



August 2024

# the Messenger

Inside this issue...

10

Understanding vicarious trauma



40

Tournament football kicks off for MLS



60

History of Manchester Pride



## Applications open for the Future Stars Programme

After years of work from the MLS Future Stars Committee the applications are now open for the first cohort.



This initiative is designed to support people into a career in the law, especially those who might not have an existing network who can offer advice and support.

Each year we will be selecting up to 10 applicants to join our programme which will include mentoring, networking with local lawyers and legal professionals, and practical and financial support for things like travel costs, workwear etc.

In our view, it is a critical part of the profession's responsibility to ensure that it provides opportunities to people from all parts of society to enter the profession and to support the delivery of legal services to

Continued on page 24

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# From the President

David Anderson, President

**In last month's column I deliberately avoided any mention of the pending (as it was then) election. Manchester Law Society is apolitical.**

We lobby for what is best for our members and the people we all serve, and we do so as vigorously as possible, no matter the party in power or the body with whom we are engaging. That said, it was concerning that the main party manifestos were devoid of any substantive mentions of justice, albeit most included something about the court backlog and justice being "broken".

Looking specifically at Labour, as they now have the mandate to deliver their manifesto promises, the only obvious new expenditure on justice is a proposed £30m to provide "Legal aid for victims of disasters or state-related deaths." This is not enough, but there were few votes in funding justice properly when compared to the issues we face in the health sector, education, infrastructure, power and border control.

It is clear that more fundamental reform and significant funding is needed. We, and many others, are lobbying for those changes. In the meantime, lawyers and their firms and chambers are being pressed harder than ever to help those in need by providing their services pro:bono. And we have all stepped up. We now have a Greater Manchester Pro:bono Committee and it is a standing item on Council meetings, helping organise, encourage and direct pro:bono services in Greater Manchester to make sure they have maximum impact on those who need it most. But this cannot be an expected method of filling the gap

left by years of under-investment. We all need to keep the pressure on politicians and those in the civil service to fund legal aid, avoid legal aid deserts and ensure legal representation remains a right and not a privilege.

As much as the country needs a small reset, so do we all. Summer is coming and the opportunity for us all to draw breath is approaching. When I joined St John's Buildings some 16 years ago it was subconsciously frowned upon to take long holidays. Needing a day off was a sign of weakness at the bar. How times have changed. Now we actively pursue counsel who do not take a break, to ensure they are making a deliberate and conscious decision rather than just believing they can't and to encourage them to take time away to recharge. We make sure holidays are booked in the diary and it is a standing item on the agenda for any practice development review. I hope all firms and chambers are the same, recognising the importance of stepping away from the strain of everyday work. The work we do is important, stressful and emotionally draining. Only by taking a break from it will we be ready to continue to deliver to our very best.

I'm off to Turkey (if you have 3 children and like a relatively nice holiday abroad, it is rapidly becoming the only place that is affordable!). You never know, this time next month I might have the same hairline that I had when I was 21 and teeth that would make Shergar jealous. Although, it's more likely that I will gain additional weight rather than additional hair. Happy holidays everyone.





# the Messenger

## In this edition...

- 03 From the President
- 06 News from HQ
- 10 Mental Wellness
- 14 Potential Unearthed
- 16 Cyber Security
- 18 Digital Marketing
- 20 Regulation Update & News
- 24 Cover Story
- 26 Committee Updates
- 36 Member News



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40 'Not the Euros'

44 Movers & Shakers

58 Manchester Young Solicitors Group

60 ED&I Update

64 MLS Advantage

72 Management Matters

76 Legal Costs Update

78 The Solicitors' Charity

80 Pet of the month

## Communications Committee

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Manchester Law Society

**Carla Jones**  
Manchester Law Society

**Chandre May**  
Manchester Law Society

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# Upcoming events: Meetings

20 August 2024  
MLS Officers Meeting

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04 September 2024  
Communications Committee Meeting

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04 September 2024  
Family Law Committee Meeting

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05 September 2024  
Crown and Magistrates Court Committee Meeting

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10 September 2024  
MLS Council Meeting

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11 September 2024  
Employment Law Forum Meeting

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11 September 2024  
Civil Litigation Committee Meeting

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12 September 2024  
Property Law Committee Meeting

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17 September 2024  
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting

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18 September 2024  
Private Client Committee Meeting

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24 September 2024  
MLS Officers Meeting

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26 September 2024  
Future Stars Committee Meeting

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1 October 2024  
MLS Council Meeting

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2 October 2024  
Communications Committee Meeting

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15 October 2024  
MLS Officers Meeting

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5 November 2024  
MLS Council Meeting

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6 November 2024  
Communications Committee Meeting

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7 November 2024  
Property Law Committee Meeting

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7 November 2024  
Employment Law Forum Meeting

---

12 November 2024  
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting

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19 November 2024  
MLS Officers Meeting

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20 November 2024  
Private Client Committee Meeting

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28 November 2024  
Crown and Magistrates Court Committee Meeting

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3 December 2024  
MLS Council Meeting & AGM

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4 December 2024  
Communications Committee Meeting

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11 December 2024  
Civil Litigation Committee Meeting

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17 December 2024  
MLS Officers Meeting

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# Actionstep announced as the MLS Legal Education Programme sponsor

We are delighted to announce that legal business management platform [Actionstep](#) will be partnering with us to be our Legal Education Programme Sponsor for 2024/5.

## Actionstep

Their support helps us to provide more training and events for the legal community in Manchester and keep the costs low for you to attend.

We very much look forward to developing this partnership and working with the team at Actionstep.

### About Actionstep

With Actionstep, you can customise your law firm management platform, giving your law firm the tools to confidently move into the future, create sustained growth, and drive profitability. Experience a comprehensive platform designed to connect, organise, and automate your practice's unique processes. One that empowers more than 38,000 users globally to better serve clients, keep teams in sync, and operate from one source of truth—saving you time (and headaches). When the platform's built around you, your firm gains a firm advantage.

Build your firm advantage with [Actionstep](#).

## Upcoming events: Social Events

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](#)

09 October 2024 – [Family Law Conference](#)

12 November 2024 – [Local Authority Conference](#)



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# Family Law Conference

**9 October 2024**  
**09:00 to 16:20**

**Manchester Hall, 36 Bridge St, Manchester M3 3BT**

**Full Day MLS Members £120.00 + VAT (£144.00)**

**Full Day Non-Members £160.00 + VAT (£192.00)**

**Half Day MLS Members £75.00 + VAT (£90.00)**

**Half Day Non-Members £100.00 + VAT (£120.00)**

**The MLS Family Law Conference returns on 9th October for a jam-packed day of updates and explorations.**

**The morning will focus on the Children side of Family Law with the afternoon focusing on finance and divorce. Delegates can attend the full day or opt to attend either the morning or afternoon, both including a networking lunch where you can catch up with your colleagues in the sector.**

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**09:00 Registration**

**09:30 Welcome and introduction**

Fiona Wood, McAlister Family Law

**09:35 Dos and Don'ts for children practitioners in the family court**

HHJ Sarah Singleton KC

**09:55 Intersection of Technology in Family Cases**

Katie Deans, Our Family Wizard

**10:40 Refreshments and networking**

**11:10 How to get the best from your expert**

Vicki Hamilton, Child and Family Psychologist

**11:55 Independent Social Work in private children proceedings - benefits and timely solutions to you and your clients**

Elaine Stokes and Howard Bramwell

**12:40 Networking lunch**

**13:40 Schedule 1 claims: are they just for the ultra-rich?**

Sally Harrison KC, St John's Buildings Chambers

**14:25 Tax and divorce - what family lawyers need to look out for**

John McCaffrey, Accountant, Alexander and Co

**15:10 Refreshments**

**15:30 10 Ways to Annoy the Judge in Financial Remedy Proceedings**

His Honour Judge Alex Kloss

**16:15 Closing remarks**

Fiona Wood, McAlister Family Law

**16:20 Conference closes**

**Book your place now**

# Understanding vicarious trauma in the legal workplace

Vicarious trauma occurs when people are indirectly exposed to trauma through their work with those who have experienced traumatic events.

In the legal sector this can happen to anyone who works with clients who have experienced trauma such as domestic or other violence, child abuse, sexual assault, torture, fleeing their homeland as a refugee, personal injury, clinical negligence or a family break up.

LawCare hears from people across the legal sector who are experiencing vicarious trauma, some without realising it. They share stories like these:

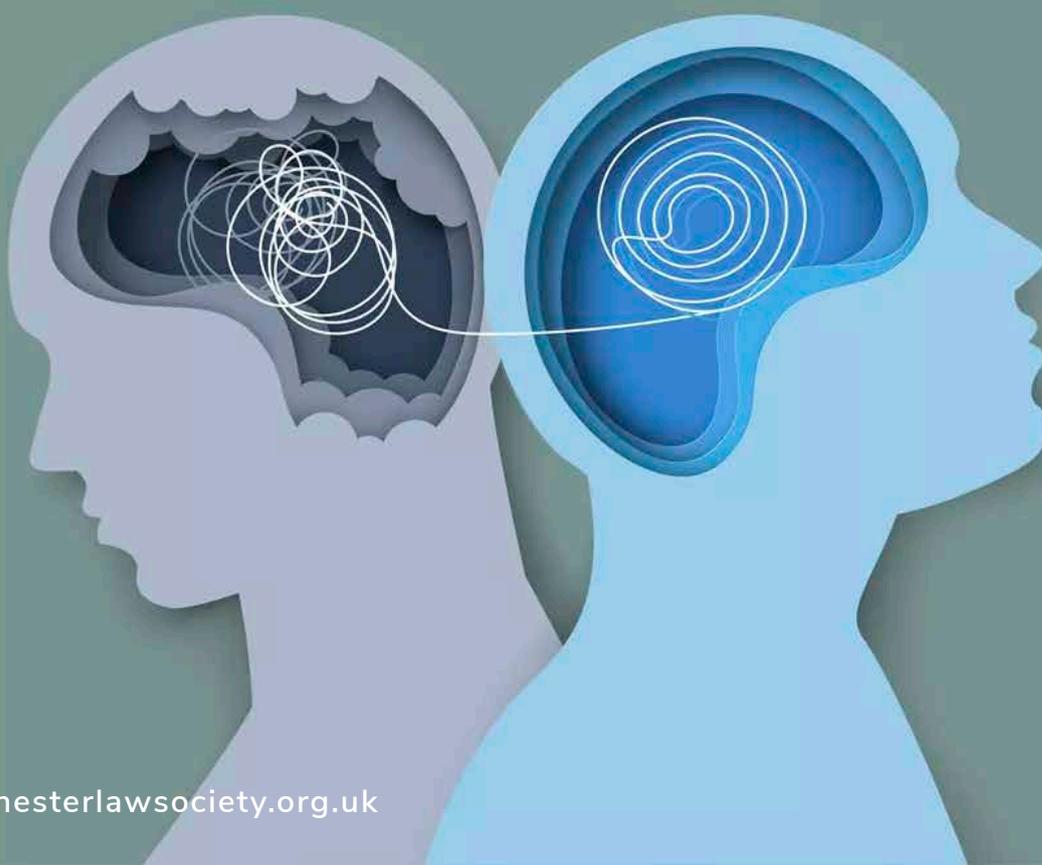
- Struggling to switch off after viewing disturbing material.
- Encounters with suicide in their work.

- Seeking counselling after distressing news about a client.
- Work triggering past personal trauma.
- Feeling suicidal due to work-related trauma.

This article will help you understand and recognise vicarious trauma in yourself, your colleagues, and the people you manage. It also explores the crucial role legal workplaces play in reducing this risk.

## Recognising the signs

Continuous exposure to other peoples' trauma can cause emotional exhaustion and decreased empathy in legal professionals. They might start to feel numb or disconnected from their work and clients, much like the trauma survivors





themselves. Additional psychological symptoms may include anxiety, depression, and intrusive thoughts about clients' cases, impacting both personal and professional life. Vicarious trauma can also strain relationships and contribute to feelings of isolation outside work as well.

Spotting the signs of vicarious trauma is crucial, common symptoms include:

- Feelings of sadness, anxiety, or hopelessness, along with increased irritability or anger.
- Difficulty concentrating, memory problems, and pervasive thoughts about clients' trauma.
- Physical symptoms, such as fatigue and headaches.
- Behavioural symptoms: withdrawing from social interactions, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, and increased use of alcohol or drugs.

Vicarious trauma can also cause burnout, reduce job performance, and force people to pass cases to colleagues or leave their role entirely.

### Reducing the risk of vicarious trauma

If you're in a role that involves helping others through trauma, taking care of yourself is essential to provide the best support. There are ways to minimise the risk of vicarious trauma, even when working closely with clients facing challenging situations.

Discover what works best for you. Everyone is different and has varying levels of resilience and coping strategies that may change over time. Here are a few suggestions.

1. Set boundaries: Don't bring traumatic work home. If you must, set limits. Don't review upsetting material in the

“

Continuous exposure to other peoples' trauma can cause emotional exhaustion and decreased empathy in legal professionals

evenings; store it away and unwind with activities like going for a walk.

2. Be realistic about your role with clients. Don't take responsibility for their whole life; guide them to the right resources and support.
3. Make sure you know how to recognise the signs of vicarious trauma and reach out for support when necessary. This can range from talking to a colleague to seeking support from a mental health professional.

