young Solicitors Group's new committee for 2024-2025 are delighted to announce a number of upcoming exciting events. Emma Whitehead and Grace Matthews, the Health & Wellbeing directors, have some great things in the pipeline, including the upcoming Padel tournament to kick the summer off!

This year has seen the rise of one sport in particular: Padel. For those who might not have heard of Padel or had the opportunity to play, it is a racket sport which combines elements of tennis and squash, in a smaller court than a tennis court with glass walls surrounding it. It first originated in Mexico and Spain, and although it has been in

Britain since 1992, it arguably only "took off" the past couple of years. As of 2020, there were 82 Padel Courts in Britain. Now, there are well over 450.

In Manchester, we are spoilt for choice with courts in Deansgate, Didsbury, Stockport, Hale, Wilmslow, Cheadle and Alderley Edge. With the cost of court hire between £20 - £30 for an hour (split four ways), it's accessible and affordable. Padel is played as doubles, making it the perfect opportunity to catch up with friends or play with new people. It's no wonder it's one of the most popular sports right now, with courts across Manchester being booked out weeks in advance.

Kick your summer off with the upcoming Padel tournament





Emma Whitehead



Grace Matthews

It was a no-brainer for Emma and Grace, the new MYSG Health and Well-Being Directors, that a Padel tournament had to be their first event of the season. Tickets will shortly be released for the upcoming event, which will take place on Thursday 18th July from 6pm to 8pm at Club De Padel, Deansgate. The event is open to all levels, advanced to beginners, and for any beginners please don't be put off if you've never played as we'll have a coach at the event to run through everything! After the tournament (once the winning pair crowned), there'll be the opportunity to replenish and network over some food and drink.

As exciting as the Padel tournament will be, it's not the only Health and Wellbeing event that MYSG members will be able to get involved with this year. The post-pandemic years have really demonstrated how important it is to keep fit, prioritise your wellbeing and look after yourself, something which can be a struggle for junior lawyers finding time to fit this in amongst a busy diary. What better way to fit in a Health and Wellbeing session whilst also connecting with other junior lawyers across Manchester.

Another event that members can look forward to is a RYDE class, an exciting new studio in Manchester offering spin classes, yoga, Pilates and Barre, with a pumped-up playlist and vibrant lights to make your workout seem like a night out. We are also scheduling for later in the year / early next year a puppy yoga event and an event to tackle more of the mental wellbeing element. More details to follow on our webpage www.mysg.org.uk.

As you can tell, we are taking our health and wellbeing events very seriously here at MYSG as we hope to help our members improve their focus on personal wellbeing and encourage them to make time for themselves!

If you are solicitor or legal executive 10 years PQE and under, make sure that you are [signed up to our mailing list](#), or follow us on [LinkedIn](#) or [Instagram @mysgsolicitors](#).

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Management Matters

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



This Month

- **The Inevitable**
- **The Environment**
- **Significant Benefits**
- **Action Plan**

A major opportunity for law firm growth, financial strength and public acceptance

A Key Facility for All

There is something that is going to happen to everyone – and that unfortunately is death – and in most circumstances we are unable to define how or when and out ages and the consequences for those that we leave behind and good causes that we would want to support.

Having said that there are between 40 – 50% of adults that do not have a Will.

Without a Will – families and beneficiaries will suffer extended times, costs and difficulties whilst Probate is sorted, who and how will handle the children and grandchildren, the tax man, having to sell property for care support and looking after the disabled. We need a Will irrespective of age or estate value, clarity around financial affairs, it needs to be tailor made for personal circumstances, safe guard assets (which includes homes, savings and businesses).

Even if there is a Will in existence when was it last reviewed and updated to ensure accuracy of circumstance and beneficiaries, the latest taxation situation. There are also needs for Trusts to be established to ensure for example the desired ownership of property and avoid selling to manage care needs.

As Covid and lock down has also demonstrated older people or people in accidents and illness issues are not necessarily with 100% of mind over matter and to this end a Lasting Power of Attorney (Health & Welfare and/or Property and Finance) is needed to cover this scenario.