### Supporting your colleagues

If you're concerned that a colleague may be struggling with vicarious trauma don't be afraid to talk to them. They might not recognise what is happening or may feel they should handle their work and emotions alone. Let them know you've noticed changes in their behaviour and that you're there to support them. Then listen and give them space to talk about what they're experiencing. Consider directing them to additional support, such as LawCare, their GP, or counselling services provided your employer.

### The role of legal workplaces

Legal workplaces are crucial in reducing the risk of vicarious trauma for employees. Robust strategies are needed to create a

Continued on page 12



supportive and resilient work environment. Here are some suggested steps to achieve this:

1. Provide training to help employees recognise signs of vicarious trauma and understand its impact.
2. Train managers to recognise the signs of vicarious trauma in their teams and how to provide and signpost to appropriate support.
3. Provide confidential counselling services when necessary.
4. Encourage a healthy work-life balance that ensure reasonable work hours, breaks, and opportunities for employees to take a break from work.
5. Foster open communication, where employees feel safe sharing their experiences and emotions without stigma. Team meetings and peer support

groups provide platforms for processing difficult cases, helping to reduce feelings of isolation and stress.

### Seeking support from LawCare

LawCare offers free and confidential emotional support for people in the legal sector. You can contact LawCare if you're experiencing vicarious trauma or if you just need someone to talk to about personal or work-related matters. You can also get in touch with LawCare if you are worried about someone you work with.

Call LawCare on **0800 279 6888**, email [support@lawcare.org.uk](mailto:support@lawcare.org.uk) or visit [www.lawcare.org.uk](http://www.lawcare.org.uk) to get in touch using the live online chat. There are also resources about vicarious trauma on the [LawCare website](#).

### Let's talk about vicarious trauma webinar

On Thursday 5 September, from 12.30 to 1.30pm, join LawCare for a webinar about the impact of vicarious trauma on people working in the legal sector. The webinar offers an opportunity for you to enhance your understanding of vicarious trauma and its impact on mental health.

[Sign up for the webinar here](#).

### Vicarious trauma online training

LawCare also offers a one-hour online training session on vicarious trauma and the next session is on Wednesday 2 October, 12 to 1pm.

This specialist training is delivered by counsellor and former solicitor Mary Jackson, who has extensive experience in facilitating vicarious trauma training. It is aimed at people in the legal sector who work with vulnerable clients or are exposed to traumatic images or experiences, such as in immigration, criminal, personal injury/clinical negligence, or family work. This training aims to introduce and develop an understanding of the concept of vicarious trauma and its potential emotional impact. Suggestions for recognising and managing vicarious trauma will also be provided.

[Book your place on the training here](#).

[CLICK FOR MORE INFO](#)

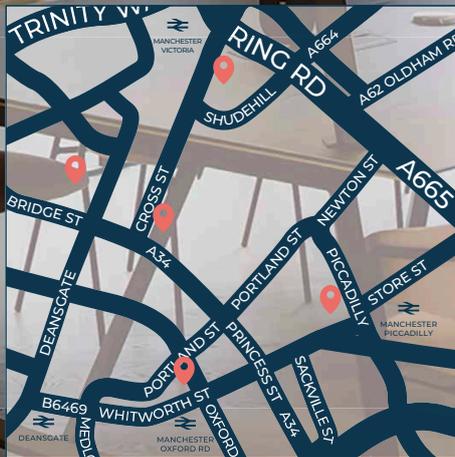
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## Managing a team who are older than you!

Emma was off the scale excited. She had managed to get Partner after a few years of trying. It would mean leaving her current Firm where she'd worked for 7 years but was excited about joining her new team and her new Firm.

Finally, the day had arrived. Emma met all the big wigs first before heading over to meet her new team. Her brain was in overdrive as she scanned the room and one thing stood out, she was by far the youngest person in the team apart for Jodie the admin assistant who was about 19 but looked 12. Everyone in the team looked about 10-15 years older than her. She knew it and they knew it. This wasn't what she was expecting, and Emma immediately started to feel intimidated and a little threatened.

She knew they would all be saying "She's young enough to be my daughter" "A Partner? They are getting younger every year."

Over the coming weeks and months Emma settled in, got her feet under the table and started to manage the team. The team were very nice, and the age difference didn't seem to cause any problems. However, Emma still had a serious bout of imposter syndrome and couldn't seem to shake of the internal self-doubt about her ability.

If I were to bump into her in a corridor, I would take her for a brew and give her some of my top tips.

1. You might be imagining what you think they are thinking. They might be thinking "brilliant, someone younger with new, fresh ideas". Then again, their perception of their new boss might have nothing at all to do with age at all.



Mike Ode

2. Don't see anyone in the team as a threat. The fact that some people are older, or more experienced is a real bonus. Instead of pushing them away, grab hold of them (not literally) and tap into their skills, knowledge and experience. In team meetings and 1:1s ask for their thoughts and opinions. Tell them that you value their opinion.
3. The ages of your direct reports have no bearing on whether they are any good at their job! Have 1:1 conversations with them and tackle any performance issues head on. Overtime, you'll earn everyone's trust and respect and will quickly realise that age isn't that important at all.

**Do you need a hand improving your management skills? If that's a yes, why not join us on the 13th September webinar; 'Managing Relationships Upwards'. [Click here](#) to book your place**

If you want a chat about how we can help you to become a better Manager, contact Mike: [mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk](mailto:mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk) or 07825301660



# 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



# A Deep Dive into Deepfakes

Deepfake technology, which uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create highly realistic but fake images, audio, and videos, is rapidly emerging as a significant threat in the cyber security landscape. As cyber criminals adopt this technology to exploit vulnerabilities, businesses must understand its implications and strengthen their defences.

## What are Deepfakes?

Deepfakes involve the use of AI algorithms to create convincing forgeries of individuals' likenesses. This technology can fabricate realistic images, videos, and audio recordings, making it increasingly difficult to distinguish between authentic and fake content. Initially developed for entertainment and artistic purposes, deepfakes have quickly been acquired by cyber criminals for malicious activities.

## Cyber security implications for deepfakes

The adoption of deepfake technology by cyber criminals presents several alarming implications:

- 1. Sophistication of Attacks:** AI enables a higher level of sophistication in cyber attacks. Deepfakes can be used to create realistic phishing emails, voice messages, or video calls, making it harder for individuals to identify scams.
- 2. Enhanced Social Engineering:** Deepfakes take social engineering to a new level. Cyber criminals can impersonate senior executives or trusted colleagues to deceive employees into divulging sensitive information or authorising large financial transactions.

For instance, an employee at a multinational firm was tricked into transferring \$25 million to fraudsters who used deepfake technology to impersonate the company's CFO in a video call.

- 3. Bypassing Security Measures:** Deepfakes can bypass traditional security controls. For example, AI-generated voice deepfakes can fool voice recognition systems, and AI-manipulated images can deceive facial recognition software.
- 4. Rapid Development:** The speed at which AI technology evolves means that deepfakes will become even more convincing and harder to detect. Cyber criminals can continually improve their methods, making it essential for businesses to stay ahead of these developments.

## Deepfakes in the real world

- Several high-profile cases highlight the real-world impact of deepfake technology:
- In the financial sector, deepfake incidents surged by 700% in 2023. Criminals are using AI to imitate vocal patterns, successfully issuing fraudulent instructions over the phone.
- The legal sector has also been targeted, with the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) warning lawyers about the risks of using video calls for client identification due to the threat of deepfakes.
- The CEO of a leading advertising firm narrowly avoided falling victim to a

deepfake scam. Cybercriminals used a fake WhatsApp account, voice cloning, and doctored YouTube footage to create a convincing virtual meeting. Thanks to the vigilance of the firm's staff, the attack was unsuccessful.

- Popular culture has not been spared either, with manipulated videos of celebrities like Taylor Swift being used to spread misinformation. These videos are widely shared on social media, illustrating the challenges in moderating such content.
- A deepfake video of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was circulated, showing him supposedly telling Ukrainian troops to surrender. Zelenskyy quickly debunked the video, but the incident highlighted the potential use of deepfakes in war propaganda.

### Strengthening Defences Against Deepfakes

To combat the threat of deepfakes, businesses must adopt a multi-faceted approach:

1. **Staff training:** Train your staff to stay vigilant to enable them to recognise and react appropriately to suspected attacks.
2. **Frequent Simulated Attacks:** Test your training by conducting regular simulated attacks that mimic techniques used by cyber criminals. This helps in identifying vulnerabilities and improving response strategies.
3. **Enhanced Authentication:** Implement stronger authentication measures, such as multi-factor authentication and conditional access, to reduce the risk of unauthorised access using stolen credentials.



4. **Layered Defence Strategy:** Establish multiple layers of protection. If one control is breached, ensure that there are additional safeguarding measures and alerting mechanisms to prevent further progression of an attack.
5. **Assessment and Assurance:** Regularly assess and audit security measures to ensure their effectiveness. Engage independent experts to provide an unbiased evaluation of your security posture.

### Conclusion

Deepfake technology represents a considerable challenge in the realm of cyber security. However, by understanding the implications and adopting proactive measures, businesses can better protect themselves against the sophisticated threats posed by deepfakes. Staying informed and vigilant, coupled with robust security practices, will be crucial in safeguarding against the evolving landscape.

Find out more about [Mitigo's Cybersecurity Services](#). Mitigo offer MLS members a free no-obligation consultation. Speak to one of our cyber security experts by emailing [mls@mitigogroup.com](mailto:mls@mitigogroup.com), calling 0161 883 3083, or filling in our [contact form](#).



# Making more money from your website

It was great to see so many law firms attend our first webinar with Manchester Law Society on making more money from your website.

We had lots of interesting follow up questions offline including:

1. How do we check our website speed?
2. How can we benchmark against competitor websites?
3. If the website is slow, do we need to build a new one?
4. How much should we be spending on SEO?

In brief, the answers are:

1. Here: <https://pagespeed.web.dev> or here: [reports.legmark.com](https://reports.legmark.com)
2. Here: [reports.legmark.com](https://reports.legmark.com)
3. Not necessarily, if it's Wordpress use our no-win no-fee speed service
4. Depends on the size of the site and number of services/keywords you want to rank in Google for.

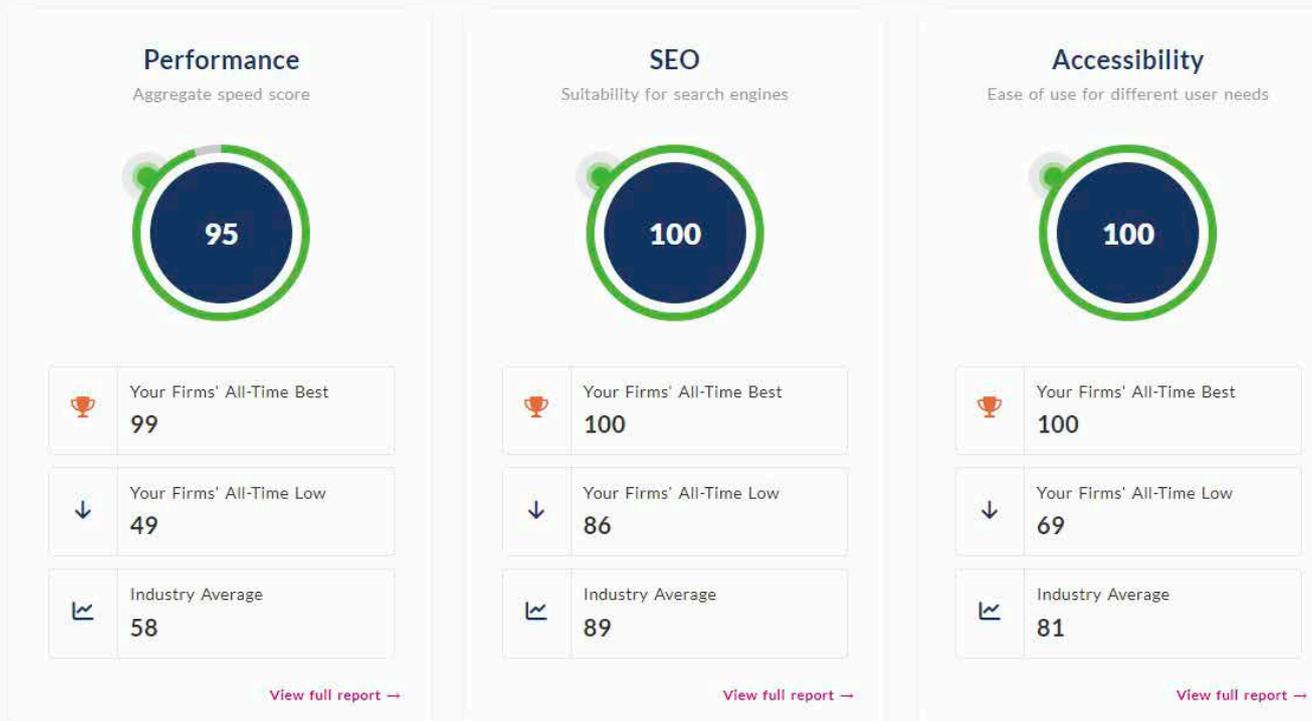
## I'll expand in reverse order:

The last one's an interesting one. I see firms happy to spend tens of thousands of pounds on building a new website or undergoing a 'rebrand', but then become very reluctant to invest in actually getting people to visit their site. We know SEO has a much higher ROI than other forms of marketing. If you're able to get over a 10:1 ROI on your SEO spend, then why wouldn't you tip all you had into it? My advice is: pick someone or some agency with a strong track record of SEO for all sizes of sites in the legal sector and invest as much as you are comfortable with on the basis it's a marathon, not a sprint.

For the third question, a new website is not a panacea for an under-performing site. It might be possible to change other aspects of the site, such as the structure, content, page speed etc, without having to start from scratch. I always say that a 'good' website is one that ranks well and converts well. The rest is largely irrelevant (if your aim is to make money on the site). We've established a 'no-win no-fee' page speed service where if you're not satisfied with the speed increases, you don't have to pay. Best result so far was taking a site from 15/100 to over 80/100 in just 24 hours.

Forgive the truism, but law firms love benchmarking against competitors. In terms of outperforming competitors in Google, you don't need to be the best website in the world, just better than your competition on the specific subject matter on your site. This is why we built [reports.legmark.com](https://reports.legmark.com) – performance data on over 5,700 law firm websites accessible for all firms to monitor and benchmark. There are also multitudes of specialist SEO software available such as SEMrush, Ahrefs, and Moz that will set you back typically several hundred pounds per month but won't have the specific sector-based data we have.

Which leads on to the final answer for the first question. The page speed scores on all firms in the [reports.legmark.com](https://reports.legmark.com) database are updated weekly so you can keep a track on the competition, as well as access tips and guidance on what specific issues are holding back your page speed performance. This data is pulled from Google's own page speed results, which you can see at [pagespeed.web.dev](https://pagespeed.web.dev). When we launched our reports software, average page speed across the sector was just 54/100 – it's slowly creeping up and now stands at



58/100, so firms appear to be taking notice of the importance of page speed. We're hoping to help enough law firms that the average hits 70 by the end of 2025.

**Key takeaways from the webinar:**

First and foremost, website speed is critical. Faster websites not only offer better user experiences but also have higher conversion rates. They are more likely to rank higher on Google, making them more visible to potential clients.

Effective website structure is another essential component. Organising content into topical silos based on keyword research, along with a strong internal linking strategy, is best practice.

Clear calls to action (CTAs) should be prominently positioned and include trust and authority signals to encourage engagement. Using compelling language and contrasting colours can significantly boost conversion rates.

The webinar also covered the dos and don'ts of law firm websites. Do include trust and authority signals, accessible language, comprehensive profile pages for key staff, and testimonials or case studies to showcase expertise. Don't churn out content for the sake of it, create profile pages for all staff members, or neglect offline conversion tracking.

Focusing on phone calls as a primary call to action is effective since phone calls convert better than forms. Promptly responding to email inquiries and training phone operators in sales techniques and overcoming objections are also important.

For contact forms, simplicity is key. Forms should only ask for essential information to reduce barriers to conversion. Including trust and authority signals near forms and using compelling CTAs for form submission buttons can further improve effectiveness.

**If you're an MLS member and would like a review of your website and advice on how to improve performance, call me on 0161 818 8448 or email [sam@legmark.com](mailto:sam@legmark.com)**

# 20 Regulation Update & News

By **Andrea Cohen**, Compli, Weightmans



Unfortunately, at the time of writing, we are still waiting for summer to properly arrive (hopefully the sunshine for a couple of days mid-July will not have been all we are getting this year!) , but we continue to provide our regular overview of what has been happening recently in the world of risk and compliance, regulatory and disciplinary decisions, and look ahead to what's on the horizon.

## **Increase in compensation fund levies confirmed**

Following a consultation on how to ensure the compensation fund survives following recent interventions, the SRA has confirmed that the contributions paid by individual solicitors and firms to the compensation fund for 2024/25 will increase from £30 to £90 and from £660 to £2220 respectively, which will come into force from November if approved by the Legal Services Board ("LSB"). The increases are required to rebuild the fund reserves which have been depleted due to the number of recent interventions and claims, including anticipated claims of £35m arising from the Axiom Ince closure, which is the subject of a long-awaited report into the response of the SRA, which was delayed due to the General Election, but which has not yet, at the date of writing, been published.

Responses to the consultation raised concerns about the amount of the proposed increase, how the figures were calculated and the fact that all firms, whatever their size, pay the same amount. The SRA said more detail would be included in the representation to the LSB and the issue regarding the same level of contribution by all firms will be the subject of further consultation later in the year. Practising certificate fees will remain the same as this year. The SRA also said: "Due to the

low level of responses received to the consultation and the fact that we are considering contributions as part of the consumer protection work leads us to conclude that it remains appropriate to approve the contributions as proposed."

## **SRA consultation on updates to the financial penalty regime**

The SRA recently launched a consultation relating to its proposals for further increases to SRA fining powers, in addition to its unlimited fining powers in cases of economic crime under ECCTA 2023.

The SRA want to introduce minimum fines for each penalty band, believing that some fines imposed now are not high enough. The new proposals include minimum fines across all fine bandings, ranging from £5,000 for firms and £2,500 for individuals whom the SRA determines have committed the least serious misconduct, to £500,000 for firms and £100,000 for individuals for the most serious misconduct. New bands are also proposed, with Band F penalties starting at 11% of a firm's annual domestic turnover and 146% of an individual's annual gross income.

Another proposed change is to the published fining guidance to make clear that once the fine levels have been determined, they can be further increased by the



amount of any financial gain that resulted from the misconduct.

Further changes outlined in the consultation include greater clarity on how the SRA will judge and take into account the impact and harm caused by the misconduct when deciding on the level of the fine and an apparent change to the SRA recent approach in relation to convictions for drink driving, where, unless there are aggravating factors or repeated incidences, a warning or rebuke will be the most likely disciplinary outcome.

The consultation closes on 20 September 2024 and we would encourage solicitors and firms to review and respond to the consultation. As noted above, in relation to compensation fund levies, a low level of responses will result in the SRA introducing the changes it is proposing.

Read more on the [financial penalties consultation](#) [↗](#).

### AML and sanctions data requirements

The SRA has written to all COLPs telling them to get ready for the AML Data Collection exercise 2024. The questionnaire regarding AML and financial sanctions activity will be sent out at the beginning of August and failure to return it by mid-September may lead to enforcement action. The SRA have advised that all regulated firms will need to provide information on:

- work they carry out within scope of the Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations 2017;

- any contact or involvement with the sanctions regime and any persons who are designated under it;
- submission of suspicious activity reports to the National Crime Agency; and
- any trust or company services

For those firms not within scope of MLR 2017, a nil return can be submitted in relation to that section, but the questionnaire should not be ignored. All submissions must be made via the online portal and the specimen questionnaire can be accessed here. The window for responses opens at the start of August.

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

### New rules on fees in financial mis-selling work

As we have previously reported, from 26 July 2024 there are new rules in place, the SRA Claims Management Fees Rules, and supporting guidance, for firms who represent clients in relation to financial services claims, under which fees are now capped at a maximum charge, in line with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) fee cap.

### SRA reports firms to Treasury for breaching sanctions

The SRA has reported two firms to the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (“OFSI”) for breaching sanctions on Russia. The law firms were allegedly facilitating

Continued on page 22



transactions worth more than £300,000. In the annual report to the board, the SRA's MLRO also reported that conveyancing remained the highest risk area, and 23 suspicious activity reports ("SARs") were made to the National Crime Agency from April 2023 to April 2024. The majority of those reports related to conveyancing work, involving more than £75 million in suspect transactions or arrangements involving the legal profession. The first SAR linked to proliferation financing was made, involving the trading of large quantities of high-value dual-use goods. Firms not conducting any or sufficient due diligence and source of funds checks on their clients, or third parties, was a key theme, as well as firms not properly scrutinising the information provided which should have triggered concerns.

### **SRA Board agrees to regulate CILEX members**

The SRA Board and Chartered Institute of Legal Executives ("CILEX") Board are working together to finalise the details to make an application to the Legal Services Board for CILEX members to be regulated by the SRA. CILEX expects its board to make a final decision whether to proceed with an application at its meeting in October. The Law Society, which opposes the proposals, would also need to approve the rule changes required for the SRA to regulate CILEX members.

### **New practice notes and guidance**

Rather unusually, other than the guidance referred to above, there have been no new practice notes published by the SRA since our update last month. However, the Law Society has published the following practice note within the last month:

- [Trust corporations](#)

### **Disciplinary and regulatory decisions**

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

#### **Notable decisions include:**

#### **Solicitor who practiced before end of suspension avoids permanent strike off**

A solicitor, suspended for a year from April 2015 for breaching accounts rules and acting without integrity, practiced on and off as a solicitor from February to April 2016 and continued to work with the firm until January 2017. The SRA initially proposed an agreed outcome that he should be suspended for three years, but the tribunal disagreed, considering this not to be sufficient in view of the seriousness of the misconduct and accepted, with some reservations, a revised agreement of 5 years. He was also ordered to pay £4,000 costs.

#### **Solicitor involved in fraudulent applications to Home Office struck off**

A solicitor providing immigration advice and services despite not being qualified to do so, who made fraudulent applications to the Home Office with the intention of assisting unlawful immigration, and who sought to obtain leave to remain in the UK by telling the Home office he was married to an EEA national has been struck off, having been convicted and sentenced to eight years imprisonment.

#### **Solicitor who admitted to being a risk to the profession struck off**

A law firm director who improperly authorised transfers worth more than

£16,000 from client to office account to deal with financial difficulties has been struck off. He was found to have tried to mislead the SRA investigators. He claimed to have no judgment debts against him when there were, to have a bookkeeper, but that person had resigned, and said client accounts were reconciled monthly, when the books had not been done for over 12 months.

### **Firm fined for allowing client account to be used as a banking facility**

A firm has been fined over £36,000 and its COFA rebuked for allowing its client account to be used as a banking facility, having self-reported that \$4.1 million was paid into and out of its client account in July 2021 on behalf of a corporate client. The SRA found that the work carried out for the client on the sale of the minority shareholding in another company did not justify the money that passed through the client account, and some of the money had been received for and paid out to a third party who was not its client.

### **Partner struck off for bullying**

A solicitor was struck off for bullying and harassment and abusing his position of seniority and authority. The SDT found that his conduct caused colleagues harassment, alarm or distress, and he made inappropriate and unsubstantiated allegations about them. His actions included shouting aggressively, using unsuitable and homophobic language, demeaning junior colleagues and physically assaulting members of staff. The solicitor denied all the allegations. He did not appear at the SDT and was not represented. He was also ordered to pay costs of almost £42,000.

#### **How Compli can help...**

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





From p.1

## Applications open for the Future Stars Programme (contd.)

society as a whole. With this in mind, and true to Manchester Law Society's founding roots, the Future Stars Programme is designed to support either people from the Manchester and Salford region or people wanting to qualify into the profession in order to work in Manchester or Salford – whether that be as a solicitor or a barrister.

The Future Stars Programme will be a network of aspiring individuals working their way towards qualifying as a solicitor or barrister. We will invite up to 10 people to join each year and they will remain part of the scheme until qualification. The Future Stars Programme will enable participants to network with each other and with law firms/barrister chambers across the region; obtain mentoring and coaching; and receive additional practical support (eg job interview training).

Separately, utilising the funds in the Manchester Law Society Educational Foundation, those who are admitted to the Future Stars Programme will be entitled to apply for financial support which can be simply to help support an individual financially or to help directly with their education/qualification – for example, it could include money to purchase a suit for an interview, a contribution to a laptop or money for textbooks.

The Future Stars Programme is being led by Matt Taylor, who commented that: "In many ways, it is harder than ever before for people to gain access into the legal profession and there is a very real risk that, without proactive help and support, we will not attract a diverse talent base from all parts of society into the profession in order to be the lawyers of the future.

“  
 The Future Stars  
 Programme will be a  
 network of aspiring  
 individuals working their  
 way towards qualifying as  
 a solicitor or barrister



I'm therefore delighted that we will shortly be able to launch the Future Stars Programme which has been carefully designed to provide individuals with more opportunities and more access to the profession, together with financial support where appropriate.

Manchester Law Society has an unrivalled network within the region which it can rely upon in order to unlock opportunities and to help grow and develop the local profession. I urge everyone to get involved wherever they can to provide support as collectively we will make a huge difference."

The deadline for applications is 13th September 2024 at 17:00. Details on eligibility and links to the application can be found [here](#) .

### How can you help?

We have outlined a few ways you and your firm could get involved in the programme. There is no fixed way in which that support can be provided and we would welcome any suggestions or offers people have.

Get the word out! Please share the scheme with any young people who are keen to get in to a career in law, be that directly or via teachers, youth workers, social workers or community groups you have contact with. It's a great opportunity and we want to make sure people know about it!

Mentoring – we would expect mentors to commit to a minimum 12 period in which they would support one of our Future Stars for around 1 hour per month both virtually and in-person.

Work experience – hands-on experience for a period of 1 to 2 weeks in which a Future Star would work and learn within your firm.



Matt Taylor

Provide space – perhaps your office could provide a meeting room or event space for one of the programme events.