Getting the Firm's Strategy Right

Some recent projects and personal considerations have certainly drawn my attention to this challenge. A couple of articles worth a read:

- [From May 2024](#) - geared to making sure law firms have the right processes in place to make things happen.
- [From June 2024](#) - updating our business strategy and actions

However, in addition to this I have been researching added value solutions across the legal sector which have included a secure portal for firm/client communication interfacing with multiple systems CMS and CRM such as [Make Life Smarter](#) plus a strong digitisation solution [EvaStore Ltd](#)

Private Client – Potential for Firm Growth and Value

Seldom considered by many firms Private Client activity with a developable Will base that needs enhancing (updates of old ones and new services – Trusts and LPA's) and nearly 50% of the adult population without Will protection and additional needs The Private Client activity is a natural work-type for this high return solution. There are too many firms who do not recognise the



potential asset value of their Will base and how this can be/needs to be developed very quickly.

This is without the clients finding the benefits of great service and empathy with needs.

We are not just talking about significant revenue and profit growth but satisfying the user base PLUS if within the strategy there is a desire to sell the firm that strength of Will base will significantly improve the firm's value.

Doing it right will

- enhance revenue significantly and consequently gross and net profit.
- It will enhance the relationship with the client base for retention, regular updates, additional services, cross selling for other departments
- plus references and referrals by clients to non-clients.
- It will enhance the brand of the firm to the outside world – including networking IFAs and accountants
- it will make clear demonstration of social awareness and communication which will benefit client relationships and growing confidence amongst the younger generation staff – enhancing retention.

Without being too clever so far, those firms that are in touch with their user base, getting them to consider Will updates are getting something like a 20% success rate. So, for a 10,000 will base that is revenue for 2,000 files or 20,000 - 4,000 files with very little required activity. Will Bank Transformation.

There was a failure during lock down with many firms not updating their client base with regards to private client considerations and not even demonstrating that the firm was switched on with articles or clarity on their web sites – neither keeping their own clients aware or attracting potential new ones

The Will Base Status

This is very variable across many firms – there are also concerns for many with Will Banks from collapsed firms

For many the availability of physical Wills is not clear. Many firms with say 10,000 Wills may have 8,000 on their case management database with digital access, then a further 1,000 in a room in the office with some recognition on the system and a final 1,000 in offsite storage, written many years ago and therefore in a very poor physical state.

Within those stores (all 10,000) there may have been no checks in terms of whether the client is still a client of the firm, whether the address has changed or even if they are still alive or dead. Not necessarily a recording on the system as to when the Will was last updated.

A major exercise needs to be undertaken by all firms on clarifying the status but it all doesn't have to happen on day 1. With the right support this can be prioritised for maximum effect and return.

Key criteria then needs to be added to a CRM database – date of Will, date of last update, client, address, age, last

Continued on page 82



communication, services with the client – Will, LPA?, Trusts? A sensible plan for communication can then be implemented.

Client Communication

The firm needs to develop an appropriate action plan – obviously considering GDPR – but also the real benefits that the client needs and can receive.

E-mail seen as potentially the obvious route but not really because of security. A secure portal which would enable a client to go onto the system, look at his/her last Will and tell the firm to make some changes is going down incredibly well – especially with modern technology where documents can also be signed and witnessed on line – not everyone these days want to travel and queue up to sign documents. ID updates can also be handled on line.

It is also a methodology by which the firm can advise the client of potential enhancements.

Product Marketing Plan

This is an overall action plan and certainly advised to happen before detailed commitments are made. This ensures a simple return on investment

- Relevant products and services offered by the firm
 - Wills, Trust, LPA, Probate other
 - Existing clients with a clean database – full range of advice
 - Benefits to clients – updated Wills to meet needs, Trusts, LPAs
 - Target Market
 - Existing clients – prioritised by group
 - New potential clients
- Route to market
 - Portal/e-mail
 - Communication with existing clients
 - Web site

- For existing and new clients
- Networking
- Existing and new clients
- Own staff (need education)
- IFAs
- Accountants
- Cross Selling services from the firm
- Timetable
- In house system to measure responses, speed of follow through, success

Resource Planning

- We need the strategy and plan approved
 - Activities and dates
- We need to stock-take our resources and availability
 - Initially to ensure that potential enquiries will be handled well from an interface and service level point of view
 - We need to review the delivery team resources in terms of volumes and skill levels and ensure a people development, recruitment or outsource plan is in place
 - We need to have a methodology to perpetually review the likely impacts of the business development activity
- We need to ensure that all the team are most effectively using the case management capability in the firm
- We need to review responses regularly from client base and new enquiries – source certainly which impacts future marketing

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 and [LinkedIn](#)

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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.