Networking and training – if you would like to support the programme but cannot commit to being a mentor or offer work experience, we would still like to hear from you if you would be open to offer networking or training opportunities to our Future Stars on an ad-hoc basis.

Donations – the Education Fund is a registered charity and as such you are welcome to make financial contributions

Share your journey – there is demonstrable value in being seen and sharing your route into your career may help someone else see that it is possible. If you would like to share your path, please let us know. It could be through an article, a short video or speaking at an event.

Please do get in touch about how you can support the Future Stars Programme. Together we can make a real difference.

**Any queries on the programme should be directed to [enquiries@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk)  or call 0161 667 8086.**



# Can Labour make a real change to the Criminal Justice System Crisis?

Any Court professional court user who has experience of Magistrates or Crown Court daily workings post COVID will have their views, (some very strong and some probably not suitable for publication) as to the Court's efficiency.

Unless Labour is willing to invest much needed time and money into much needed resources in the Criminal Justice System, for some time hereon in it will remain a

broken as described in Labours manifesto. The questions they should ask themselves are, how high up their list of priorities is the Criminal Justice System and those that work within it and is the broken system salvable?

It is evident from the increase in criminal charges and overnight remands of prisoners that Greater Manchester Police wish to remain out of special measures they found themselves in. The increase in charges and overnight remands are an added pressure to a broken system still trying the tidy up from the tsunami caused by COVID delays. Police charges increase but Court resources are being reduced at the same time. That equation doesn't result in efficiency within an already broken system.

Labour recognises that more prosecutors are needed. Labour also recognises they need to address an under resourced Probation system. I agree. However, I see no mention of an under resourced administrative sector within the Courts and a depleting, despondent defence fraternity and an increase in Legal Aid payments.

The defence fraternity is now more than ever predominantly based on the goodwill of those that still see it as a vocation rather than a profession. That goodwill is dwindling fast. You just need to look to the Courts corridors to see that the average age of Duty Solicitors is increasing, those already within criminal defence work are vacating the vocation to look to other sectors of the law to work in and as a result the criminal defence solicitor becoming a dying breed.



Daniel Weed

“

It is evident from the increase in criminal charges and overnight remands of prisoners that Greater Manchester Police wish to remain out of special measures they found themselves in”

Newly qualified solicitors seem attracted to the better paid legal sectors with wellbeing and work life balance a priority, without the out of office hours demands of early morning police station call outs, late night Court preparation and following morning Court lists including a Saturday Court list and demands of clients.

Any changes to the system decided by Labour will take time, but the broken criminal justice system is a ticking time bomb.

Will the new Government invest to reignite the Criminal Justice System efficiently, its current inefficiency being a major factor in the wellbeing of those that find themselves day in, day out, morning, noon and most nights engaged in the continued battle of working in the Criminal Justice System.

The Criminal Justice System may be better served if those still willing and trying to serve and assist the system in its day-to-day survival are remunerated fairly and given the necessary resources.

The Current Cabinet have a few members with a legal background, some have built their previous career on securing justice for those that need it, defending ordinary people against the powerful. Let's hope those in power that can make meaningful

changes to a system they know of old and don't forget their professional grass roots.

Labour promised they would win back our streets from anti-social behaviour. One of their 1st tasks in power - early release of prisoners back onto those streets due to overcrowding of prisoners. That will only add to the pressure for those working in the Probation Service, those responsible for managing offenders released back into the community. Further demands. Further pressures. Is that the answer for an already over worked, under resourced group of professional court users?

Labour will be busy trying to revive the system. Being busy doesn't always equate to efficiency and productivity, both of which are a much-needed boost for all practitioners in the Criminal Justice Service. The system needs to be injected with a cocktail of efficiency and proactivity and it needs to be done fast.

Let's hope they are in Government long enough, if only to revive the broken Criminal Justice System they describe.

**Daniel Weed**

**Chair, MLS Crown and Magistrate Court Committee**

**Director, Compliance Partner & Supervising Solicitor, Burton Copeland**



## Family Law Conference – 9 October 2024

I am delighted to be chairing the [MLS Family Law Conference](#) which takes place on the 9 October 2024.

The MLS Family Committee are really keen to have a Conference that is practical, helps family practitioners in their daily work, is really interesting and provides information that you cannot get elsewhere! Whilst this is a tall order, I think we have more than met our brief with the fantastic speakers and the topics they are covering.

Our speakers include leading counsel, eminent experts and senior local judges, which makes attendance at the Conference a must for all local family law practitioners.

The speakers and the topics they will cover are:

**HJ Sarah Singleton KC** – the Designated Family Judge for Greater Manchester – who will speak on the “Do’s and Don’ts for children practitioners in the family court”.

**Family Law Wizard** – who will speak on “Intersection of Technology in Family Cases”

**Vicki Hamilton** - child psychologist – who will speak on “How to get the best from your expert”.

**Elaine Stokes and Howard Bramwell** – independent social workers – who will speak on “Independent Social Work in private children proceedings – benefits and timely solutions to you and your clients”

**Sally Harrison KC** – who will speak on “Schedule 1 claims are they just for the ultra rich?”

**John McCaffrey** - accountant – who will speak on “ Tax and divorce – what family



Fiona Wood

lawyers need to look out for”

**HJ Alex Kloss** – who will speak on ‘10 Ways to Annoy the Judge in Financial Remedy Proceedings’

The mix of black letter law, experts and feedback from local senior judiciary makes this a really useful and interesting conference for those who practice in any area of family law.

Like last year, the conference will cover child law related topics in the morning and divorce law related topics in the afternoon. You can attend for half a day or the whole day and both include lunch! The feedback from many who attended last year was that you should attend for the full day, as not only does the variety of topics make it a really interesting day, but there is also great networking at the coffee breaks and lunch.

I hope to see you there.

**Fiona Wood**  
Chair, MLS Family Law Committee  
Partner, McAlister Family Law

You can book your place at the Family Law Conference by emailing [ChandreMay@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:ChandreMay@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk) with the name and email address of the delegate.

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# Local Authority Conference

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

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

## Topics will include:

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



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**For what comes next**



# What does a Labour win in the General Election mean for employers?

In the lead up to the General Election, we had a good idea of what Labour proposed to implement by way of employment law reform, as they had previously produced an Employment Rights Green Paper which was called “A New Deal for Working People” and then followed this up with “Labour’s Plan to Make Work Pay: Delivering a New Deal for Working People.” When Labour produced their manifesto, “Change”, this contained a clear commitment to implement these “New Deal” proposals, if they were elected.

In the recent briefing note to the King’s speech, it states that the Government will deliver it’s New Deal for Working People in full and the Employment Rights Bill (that is planned to be delivered within the first 100 days of office), will deliver on policies in the Plan to Make Work Pay that require primary legislation to implement.

The “New Deal” documents contain some quite significant changes to employment law and workers’ rights that employers do need to be aware of. Those that are of note are as follows:

## Day one rights for all workers

Labour have confirmed that they plan to give, “day one rights for all workers, ending the current arbitrary system that leaves workers waiting up to two years to access basic rights of protection against unfair dismissal, parental leave and sick pay.” The reference here to “worker” is confusing as it is not clear if Labour are planning on giving workers in their current form a whole suite of employment rights or if they are referencing the new status of worker

for all but the genuinely self-employed which they have committed to consult on implementing. We shall certainly need clarification on this point.

Whilst unfair dismissal will be a day one right, a “fair dismissal” would include dismissal in a probation period. This means that businesses would need to ensure that they have their policies and procedures in place to ensure that probation periods are contained in the relevant contractual documentation, and proper procedures are followed if an individual isn’t a right fit for the business and will not be passing their probation.

There is a proposal for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) to become a day one right and will be available to all workers and the self-employed, along with all of those who are currently not eligible for SSP due to them not meeting the Lower Earnings Limit. There is also a commitment to raise the amount of SSP payable.

Alongside this, there is a proposal that the time limit for bringing a claim at the employment tribunal would increase to 6 months for all claims.

## Zero hours contracts

“Exploitative zero hours contracts” will be banned, although there isn’t a definition of what would constitute “exploitative”. There is a proposal to give rights to employees to have a contract which reflects the hours they regularly work based on a twelve-week reference period. If any shifts are cancelled without appropriate notice, compensation

Continued on page 32



# It was great to join you at the Manchester Legal Awards 2024

Azets were proud to sponsor the Manchester Legal Awards 2024 on Thursday 6th June and we enjoyed meeting so many legal professionals.

Azets is a top 10 accountants and business advisor with experience of advising clients in the legal sector. Our services include:

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## We are here to help

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shall be available that is proportionate to the notice given. Employers will not be prevented from offering fixed-term contracts, including seasonal work.

### Single employment status of “worker”

There is a pledge to move towards a single status of worker and transition towards what Labour describe as a “simpler two-part framework for employment status”. There is a commitment to consult in detail on this simpler framework that differentiates between a worker and the genuinely self employed. The Make Work Pay document correctly references the confusion that exists around employment status, but this is something that has been in the pipeline since the Taylor Review in 2017, so it is unlikely this will be straightforward and there certainly won't be a quick fix.

### Fire and re-hire

A Statutory Code of Practice on dismissal and re-engagement came into force on the 18th July 2024. Within this Code it suggests what businesses “should” do if they are contemplating dismissing and re-engaging on new terms and conditions. In a statement made by Jonathan Reynolds (the new Secretary of State for Business and Trade) regarding the new Statutory Code, he says: “... we have decided not to prevent the previous government's Code of Practice from coming into force today. While the Code is an inadequate measure to deal with fire and rehire, it will at least provide a small additional level of protection for workers while we bring forward legislation to implement our commitments on fire and rehire in our Plan to Make Work Pay... We will replace the Code with a strengthened version as soon as we have brought forward legislation on fire and rehire.”

We therefore expect the protection against

“fire and rehire” and “fire and replace” to be strengthened going forward.

### Family friendly rights

There is a commitment by the Labour Government to review the parental leave system within Labour's first year of Government. We assume that Labour mean family friendly rights generally rather than statutory parental leave, but this is not clear. There is a proposal to introduce a right to “bereavement leave” for the loss of a loved one and the benefits of paid carer's leave would be “examined”.

There is also a commitment for the right to work flexibly to be the default for all workers “except where this not reasonably feasible”. It is not clear if this means the 8 statutory reasons for turning down a flexible working request will no longer be available, however, this may very well be the case. Of course, the right to request to work flexibly is already a day one right, which took effect from the 6th April this year.

### Right to switch off

There will also be a right to switch off brought in where workers will have the right to disconnect from work outside of working hours and not be contacted by their employer during these times. This reflects the concept which is already in place in countries such as France and Belgium, but again, we shall need to wait and see how this would work in practice.

### Changes to the National Minimum Wage

Labour plan to remove the current age bands in place which determines the level of National Minimum Wage (NMW) payable, so all adults receive the same rate, which will be significant for businesses that would

normally pay on or around the NMW. This could also result in younger, entry level workers competing with more experienced workers for the same roles which could make it difficult for the younger generation to enter the workplace.

There is a commitment to ensure that the NMW is a “real living wage” and unpaid internships will be banned except where they are part of an education or training course. Labour will also “work with the Single Enforcement Body and HMRC and ensure they have the powers necessary to make sure our genuine living wage is properly enforced, including penalties for non-compliance”.

### **Redundancy consultation and TUPE**

It appears that there will be a change to redundancy consultation provisions, meaning that the current case law will effectively be reversed and the duty to collectively consult will occur when looking at the number of redundancies over the whole business, rather than at each workplace, which is the law at present. In addition, “Labour will also strengthen the existing set of rights and protections for workers subject to TUPE processes.” It is not clear if the Labour Government mean workers as they are at present? Of course, the Conservative Government had consulted on if “worker” should be included in the wider definition of “employee” for the purposes of TUPE.

### **Strengthening of Trade Union and collective bargaining rights**

Unsurprisingly, there are plans to strengthen Trade Union powers and to make it easier for Trade Unions to enter workplaces to organise, meet and represent their members, along with simplifying the Union recognition process. It is worth

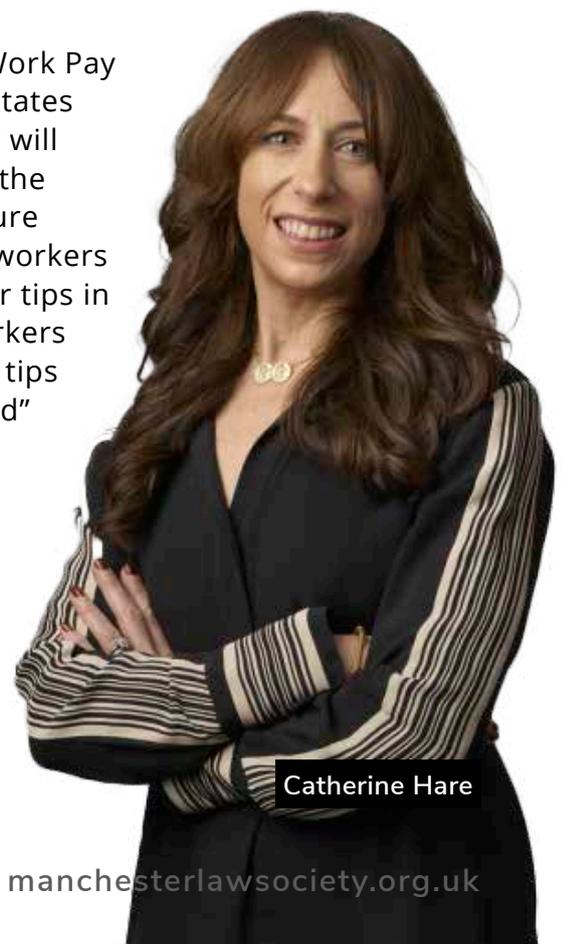
noting that there is a proposal to place a proactive duty on employers to inform all new employees of their right to join a Union and to inform staff of this on a regular basis and for this to be included in the section one statement issued to all staff. It would also be fair to say that the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023 probably won’t survive under a Labour Government. There will only be Fair Pay Agreement in adult social care, and not for the wider economy as was originally pledged and there is a proposal to make it easier for workers to raise collective grievances via ACAS.

### **Fair distribution of tips**

For many in the hospitality industry they will be aware that there is currently a draft statutory code of practice on the fair and transparent distribution of tips which was approved by the House of Lords in May of this year, but Regulations are awaited to bring this and the remaining provisions of the Employment (Allocation of Tips) Act 2023 into force.

The Make Work Pay document states that Labour will strengthen the law to “ensure hospitality workers receive their tips in full and workers decide how tips are allocated” which is slightly different wording to the current

**Continued  
on page 34**



**Catherine Hare**



legislation. We shall need to see what a Labour Government does about this going forward.

### Equality provisions

Large firms will be required to develop, publish and implement action plans to close the gender pay gap and pay ratio reporting. The publication of any ethnicity and disability pay gap will also be made mandatory for employers with over 250 staff. There will be a requirement for large employers with more than 250 staff to produce Menopause Action Plans, setting out how they will support employees through the menopause. There also will be guidance published for smaller employees on measures relating to uniform and temperatures, flexible working and recording menopause related absence.

Labour also propose to strengthen the legal duty on employers to take all reasonable steps to stop sexual harassment and strengthen protection for whistleblowers, including updating protection for women who report sexual harassment at work, including by third parties. It will be interesting to see how this fits in with the changes to the duties on employers to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, which are due to come into effect in October 2024.

Should businesses expect these proposed changes to employment law and workers rights to take place imminently?

In Labour's Plan to Make Work Pay document, it confirms that legislation will be put before Parliament within 100 days of the Labour Party entering Government, with an implementation period as is standard following Royal Assent.

It is noted that many of the proposed reforms have been debated for years, (as far back as the Taylor Review in 2017) so some of these proposals could be acted on quickly. One example of this would be creating the single enforcement body to ensure the National Minimum Wage is protected.

Where substantial secondary legislation is required, Labour say that they will engage with experts and stakeholders, including employers and trade unions.

It is worth noting, that there are some other proposals contained in the Plan to Make Work Pay that don't require legislation, for example Labour commit to writing to the Low Pay Commission to change it's remit requiring it to take account of the cost of living.

Would the change to the qualifying period to claim unfair dismissal to make this a day one right be something that could be changed quickly?

There have historically been many changes to the qualifying period needed to bring an unfair dismissal claim, changing from six months service to two years. The most recent change was in 2012 where the qualifying period of continuous employment for unfair dismissal rights was increased from one year to two years. Looking at the process that was followed in this instance, the change was made pretty quickly. However, it is worth remembering that there were transitional provisions which provided that the change in qualifying period did not have effect in any case where the period of continuous employment began before the 6th April 2012.

### Catherine Hare

Member, MLS Employment Law Forum  
Professional Support Lawyer, Forbes Solicitors

[CLICK FOR MORE INFO](#)

# FEMALE LAWYERS BREAKFAST NETWORKING

X ST JOHN'S  
BUILDINGS

FLBN returns on **Tuesday 10 September** for its first event in Chambers

The event will comprise a networking breakfast with guest speaker **Fran Eccles-Bech**, Chief Executive of Manchester Law Society



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8:30 am-10:30 am

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Please reach out to Georgie Clayton at  
[Georgie.clayton@jmw.co.uk](mailto:Georgie.clayton@jmw.co.uk) if you have any questions

## Another excellent financial year for JMW

**JMW** has announced another record financial year, achieving a 10.3% uplift in revenues, with turnover up from £74.3m in 2022/23 to £82m in the year to 30 April 2024, against a target of £80m.

The firm, which has offices in Manchester, London and Liverpool, achieved £13m profit, up on the £12.7m of 2022-23. Marc Yaffe, managing partner, said this was testament to the talent and tenacity of the 771-strong JMW workforce and the firm attracting an influx of new clients, whilst continually developing relationships with their existing client base.

During the last financial year, the majority of departments across the firm enjoyed an increase in revenue: of particular note is the Restructuring and Insolvency team with fee income growing by 56%, followed by both the Private Client and Commercial Litigation teams, both of which increased their fee incomes by 30%.

JMW's fast-growing London office saw its revenue increase by 21% compared with the previous year, with several notable new hires at partner level, including Lisa Conmy, Head of Client Relationships, Lee Ranford as Head of Restructuring and Insolvency, Phil Hind, Head of Property Litigation, and Paul Webber, Head of Personal Injury.

In addition, over the past year membership of JMW's Lawshare, the unique referral scheme and support network for law firms, increased by 12%. The number of JMW's website enquiries also increased by 11% with billing increasing 16% to £8.7m.

In Manchester, the firm welcomed the arrival of David Easdown from Knights plc as Head of Corporate (Manchester), bringing a wealth



Marc Yaffe

of new contacts and a determined focus to further expand and develop the Corporate team. Former Head of Corporate Mike Blood has taken on a new role as Head of Sport and his pedigree in this area is renowned.

John Burns arrived from Gateley plc as Head of Brands, and his national and international network of contacts have already produced a significant amount of work for JMW, and Neil Armstrong joined JMW from Myerson as Head of Construction.

JMW has also launched a highly specialised Commercial Road Transport division with the recruitment of Laura Hadzik and Scott Bell from Backhouse Jones to head up the team, which has already grown its client base significantly in the six months since they joined the firm.

Marc said: "We are pleased to have enjoyed another great year in terms of our financial performance, despite the many ongoing economic challenges facing the UK and the legal sector. We continue to invest heavily in our systems and technology, but most importantly we continue to invest in our people: this year we made 75 promotions across the firm across all levels, the highest number of promotions in the firm's 46-year history, because we recognise that our people are, and always will be, our greatest asset.

"The JMW culture is one of inclusiveness and support, recognising at all levels the excellence of our people, which is why we have once again rewarded all of our colleagues with a bonus this summer. We are determined to continue to offer development



pathways for each and every individual we work with at JMW, and the record number of promotions is, quite simply, a recognition of our talented people. As ever, we are

grateful for the loyalty and support from all our valued clients, and we genuinely do love playing our small part in their own commercial success."

## Mills & Reeve celebrates another record year with highest ever turnover and all staff bonus

In an impressive display of growth, [Mills & Reeve](#) has announced record turnover of £168 million for 2023/24, a 14.1% increase. The firm's fees grew by 14.6% surpassing ambitious targets set for 2025 a year in advance.

The firm's culture of shared success is demonstrated by the highest ever all-staff bonus pool of £3 million, meaning staff received between £2,420 and £2,783 depending on length of service\*.

The strong financial results follow another successful year at the firm which has achieved several significant milestones and embarked on a range of exciting projects, including:

- Major investment in 22 new partners over the last 12 months, including 12 lateral hires and 11 internal promotions.
- Moving their Birmingham office to One Centenary Way, one of the city's most sustainable and SMART buildings.
- Preparing to double their footprint in Leeds as headcount rises by 25%.
- Trialling GenAI through contract analysis and drafting tools.
- Being recognised within the professional services sector as one of only 15% of firms who are considered at an advanced stage of client feedback with 89% client recommendation score.
- Teaming up with client Albanwise Environment on the first step in an innovative, first of its kind partnership to transform a difficult to cultivate area of



Chris Ross

floodplain into a biodiverse wetland.

- Being listed in the Sunday Times Best Places to Work for the first time as one of the best big organisations, adding to Platinum Investors in People accolade.
- Increasing maternity and paternity pay.

In Manchester, fee income was up by more than 11 per cent on the back of client wins, lateral hires and the launch of practice areas. The office also welcomed Ruj Dev who recently joined as the firm's new chief financial officer.

Chris Ross, head of the Manchester office, said: "It's been a strong year for the office against a challenging backdrop. Headcount has increased significantly with several high-profile hires including partner Simon Prendergast to launch the Manchester banking team, and private client partner, Christopher Noel.

"All teams have had an excellent 12 months and we've continued to enhance our presence in key sectors such as technology, life sciences, food and drink and healthcare. We're continuing with our investment in recruiting

Continued on page 38



## Manchester retains top 10 spot for foreign direct investment attractiveness

- City Improves Local Skills And Infrastructure Scores But Economic Growth Potential Falls
- Mixed Picture For Other North West Cities But Stockport Secures An Eight-Place Jump In Its Ranking

Manchester has retained its position in the top 10 UK cities for foreign direct investment (FDI) attractiveness, according to a new study published in July by [Irwin Mitchell](#).

The latest Investment Attractiveness Index has been compiled by a team of experts at the [Centre for Economics and Business Research \(Cebr\)](#), who have analysed the UK's 50 largest cities according to eight indicators related to Growth Potential, Local Infrastructure, and Local Skills. \*

The report says Manchester has moved up the rankings from 10th place to eighth despite its overall attractiveness score being 7.7 points lower than the previous year.

This reduction in the overall score was in line with all but one of the other 50 cities analysed and mainly due to lower predicted GVA growth in 2024 compared to 2023.

Despite this, Irwin Mitchell's report reveals that the city of Manchester is performing well in other areas. Improved online connectivity boosted its Local Infrastructure score whilst its Local Skills pillar was boosted by strong scores in terms of qualifications, the number of economically active people, and the number of universities.

[Bryan Bletso](#) partner and Head of International at Irwin Mitchell, said: "The results in our report point to challenging conditions and mirror the sentiment amongst both businesses in the North West and overseas investors that we are speaking to.

"Manchester's relatively strong performance comes as no surprise. The city has many accessible universities, a large economically

City	Growth Potential	Local Skills	Local Infrastructure	Overall Score	YoY ranking change
Inner London	35	114.7	66.3	72	0
London	33.3	110.7	61.5	68.5	0
Outer London	17.3	107.6	58.9	61.3	0
Brighton	47.7	34	44	41.9	0
Oxford	6.7	39.6	72.4	39.6	0
City of Edinburgh	9.9	43.5	62.5	38.6	2
Birmingham	28	38.6	46.8	37.8	0
Greater Manchester	-1.1	68	42.2	36.4	-2
Manchester	18.1	38.6	47	34.5	2
Cambridge	1.5	33.3	66.9	33.9	0

Investment Attractiveness Index 2024 – Top 10 (source: Irwin Mitchell / Cebr)

active population, and benefits from robust public transport use. These factors together make the Manchester area, both the city and Greater Manchester, attractive to businesses seeking to employ a large, educated local workforce supported by a strong public transport network.

“The recent King’s Speech, and the proposed introduction of an English Devolution Bill, is vital also for the creation of a modern, dynamic economy that is attractive to foreign investors. We certainly welcome legislation that will give new powers to metro mayors and combined authorities.”

Stockport has secured an eight-place jump in its ranking in the 2024 Investment Attractiveness Index, rising to 25th. This rise is largely due to its improved performance in the Local Infrastructure pillar (+14.9 points), driven by significant enhancements in its online connectivity, which saw a year-on-year improvement of 45 points.

Liverpool is in a similar position (27th) but this represents a fall of three places

compared to 2023. Although the city has improved online connectivity, other factors mean its Local Infrastructure score was lower relative to other cities. This is also the case with Growth Potential which was hit by a 58.5 point reduction in forecasted GVA growth in 2024.

Warrington’s overall score reduced by 8.2 points but it improved its ranking by one which moved it to 20th place. Preston performed similarly and is now a in 22nd position.

FDI refers to investments made by foreign investors in a company located in a different country. It can take the form of greenfield investments or Mergers & Acquisitions. In 2021, the UK’s inward FDI position was £2,002 billion, slightly higher than the previous year’s £1,919 billion.

EY’s 2024 UK Attractiveness Survey recorded 985 FDI projects in 2023, up 6% from 2022. It also revealed the UK recorded an average 60.9 jobs per FDI project.

From p.37

## Mills & Reeve celebrates another record year

highly-skilled lawyers and look forward to expanding our client base in the North West, across the UK and internationally as we press on with our growth strategy.”

Managing Partner, Claire Clarke, commented, “Our growth is a direct result of the hard work and dedication of everyone at Mills & Reeve. We believe in rewarding our staff for their contributions, and I’m thrilled to announce this record bonus as a token of our appreciation.

“It’s been a year of significant strategic

investments, including the addition of 22 new partners to the firm and a new Birmingham office. These developments not only contribute to the firm’s growth but also reinforce our commitment to providing an exceptional environment for our people.

“As we look to the future, we remain dedicated to enhancing our systems and technology while making sure crucial issues such as sustainability and wellbeing remain at the top of the agenda, ensuring we remain a true leader in the legal marketplace.”