We start with an unusual judgment where the successful party wanted a detailed assessment rather than a summary assessment but did not get one! In **Scenic International Group Ltd (In Provisional Liquidation) v Adenaike (Costs)** [2024] EWHC 1178 (Ch), a party had won an application and a summary assessment was appropriate under Practice Direction 44, para 9.2(b). No statement of costs had been filed and served because the successful party did not wish to go to that expense (as it was unlikely that the losing party would ever pay the costs) and sought a detailed assessment instead. That request failed. Roth J said that that was a mistaken approach and ordered a schedule to be served, with the costs to be assessed on the papers. That schedule had subsequently sought £36,000 which was disproportionate: £23,235 was a reasonable sum to allow.

In **Francois v London Borough of Waltham Forest** [2024] EWHC 1162 (KB), Yip J, gave a lesson to counsel about making sure that they have an up-to-date practising certificate in place. Following a detailed assessment during which the court had allowed fees for the claimant's counsel of £894 against a claim for £3,200, she upheld the decision of the Master below in having disallowed fees for the period during which counsel had inadvertently let his practising certificate lapse. She held that an unregistered barrister cannot act as a

barrister and must be treated no differently to any other professional such as a debt collector, tax adviser or foreign lawyer, all of whose services have been found not to qualify for recovery under CPR 45.5(3)(b).

Next, a rare foray into the world of costs in Family cases where the general practice is to make no order in matters involving children. In **Re O (Appeal: Costs)** [2024] EWHC 1163 (Fam,) Ms Justice Henke found that there was no good reason to depart from that general practice when requested by the Petitioner to do so. She held that the Respondent's litigation conduct could not be characterized as unreasonable or reprehensible. Having instructed Counsel, the Respondent had taken proactive steps to narrow the issues and reach a compromise. "No order as to costs" was the correct order.

In **DH v RH** [2024] EWFC 114, however, MacDonald J went the other way, albeit in a family case not involving children. Although under FPR r.28.3(5), the court will not ordinarily make an order requiring one party to pay the costs of another party, the wife had been guilty of persistent and egregious conduct (extra costs in an unsuccessful attempt to find hidden assets). That justified a departure from the general practice and the wife was ordered to pay over £250,000 in costs out of her matrimonial settlement.



Allegations of “fundamental dishonesty” made by defendants in personal injury actions are without doubt on the increase, usually generated where video surveillance is relied on by the defendant to show that a claimant has exaggerated their injuries to the extent of being dishonest. However, in **Thakkar & Ors v Mican & Anor** [2024] EWCA Civ 552, the defendant’s case went further. The court below had dismissed the allegations of fundamental dishonesty. Accordingly, the claimants had wanted indemnity basis costs against the unsuccessful defendant. That submission failed, with the Court of Appeal holding that there was no presumption or reversal of the ordinary burden of proof where fundamental dishonesty had not been found. Whether an award should be made for indemnity costs would always depend on the circumstances of the particular case, and the judge retained a complete and unfettered discretion. Failed allegations of dishonesty might be the starting point for any consideration of those circumstances, but that did not reverse the burden of proof or put the burden on the paying party to explain why indemnity costs were not appropriate.

The growing trend to make solicitors pay the costs in proceedings in which they act for litigants, took a further, albeit unusual twist, in **Tonstate Group Ltd (In Liquidation) v Wojakovski** [2024] EWHC 1196 (Ch). Adam Johnson J held that there had been no proper justification for adding a firm of solicitors as a third party to an application and ordered the applicant to pay the firm’s costs. In the proceedings, the firm had been dis-instructed during the course of a hearing. Later, the successful claimant had served the firm with the order subsequently made by the court at that hearing. However, the claimant’s further

application seeking a declaration that by sending the sealed order to the dis-instructed solicitors, the defendant had been validly served, came at a heavy price. The firm was entitled to recover their costs which Adam Johnson J summarily assessed at £45,000!

Finally, a short summary cannot do justice to Joanna Smith J’s judgment in **Leonard v Leonard** [2024] EWHC 979 (Ch) which encompasses costs in contested probate proceedings, Part 36 and issue-based costs orders! Her decision will repay a full reading. In short, the testator had made two wills (in 2005 and 2015 respectively) with there being a dispute as to his capacity to make the second will, and about two lifetime gifts he had made. The court found in favour of the 2005 will and upheld the lifetime gifts, meaning that the parties had both won and lost, so the costs orders went both ways. Just to muddy the waters there were Part 36 offers, and an issue about whether the additional benefits payable under CPR 36.17(4) were payable. In the end, the judge found that there was no reason to disapply the rule. She also held that this was one of those cases where an issue-based costs order would have to be made under CPR 44.2(6)(f) as it was not safe to make a percentage-based order under CPR 44.2(6)(a) or (c) given the disparity of dispute between the wills issue and the gifts dispute.