*\* The bonus received is determined by the number of shares someone has based on length of service and is pro-rated for people who are part time or joined part way through the 2023/24 financial year.*



# Manchester Law Society's first venture into tournament football...

At 11am on Friday 12th July 2024 I received the dreaded phone call from Carla at Manchester Law Society "A team has dropped out, what can we do?"

**The draw had been done, the fixtures printed and the teams were due to register in a couple of hours time...**

Any hopes I'd had of having a pleasant afternoon watching the great and good of Manchester's legal community play football were dashed when I answered that call. Thankfully a combination my trainers being inconveniently in the boot of my car and coercion of some unsuspecting 'volunteers' at the firm meant I was able to assemble a team to fill the void. Trade descriptions would have raised an eyebrow at our team

name - 'All Stars', but the emergency was over. The legacy of MLS's first 5 a'side tournament was preserved.

12 firms, 4 leagues and then knockout stages for everyone who had entered. The Power league at Ardwick may not have been the Olympiastadion in Berlin but I could sense the tension whilst teams were completing registration. I could see the customary 'sizing up' of the opposition taking place. 'Does he actually work for that firm?' 'Was he a semi-professional player back in the day?' and 'surely he's too old



Team TLT



Leigh Day vs Canford Law



Canford Law vs St John's Buildings

to still play football?' were some of the questions I could overhear being asked amongst the huddles of players.

Being a man of a certain vintage and playing in a 'rag-tag' team I had hoped for an 'easy' league. I had noticed that David Anderson the Manchester Law Society President had his kit on, 'hopefully we'll be playing against him' I thought. No such luck. I watched the first game in our group between Pannone Corporate and McHale and Co and the standard was worryingly good. Whilst the atmosphere was friendly it was clear that games were going to be ferociously fought and everyone was desperate to get their hands on the trophy. I started to mysteriously feel aches and pains in my legs, my brain was subconsciously telling me I was about to do something really foolish.

It was no surprise then that the 'All Stars' lost our 2 group games and finished bottom of our group. One goal losses in both games though felt like a victory.

McHale and Co were to go onto contest the final in what was a very tense affair against JMW's 'official' team. The teams couldn't be separated and the final was decided on penalties with JMW eventually winning the very impressive Silverware (The Euro's trophy that was won by Spain the following Sunday looked modest in comparison).

Proceedings inevitably then moved to the bar for the presentation and the general consensus seemed to be that the event had been a roaring success.

Football may not have 'come home' for England but the MLS trophy actually did

Continued on page 42



Players ready for the final: McHale & Co vs JMW



Final penalties to decide the champions

The President presents the runners up trophy to McHale & Co's team



## 42 'Not the Euros'

'come home' with me after a colleague told me "there's no way I'm carrying that on the tram". I did feel a bit of a fraud walking through the front door with the glorious trophy. My 2 boys were very impressed that their Dad has 'still got it' and I obviously didn't have the heart to tell them the truth.

My wife soon brought me down to earth though when she looked at the trophy and told me that a) that "monstrosity" is not staying in the house and b) that I was walking black bits into the carpet.

So that was that, our first MLS tournament was completed. Roll on 2025. If you have budding footballers at your firm PLEASE enter a team next year and spare an old man's legs.

**Stuart Cartwright**  
Chair, MLS Membership and Social Committee  
Head of Lawshare and Partner at JMW Solicitors LLP



The Champions ... Team JMW



A huge thank you to all that participated in the tournament – both playing and helping keep the teams in the right place at the right time! It was brilliant to see everyone's enthusiasm. Please do let us know if you would be interested in taking part in a 2025 tournament.

The event raised £1,000 for We Love MCR Charity – I'm sure they will put that to some excellent use improving the lives of Mancunians!

If you are interested in a less physical football related activity why not join our *Fantasy Football League*? Joining the league couldn't be easier. Simply use the link below and you'll be added automatically after you've entered the game.

[fantasy.premierleague.com/leagues/auto-join/sphtor](https://fantasy.premierleague.com/leagues/auto-join/sphtor)

League Code: **sphtor**

# 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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To book email

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



## Bexley Beaumont expands service offering with social housing team

**Bexley Beaumont** [✉](#) has announced the further expansion of its service offering with the creation of a specialist Social Housing team.

The unit will be led by two vastly experienced Partners, Sarah Savage and Amy Stirton, and follows a surge in demand for help from private and social landlords.

The decision comes amid a remarkable spell of growth which has seen Bexley Beaumont make 13 partner appointments since the turn of the year alone.

Bexley Beaumont's Chief Executive Karen Bexley has described how this latest initiative has added even greater breadth to the firm's Real Estate unit.

She said that it was another important part of the firm's ambitions to offer business clients a "truly comprehensive" portfolio of services.

"Social Housing is very much a new individual service area for us but it builds upon expertise within our firm which has already had a real impact on our caseload.

"In addition to having bags of experience and immense credibility with clients and peers alike, Sarah and Amy have worked very successfully together before.

"We regard it as something of a continued evolution of our broader Real Estate offering and another key point in our becoming a full-service firm, able to address the needs of business clients no matter how complex they may be.

"Above and beyond the work done by Sarah and Amy over the years in the



Karen Bexley

Social Housing sector, the flexibility of our structure means that clients of the team will be able to call on our other lawyers to help with issues such as regulation, data protection, employment and the environment as and when they need them."

Ms Savage joined Bexley Beaumont in July last year after almost a decade at Forbes Solicitors, where she was a Partner and Head of its Housing Management Team.

An acknowledged expert advocate on behalf of social and private landlords, helping them establish and manage their businesses as well as dealing with tenancy management and enforcement issues.

In addition to featuring in both of the UK's leading legal rankings, Legal 500 and Chambers and Partners, Ms Savage is qualified to represent clients directly in the High Court and trains other lawyers and housing professionals on a range of related topics.

Ms Stirton, meanwhile, spent most of her career to date working alongside Ms Savage

at Forbes, building up a specialism advising registered housing providers on strategic and operational issues.

She has become renowned nationally for her ability to resolve anti-social behaviour cases in particular but has also been involved in resolving difficulties arising from organised crime and gang activity.

Ms Stirton's arrival last month means that Bexley Beaumont now has 19 partners across its real estate, planning and development team out of a total fee earning complement of 61 partners and five Associate Solicitors despite only opening its doors in 2020.

Bexley Beaumont's appeal across the legal industry was illustrated by the results of an independent study published by Codex Edge late last year.

Although many law firms struggled to attract talent during 2023, it 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 further strengthens dispute resolution team

**Kuits Solicitors** [↗](#), has further strengthened its dispute resolution team with the appointment of Senior Associate, Sam Pepper.

Sam brings to Kuits significant experience in commercial litigation matters, particularly in bankruptcy and winding up proceedings which makes him a valuable addition to the firm's dispute resolution team. Sam's appointment comes at a time of significant growth for Kuits and its dispute resolution team which is now one of the largest in Manchester.

"We are delighted to welcome Sam to Kuits," said Nichola Evans, Head of Dispute Resolution at Kuits. "Sam's extensive experience and proven track record in commercial litigation will be instrumental in supporting our clients' diverse legal needs and driving our continued growth. His appointment aligns with our strategy to strengthen our offering and maintain the highest standards of service excellence."



Commenting on his new role, Sam Pepper said, "I am very pleased to join Kuits and work alongside such a talented team. Kuits has a strong reputation for its client-centric approach and its commitment to delivering outstanding legal services. I look forward to contributing to the firm's continued success and helping our clients achieve their business objectives."

Kuits' dispute resolution team has grown significantly over the last 12 months following the successful appointment of Nichola Evans to lead the team.



## Key hire for boutique law firm

[Hugh Jones Solicitors](#) , has grown its team and further strengthened its unique offering with the appointment of a new associate solicitor.

The firm has appointed Ariella Jones in the expert Court of Protection team following increased demand from local authorities and referrals from other firms.

Ariella joins Hugh Jones Solicitors having qualified in 2019. She is a specialist solicitor in Court of Protection finance and property matters and is highly experienced in working with adults and children with complex needs and high-value litigation awards, including Protected Parties with pre-settlement litigation claims.



Ariella Jones

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

“

“Hugh Jones Solicitors has an impressive reputation within the field of Court of Protection” – Ariella Jones

Before specialising in Court of Protection work, Ariella gained valuable experience in actions against public and private bodies arising from child sexual abuse and acted for clients in applications to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority and advocating on behalf of clients at tribunal hearings

Speaking of her new position, Ariella said: “Hugh Jones Solicitors has an impressive reputation within the field of Court of Protection and now I’m working at the firm, it’s clear to see why. Every team member shares the same amount of passion for supporting those who lack mental capacity and the level of professionalism is inspiring to be around.

“The Court of Protection team is growing fast, and I’m proud to be a part of the journey.”

Managing director, Liz Hughes, added: “We’re thrilled to welcome Ariella to the firm – she’s an extremely talented Court of Protection specialist and a valuable addition to the team during a time of rapid growth.”

The multi-award-winning firm boasts the largest independent team of Court of Protection lawyers in the UK and has built an impressive reputation for supporting vulnerable people in a professional, friendly and cost-effective manner.

[CLICK FOR MORE INFO](#)



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# Property Law Conference

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latest developments in the  
sector.**

**09:00 Registration**

**09:30 Welcome and introduction**

**09:40 VAT, Capital Allowances,  
environmental reliefs**

James Greenhalgh and Paul  
Hammond, Cowgills

**10:25 Understanding and adapting  
to the evolving landscape of  
environmental risk and climate  
considerations**

Sam Francis, Head of Client  
Relationship Management at  
Searchflow

Allie Parsons, Customer Success  
Consultant, Landmark

**11:10 Legal Update: RICS Property  
Measurement**

Martyn Markland, Tennant Advisory  
Group

**11:35 Refreshments and  
networking**

**11:55 Dilapidations Review**

John Crowley, Tenant Advisory Group

**12:20 Case Law update**

David Gilchrist and Norman Lamb,  
Nine St John Street

**13:05 Structural warranty  
insurance cover for defects in  
residential and commercial  
premises**

Steve Padley, Building Land and  
Guarantees Ltd

**13:50 Closing remarks**

**14:00 Networking Lunch**

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## Brabners promotes four to partnership

**Brabners** [↗](#) has promoted four colleagues to its partnership in the latest round of promotions following another year of purpose-led growth.

Hannah Fawcett (commercial & intellectual property), Leanne Instrall (family), Brendan McAleese (employment, pensions & immigration) and Fiona Tinsley (litigation) have all joined the now 90-strong partnership as the B Corp-certified firm continues to be recognised as the UK's 'Best Law Firm to Work For' by Best Companies.

Hannah Fawcett, a dual qualified solicitor and chartered trade-mark attorney who joined the firm in 2017, leads the beauty and fashion team within Brabners' retail sector offering while also playing a key role in developing its broader anti-counterfeiting legal services. With clients including outdoors and fashion brands Regatta, Craghoppers and Sosandar, Hannah is a committee member within the International

Trademark Association (INTA) and recognised as a 'Rising Star' by Managing Intellectual Property specialist guide, IP Stars.

Both Brendan McAleese and Leanne Instrall joined the firm as trainee solicitors. Brendan specialises in both employment law and business immigration, with a particular focus on the healthcare and professional services sectors, while also actively managing the firm's relationship with the Association of European Lawyers. Advising on all areas of family law and financial matters, Leanne is also a qualified collaborative family lawyer. As well as being a member of the family law association Resolution and the chair of its Manchester YRes committee, she also plays an important role in Brabners' social impact work, leading its social mobility affinity group. Earlier this year she was named Legal Professional of the Year at the Made in Manchester Awards.



Fiona Tinsley joined Brabners' litigation team in 2021 and has since successfully established and grown its clinical negligence and serious & catastrophic injury team. Her team's work encompasses dealing with all aspects of medical negligence including relating to delay, misdiagnosis, mismanagement and consent issues.

The additions to the partnership come on the back of a record promotions round including 12 colleagues promoted to associate, nine promoted to senior associate and eight promoted to legal director within the business, which has now delivered seven consecutive years of growth across its offices in Liverpool, Manchester, Lancashire and Leeds.

Nik White, managing partner at Brabners, said: "Brabners has evolved significantly over recent years, and that is reflected in our partnership which continues to welcome ambitious lawyers that live and breathe our values as well as our commitment to bringing about positive change. As someone who started their career with the firm, it's incredibly satisfying to see more and more partners enjoying the same support and progression as we continue to invest significantly in career pathways and strive to create a more diverse and innovative business."

## DWF appoints new managing partner in Manchester

DWF, the global provider of integrated legal and business services, has announced the appointment of Joel Heap as the new managing partner of its Manchester office.

Joel joined [DWF](#) in Manchester in 2008, with a focus to build the firm's litigation practice in the North West. Having successfully grown the team locally, Joel has gone on to become the UK & Ireland head of dispute resolution, a role which will continue as he takes on his new position as managing partner of DWF in Manchester.

Aside from his leadership roles, Joel specialises in corporate litigation, advising on company law, partnerships, and shareholder-director conflicts. Joel also provides strategic advice both pre- and post-corporate transactions to help maximise deal value including advising on



Joel Heap

warranty/indemnity, earn-out, completion accounts, and additional consideration.