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

Revamped range of support for solicitors through The Solicitors' Charity



The range of support available for solicitors in England and Wales through The Solicitors' Charity has shifted. With a renewed focus on holistic wellbeing, the charity has refreshed its approach to support, and offers more types of help than ever for solicitors. It's time to take a fresh look at The Solicitors' Charity and its comprehensive support for emotional, financial, professional, and physical wellbeing.

Nick Gallagher, CEO of The Solicitors' Charity shared: "You may not have thought of "wellbeing support" and "The Solicitors' Charity" in the same breath. However, things have changed, and it may be that we can help (if not now, but at some time in the future) with some of the wellbeing challenges that you or colleagues may be experiencing".

"People's situations are all different and we have a wide range of clients approaching us for help because of a huge variety of challenges that they face. This could include struggling with the cost of living and money management, debt, ill health, disability, distress through domestic violence, and

“

You may not have thought of "wellbeing support" and "The Solicitors' Charity" in the same breath

anxiety, which may be caused by work-related stress or life-related trauma".

The Solicitors' Charity offers assistance with various aspects of wellbeing, using its wellbeing pillars (as shown below).

Emotional

Through established partnerships with providers in the field of psychotherapy, the charity can offer an initial assessment followed by sessions with a qualified therapist, where these are indicated. The Solicitors' Charity also part-funds the mental health and wellbeing charity, [LawCare](#), which is staffed with fully trained volunteers including many lawyers, providing a phone and email peer support helpline.



Financial

If individuals are struggling with finances and money management, The Solicitors' Charity has services in place which can help with budgeting and drawing up a practical money management plan. If the situation is more serious, Breathing Spaces and Debt Relief Orders can be negotiated.

However, we know how threatening dealing with debt can be, as a solicitor, and the charity can sometimes help to clear these. The Solicitors' Charity can also make direct financial awards for day-to-day support to individuals experiencing challenging times for solicitors who qualify for its [financial eligibility](#) criteria.

Professional

Some solicitors may be returning to work after a break or may need to change the sector of law that they practice in, or even to move on from the law. Perhaps they have been made redundant and need support with securing their next career opportunity. Once again, The Solicitors' Charity funds sessions offering vital career transition counselling support. The charity has also helped with the cost of Practising Certificates for those with the chance of a job but no current income, and even with awards for work and interview clothes.

Physical

Solicitors of any age can experience physical illness or disabilities which affect their ability to work or manage at home. The Solicitors' Charity can provide [occupational health assessments](#) designed to identify adaptations that may help. The charity has also funded specialist equipment, where this is not available through the NHS.

“

Solicitors of any age can experience physical illness or disabilities which affect their ability to work or manage at home

The Solicitors' Charity offers a wide range of support services to solicitors, former solicitors, and their dependants in England and Wales. The majority of the wellbeing support offered does not require any financial eligibility checks, just proof of current or previous registration with the SRA.

All dealings with The Solicitors' Charity are strictly confidential; the charity is independent, and support is provided discretely, non-judgementally and in confidence.

Unclaimed client balances can help to fund services

If you are (or your firm is) looking for a meaningful way of giving back and making an impact on the profession, consider donating [unclaimed client balances \(RCBs\)](#) to The Solicitors' Charity. It's a simple action, but it goes a long way. Not only does it assist law firms in meeting their regulatory obligations, but it also provides a crucial stream of funding for the continued provision of wellbeing packages for solicitors and their families. The Solicitors' Charity indemnifies all donations of this kind, so should you ever need any unclaimed balances back, you can claim the funds back at any time.

Any [voluntary donations](#) are also welcome from individuals, firms, and local Law Societies.



Pet of the month

Name: John Donigan

Firm: Shieldpay

Pet Name: Jameson James

Pet Nickname: JJ

What kind of pet do you have?

Black Maltipoo

Is your pet: Male

How old is your pet: 4 Years

Favourite Toy: His Red Bouncy Ball

Favourite Activity: Going for Walking and playing with other dogs and sleeping

Favourite Treat: A sauce of Tea or a piece of hot chicken

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

My perfect day would be: A day on the Beach in Abersoch ,a paddle in the sea finished off with the Chicken off the BBQ

Favourite thing my parents do: treat to let me sleep on their bed and take me for long walks and spoil 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

Messenger Deadlines

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

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