Kirsty Rogers, who has led the firm's Manchester office for the past eight years, has been appointed as DWF's first Chief Sustainability Officer. Already serving as

Continued on page 50

## Double appointment for the Commercial Team at Pearson

Two significant appointments have been announced at [Pearson Solicitors](#) to further strengthen the commercial department, increasing the team to over 30 specialist staff and helping them provide a bespoke commercial service and a real alternative to bigger firms.

The hires have been possible through continued business growth, significant investment, and a keen awareness to strategically develop key areas.

Commercial Property Solicitor, Gary Jones has over 20 years of legal expertise and joins Pearson from WHN Solicitors Ltd in Bury where he worked for 20 years, the last 12 as partner and director.

Commenting on his move Gary said: "The ethos of being part of a team which supports each other was one of the main attractions of Pearson to me. I am looking forward to meeting clients and working with the wider commercial department, liaising with our employment lawyers, experienced corporate team, and of course commercial litigation, to help coordinate a strategic approach for all our clients"

Gary believes his former experience in business is a unique and ideal background to his role as a solicitor, as he previously worked for the Inland Revenue, as well as being a commercial officer in a manufacturing company.

He has seen many changes in commercial property law over the years, however, he highlights green leases as one of the next big things in property law, with the ongoing associated environmental concerns.



Laura Campbell and Gary Jones

Litigation solicitor, Laura Campbell, joins from Rainbow Law, a multi-service law firm she founded several years ago which was based in the High Street, Uppermill. With business development taking up much of her time Laura decided to return to her role as a solicitor and is looking forward to helping further develop the Litigation department at Pearson.

"Having trained and worked at top tier firms I didn't want to compromise on what I did after closing my own practice therefore Pearson was the obvious choice; with its reputation as a leading law firm in the North West, but also a firm that retains the 'personal touch' with its client which is important to me," said Laura.

"I'm looking forward to being part of a busy, high calibre team that pools its talents to

the advantage of its clients and putting my wealth of experience, dealing with all kinds of litigation, to good use.”

Laura is convinced her experience of running her own business is a vital addition to her skill set as she works with owners of many local and national businesses.

Welcoming both, Joanne Ormston, Director at the firm said the appointments were crucial to help development: “We have seen some significant growth areas across the business this past year and wanted to invest in our commercial team, both in litigation and commercial property. We are pleased

to welcome two highly skilled solicitors to bolster the department and set us in a very favourable position for further growth.

“The experience Gary and Laura bring with them is immense.

“Gary is a forward-thinking property lawyer who has hit the ground running since he joined us, and he has embraced the busy Pearson style. Laura similarly brings with her a wealth of experience, she has run her own business, and her calm and confident manner will no doubt be welcomed by our litigation clients.”

## DWF appoints new managing partner in Manchester (continued)

Global Head of ESG, Rogers’ extended role will see her continue to provide Executive Board leadership across DWF’s full range of activities and responsibilities, reflecting the business’ commitment to sustainability, as well as the expectations of internal and external stakeholders. This global role will involve working with all of DWF’s locations on ESG issues, including Manchester.

Commenting on his new appointment, Joel said: “Manchester’s business environment provides an amazing opportunity for growth and DWF wants to contribute to the City’s success. I’m honoured to take on the role of managing partner in Manchester. Having been part of the business’ national and international journey for over a decade, I’m keen to build on our successes, and help drive DWF’s active engagement within the Manchester business community and enhance our market position.”

Kirsty added: “The landscape around sustainability has changed drastically in recent years with increased accountability



Kirsty Rogers

expected of businesses from all stakeholders. The creation of the Chief Sustainability Officer role reaffirms DWF’s dedication to delivering positive outcomes with our colleagues, clients and communities. I look forward to working with all of our stakeholders to ensure our growth agenda is underpinned by responsible business practices.”



## Professional musician and lawyer Peter Pegasiou joins Glaisyers ETL's Creative, Digital and Marketing team

**Glaisyers ETL** [✉](#) has appointed the professional musician and lawyer Peter Pegasiou as a solicitor in its Creative, Digital and Marketing team.

Mr Pegasiou, who studied law at Liverpool John Moores University and the University of Law, joins from Counterculture Partnership, where he qualified as a solicitor in early 2023.

At Glaisyers ETL, which has offices in Manchester, Liverpool and London, he will provide legal advice and assistance on intellectual property, privacy law and entertainment and media matters. He has a particular specialism in music law, which stems from his background in the music industry as a singer, songwriter and guitarist.

He has played in a variety of musical outfits, the most successful of which, Merseyside-based VYNCE, has achieved more than a million online streams and appeared live on the same bill as global stars Noel Gallagher, Echo and the Bunnymen, Blossoms, McFly, Kaiser Chiefs and the 1975.

He worked closely with Liverpool John Moores University to develop a clinic that provides free legal advice to aspiring musicians, and still takes time to work with this initiative and supervise the students who take part in it.

Mr Pegasiou is the latest entertainment professional-turned-lawyer to join Glaisyers ETL in recent years, following the appointment of Sara Shulman, a former script editor and producer with more than a decade's experience in the British comedy industry as an entertainment, media and sport solicitor in 2022.



(L-R) Peter Pegasiou, Steve Kunczewicz

He said, "I'm delighted to have joined the Creative, Digital and Marketing team at Glaisyers, and look forward to continuing to use my experience in the creative industries to help Steve and Sara develop a truly unique legal offering for our clients."

Steve Kunczewicz, partner and head of Creative, Digital and Marketing at Glaisyers ETL, said, "Pete is a great addition to our team, whose legal knowledge is backed up by real-world experience of how the law affects musicians making their way in an industry that nobody could claim to be easy.

"This is a really exciting time for our growing department and Pete's expertise adds a valuable string to our bow alongside Sara – we're a team of genuine specialists with a unique skillset across entertainment, agencies and now the music industry, and we are genuinely excited about the work we do.

"I also now have someone else in the office to talk to about guitar-based rock, and while that's an added bonus, he's a far better guitar player than I am with better taste in music!"



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## Bermans welcomes partner duo

**Bermans**  has added two new partners to its growing team. Employment partner Sarah Collier and litigation specialist Sarah Wellicome.

**Sarah Collier**  brings over 15 years' experience in supporting SMEs with a full range of day-to-day employment advice ranging from redundancies, disciplinarys and grievances, as well as advising and supporting businesses on discrimination and sexual harassment matters, shareholder disputes, settlement agreements and in-house training. She will be based in the firm's Manchester office as a partner in the employment team.

Sarah Wellicome is coming in to head the firm's nationally renowned invoice and asset finance litigation team following the retirement of partner Andrew Henderson after 39 years with the firm.

Sarah, who will be based in the firm's Manchester office, qualified in 2007 and previously headed up a busy litigation team dealing with property litigation on a range of high value and complex disputes for secured lenders and receivers in the High Court and through mediation and ADR.

Just last month the firm added Charlotte Mills as a partner in its corporate team from sister law firm, Jackson Lees. These latest appointments take the number of partners at the firm to 20.

**Jon Davage** , managing director of Bermans, says: "I am delighted to welcome a further two lawyers who are so well-established within their fields. Our litigation work is thriving, so Sarah Wellicome's arrival will further drive growth within this nationally renowned team.

"Further, the planned changes to employment legislation by the new Labour government will be an ideal opportunity for Sarah Collier to contribute to the growth of the employment team and add real value to our active client base."

"Across both of our offices in Liverpool and Manchester we are seeing growth and momentum build as we actively look to add new lawyers to our team over the course of the year."

Since 2022, Bermans has been part of the MAPD group which stands for 'Making a Positive Difference'. The MAPD Group was founded by CEO Brian Cullen and COO Joanna Kingston-Davies in 2020 to power the growth of local law firms nationally through acquisition. The group now has nine brands.



(L-R) Sarah Wellicome, Jon Davage and Sarah Collier

## Browne Jacobson appoints new procurement partner to government and infrastructure team

**Browne Jacobson** [↗](#) has strengthened its government and infrastructure team with the appointment of a partner specialising in public procurement law.

**Bradley Martin** [↗](#) joins the UK and Ireland law firm from Addleshaw Goddard, where he was Legal Director.

Consistently recognised as a 'rising star' by the Legal 500 directory, Bradley bolsters Browne Jacobson's growing Manchester team, while he will work with clients across the UK.

He said: "It's hugely exciting to join Browne Jacobson at a time when the firm's profile is growing both nationally and in the North West.

"With expertise that straddles both the public and private sectors, we are very well placed to advise clients from both worlds on government tenders and to guide them through changes brought by the Procurement Act when it is implemented in October this year.

"I look forward to bringing my experience in public procurement to the team and further developing our offering to clients."

Bradley's public procurement expertise, strengthened by secondments in the public and private sectors, involves advising on the full suite of procurement documents and strategies, ranging from service agreements to major regeneration projects.

He has acted on some of the largest-ever procurements conducted under the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 in the energy and rail sectors, with combined values exceeding £14bn.



Bradley Martin

Landmark projects included procuring a multi-supplier enterprise to deliver upgrades to the UK's energy infrastructure, supporting a private utility on its £200m second generation IT services procurement, and advising a local authority in Greater Manchester on its £350m procurement of a joint venture partner to deliver major commercial, housing and leisure developments in a town centre.

**Peter Ware** [↗](#), Head of Government, said: "With public-private partnerships set to be a major theme of the new Government and new legislation soon coming into force, our excellence in this area is something we are really proud about.

"We are thrilled to have further strengthened our team with the addition of Bradley, who brings fantastic experience of working on large-scale procurements across a range of sectors."



## Farleys expands insolvency offering with partner appointment and newly-qualified solicitor

**Farleys Solicitors** [↗](#) has expanded its insolvency offering with the appointment of an experienced partner and a newly-qualified solicitor.

Jane Haymes has joined the firm with over 30 years of experience behind her in corporate insolvency, formal insolvency procedures, related claims, court applications and recovery work. Jane has spent two lengthy periods as a partner at two Lancashire law firms prior to joining Farleys' Preston office last month.

Alongside Jane, the team has also welcomed newly-qualified solicitor Olivia Cooper on a permanent basis following the completion of her training contract with Farleys. Olivia originally joined the firm four years ago as an insolvency executive before being awarded a place on their training programme. After completing two years of training including a seat within the insolvency team, Olivia was offered a role as a solicitor within the team.

The Preston based insolvency and commercial litigation team also comprises of partner and head of the team Mark Hague, solicitor Ella Holden, paralegal Armin Pishro, and legal assistant Sarah Hill. The team has been expanding over recent years to meet the high demand for insolvency services in these challenging economic times.

The team act for business owners, directors, insolvency practitioners, and creditors at various stages of the insolvency process and have experience in litigation relating to insolvency proceedings.

On the latest expansion of the team, Mark Hague said,

"I am delighted to welcome Jane to the team and to see Olivia's hard work recognised in her securing a post-qualification role with us. Over the last few years not only has the quantity of work the team has been instructed on increased but the quality of that work has massively improved too and the appointments of Jane and Olivia will enable us to grow further. We are currently handling some of the biggest and most high-profile cases in the North West and we are constantly competing with the biggest law firms across the country, so adding two further excellent solicitors to our team is very well timed."

Jane Haymes commented, "I have worked alongside Mark on transactions previously and was always impressed with his approach, so when the opportunity arose to join Farleys it felt like the right time to bring the knowledge and experience I have acquired over a long career to a talented team, and I am looking forward



(L-R) Olivia Cooper and Jane Haymes

to supporting them and strengthening the team's proposition."

Olivia Cooper added, "After working at Farleys for coming up to four years, I was delighted upon the completion of my training contract to be offered a permanent

position in the insolvency team. This is the department I have spent most of my time with at Farleys and the one I knew I wanted to qualify into. I have been able to watch the team expand throughout my time here and I am proud to be contributing to its continued growth and success."

## Jonathan Kay joins Prosperity Law as Commercial Director

Prosperity Law has welcomed a new Commercial Director. Jonathan Kay will take on a strategic role for the fast-growing firm, bringing with him a wealth of experience and expertise. Jonathan's role will span all four of the firm's offices with the aim of building on Prosperity Law's continued commercial success and growth.

Jonathan has held senior roles at a number of leading firms – including Head of Real Estate, alongside other senior management positions. As well as his expertise in real estate, his commercial acumen developed over three decades in the sector makes him ideally suited for the role of Commercial Director. In conjunction with the senior management team, part of his role will be the ongoing advancement of the business, including key hires and acquisition opportunities for Prosperity – continuing the firm's ambitions to scale and diversify its already wide service offering.

Speaking about joining Prosperity Law, Jonathan said: "Prosperity has enjoyed a number of successes of late, which speaks to the entrepreneurial and ambitious nature of the teams and specialists there.

I'm commercially driven but just as interested in people and what they bring to



(L-R) Andrew Farrell and Jonathan Kay

a firm. As well as the strategic work I'll carry out for the business I'm looking forward to working with my new colleagues to really drive forward our collective success at Prosperity."

Managing Partner, Ed Smethurst commented: "We've made a number of key hires in recent years to head up different departments across all our offices. Jonathan's appointment marks a real commitment to our ongoing commercial success and desire to grow the business

His unique skillset will undoubtedly help us unlock our potential to scale, all whilst offering the exceptional legal advice and client service that Prosperity has become known for."

# Manchester Young Solicitors Group – summer fun

We are absolutely delighted that the questionable English weather held out last Thursday for our Padel and Pizza evening! The night was a sell-out success, with 32 attendees on the night, ranging from novices to pros. The sun being out was simply the cherry on the cake.

The first half of the evening was spent with the beginners learning how to play with the help of a Club de Padel coach, while those more seasoned players enjoyed a knock-up. The heat

was turned up for the second half of the night which was a tournament including 14 couples. Prizes were given to first and second place, as well as to the players who showed the most promise.

Players also got to enjoy a selection of beers, prosecco, soft drinks and alcohol-free alternatives as well as the biggest pizza slices we have ever seen from Nells! Despite some initial concerns that we had over-ordered, the appetites were high





after the Alcoraz-esque performances on the courts!

In terms of the next slice of summer fun from MYSG, in August we will be celebrating the launch of our new committee (who started their roles in May this year).

We have exclusive hire of the balcony bar at Dukes 92 on Thursday 8 August, sponsored by BCL legal. Tickets will include two drinks and BBQ food on the night. There will also be a photobooth and a raffle, so it is not one to miss! [Tickets are available here](#) .

For more information about our events, please head to our webpage: [www.mysg.org.uk](http://www.mysg.org.uk) and be sure to follow us on Instagram [@mysgsolicitors](#) and [LinkedIn](#)



## Upcoming: **Virtual Events**

13 September 2024 – [Managing Relationships Upwards](#)

17 October 2024 – [Presentations – YOU be YOU](#)

22 November 2024 – [Management – Closing the Gap](#)



## Messenger Deadlines

23 August 2024 – September Messenger

20 September 2024 – October Messenger

18 October 2024 – November Messenger

22 November 2024 – December Messenger

13 December 2024 – January Messenger



# History of Manchester Pride and why we celebrate it



Matt Flanagan-Roberts



Shane Smith

## Pride. One syllable, five letters.

A short, simple word with an array of definitions to many around the world. A word behind which sits a colourful history of pain, suffering, sacrifice and liberation. A single word that can unite a community, promote a cause and champion the rights of many. But what is the history of Manchester Pride and why has it become one of the focal events in the LGBTQ+ Pride calendar?

During the August bank holiday in 1985, Manchester Pride was born in Manchester's Gay Village. In 1986, Manchester City Council had provided £1,700 in funding to hold celebrations, this time at Oxford Street, to raise money for AIDS organisations across the city which, despite hostility from the Police at the time, garnered a lot of support and effort from the gay community to make the event a success. This has been credited as being the start of a more organised gay community that would later pave the way for Manchester Pride.

In 1989, events were held to raise funds to provide soft furnishings for the ward at Monsall Hospital where people received treatment for HIV and AIDS and by 1991 the Village Charity was established and ran the

festival then known as 'Manchester Mardi Gras'. By this time, it had expanded to include a full programme of activities over the August bank holiday weekend to include a market held in Sackville Park and a fireworks display amongst many of the attractions. In 2006, at the final closing ceremony of Mardi Gras, it was announced that the event would be renamed as 'Manchester Pride'.

Manchester Pride is now one of the UK's leading LGBTQ+ charities and is more than just a bank holiday weekend celebration. Their vision is 'a world where LGBTQ+ people are free to live and love without prejudice'. Their values are centred around inclusivity, togetherness and empowerment, and they are committed to improving the lives of LGBTQ+ people in Greater Manchester and beyond. Their goals are to ensure that they acting as a beacon for LGBTQ+ equality in Greater Manchester and throughout the world; that they campaign for the advancement of LGBTQ+ equality at home and abroad; they seek to educate the people of Greater Manchester and beyond to recognise, understand and challenge discrimination against LGBTQ+ people; they aim to raise awareness and support for LGBTQ+ mental health and support grassroots projects and initiatives that encourage the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ people in Greater Manchester.

Manchester Pride remains part of the global Pride celebrations that recognises the LGBTQ+ movement, celebrates advancements in equality and challenges discrimination faced by LGBTQ+ people. Events like Manchester Pride pay homage

# WE LOVE MCR CHARITY GREAT OUTDOOR CHALLENGE

 **Friday 23 Aug 2024, all day event**

 **Lake District National Park**

This August, We Love MCR Charity invites valued partners to join us in our 4th annual trekking challenge, a fundraising event providing an incredible team-building experience every year. For 2024, we'll be taking 70 trekkers from Manchester by coach to our Great Outdoor Challenge in the stunning Lake District National Park!

**For added accessibility, we're offering fundraisers two different, yet challenging, routes that will test your determination and fitness...**

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- 20km, ~7hrs, 1600m elev.
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### Hike + Lake Challenge

- Gummers Howe + Windermere
- 16km, ~4.5hrs, 334m elev.
- Hike to summit, then 6km traversal across the Lake
- LIMITED TO 30 PLACES

All trekkers will meet back up for barbecue and drinks when finished! Places cost £50, and £200 minimum fundraising target required.

**For more information, and to enter a team, please contact [nicholas.clarke@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:nicholas.clarke@manchester.gov.uk)**





to the events at The Stonewall Inn in 1969 and serve as a reminder of how far we have come but is also an opportunity to raise awareness and increase visibility to ensure the impetus for a better, more inclusive tomorrow, is not lost.

If you wish to learn more about how you, your business or your organisation can get involved in Manchester Pride, please get in touch with Manchester Law Society's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee via [enquiries@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk) or you can visit [Manchester Pride's website](#) for an abundance of resources. We look forward to seeing many of you at Manchester Pride this year!

### **MLS Pride Brunch and Manchester Pride Parade**

Manchester Pride is held on the August bank holiday weekend each year – a highlight of the year for the LGBTQ+ community. It goes without saying that one of the main events of the weekend is the Manchester Pride Parade itself. As one of the largest attended pride parades in the UK, it is attended by tens of thousands of supporters as large numbers of people of all ages march proudly through the city centre.

In addition to the parade, the live concerts draw a large crowd, from not only Manchester but from all over the UK and the World. With confirmed performances from Rita Ora, Sugababes, Jessie J, Loreen, Claire Richards, Bimini, Ginger Johnson and many more Manchester Pride 2024 is sure to be another unforgettable weekend. Whilst the parade and live events are the most high profile events, Manchester Pride offers so much more. For instance, a Candlelit Vigil is held on the bank holiday Monday, to commemorate those who have lost their lives due to HIV/AIDS, to also raise awareness of such issues, and to tackle the stigma around it.

Have you decided how you'll be celebrating Manchester Pride yet? Why not join us for our 3rd celebratory **Manchester Pride Brunch**? Taking place at the iconic Midland Hotel we will kick off in style with mimosas on arrival followed by a delicious brunch with a cash bar. Then watch the parade from our exclusive viewing area on the steps of the hotel.

We are thrilled that this event is held in partnership with [By Parallel Events](#) and [The Midland Hotel](#) and is in aid of the fantastic charity **Out Together**.

Everyone is welcome – you don't have to be a member or even work in the legal sector! This is the ultimate way to celebrate Manchester Pride this year along with your friends, family, and colleagues!

**Cost to attend is** £48.00 including VAT per guest. This includes a drink on arrival, brunch, glitter bar, specially discounted cocktails, and access to the exclusive viewing space on the steps of The Midland.

#### **Timings**

11:00 – 11:30 Mimosas on arrival  
 11:30 – 12:30 Brunch and cash bar  
 12:30 onwards Watch the Parade from our exclusive viewing area on the steps of the Midland Hotel

You can book your places by emailing [ChandreMay@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:ChandreMay@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk). We can cater for tables of ten, smaller bookings will be on shared tables.

*Article co-written by*

**Shane Smith**

**Chair, MLS EDI Committee**

**Slater and Gordon**

**Matt Flanagan-Roberts**

**MLS EDI Committee Member**

**Squire Patton Boggs**

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**10:00 Welcome and introduction**

Rebecca Clarke, Clarke Willmott

**10:10 Taxation of Estates**

Simon Cieluch, Myerson Solicitors

**10:55 Refreshments**

**11:15 Lifetime Tax**

Sasha Phillips, Azets

**12:00 Taxation of trusts**

Paul Davies, Clarke Willmott

**12:45 Lunch**

**13:45 Inheritance Tax**

Sasha Phillips, Azets

**14:30 Genealogy: It's all relative**

Stuart Haydock, Fraser & Fraser

**15:00 Closing remarks**

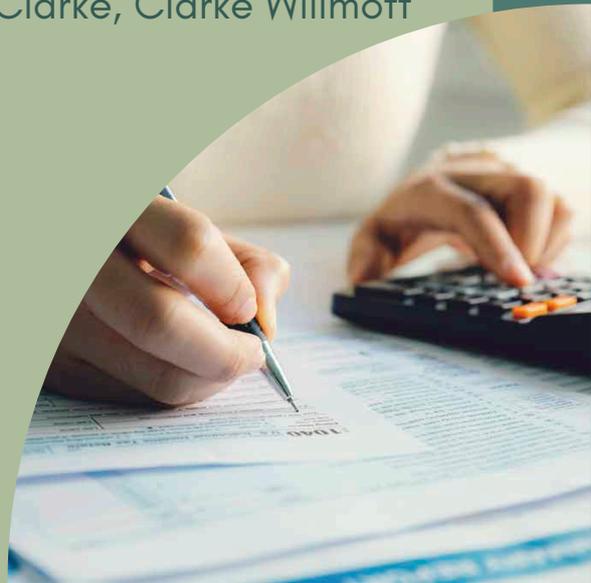
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Continued on page 68



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

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

To find out more, visit:

[www.chamberspace.co.uk](https://www.chamberspace.co.uk)  If you're interest in Membership, the Members' Lounge or Chamber Space, then feel free to get in touch with the team on [benefits@gmchamber.co.uk](mailto:benefits@gmchamber.co.uk) 

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Further details, including as to hotels, are available on our website

<https://www.europeancircuit.com/event/conference-2024/>

This year, the European Circuit is being welcomed to the wine capital of the world by the Bar of Bordeaux.

As usual the conference will include high-quality discussions around a broad range of topics of interest to practitioners across Europe including legal issues relating to sports, arts and culture and modern challenges in dispute resolution. We will return to further aspects of AI, building on our discussions at last year's conference in Prague, and will also look at challenging cross-border issues in family and criminal law. The conference will also include a visit to a local court.

Delegates will enjoy a drinks reception at the Cité du Vin in the Latitude 20 wine bar (with a cellar containing a unique range of wines from more than 70 countries) and a closing dinner at the stunning restaurant L'Estacade on the banks of the Gironde.

The event will be opened by Caroline Laveissière, the Batonnier of the Bar of Bordeaux, who will then join Vice Batonnier Jérôme Delas, Barbara Mills KC, Vice Chair of the Bar of England and Wales, and Robert Němec, President of the Czech Bar Association, in a Bar Leaders Discussion Panel.

 @europeanbar1

administrator@europeancircuit.com

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# Management Matters



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

## This Month

- **Essential business challenges needing action**
- **Simple action plan following status review**
- **Cost saving and productivity available**
- **Needs some dedication and expertise**
- **Liaison with Suppliers**

## The Business Challenge for Lawyers and Law Firms

Many people become lawyers because of personal desires to participate in very interesting topics, challenge others and also to provide a community and social service

There is a great deal to learning required and all the necessary steps to qualification. Once that is achieved it is followed by movement into small, medium or large firms and the suffering or enjoyment of development, supervision, communications internally and with clients reputation and image development, just remaining as a lawyer but getting to operate the processes effectively or movement into management – even ownership or business development, client relationships, specific functional expertise, commercial success of the business (profitability and/or cash flow) in a business world like so few others with the extra demands of regulation and compliance and the joy of being watched over by the SRA and having to have Professional Indemnity Insurance that is affordable and certainly limits on fines that affect cash flow and profitability and market place image.

Articles over the last six months or so – say starting with November 2023 have been dealing with the major challenges that management within law firms have to be on top of – which includes all members of the teams being aware and doing their bit.

I strongly suggest that at next month's management/Operations Board a decision is made that the IT future of the firm has to be considered and some decisions made – subcommittee with a real challenge that cannot be ignored at the moment.

[Read the articles here](#) .

The good thing is that success across the piece is certainly achievable – just needs some important focus.

In January the focus was on:

- Proactive monthly management
  - Trend data and perpetual forecasting
- Key Data and strategy/process
  - The availability of the right BI, MI and KPI at the right time
  - Daily time and billing data, WIP reviews
  - Comparable business performance, systems use and efficiency
  - The right PMS/CMS plus added value HR, CRM, Client communications, on boarding conversions.
  - PMS/CMS and added value being integrated
  - Staff communications and KPIs – certainly the younger stars need this
  - Client communications and empathy
    - During matters
    - Possible environmental changes needing updates – representation of firm's knowledge and care



- Cross selling
- Demonstration of firm's social conscience and environment with ESG and BCorp
- The availability and integration of added value outsourced services like document production and even bookkeeping (24x7)
- Regulation and compliance achievement
  - SRA and AML and ID

Unfortunately, very little of the above can be achieved without the right PMS/CMS in place along with added value requirements fully integrated. This also needs a clear relationship between the firms and their PMS/CMS suppliers and a very clear understanding of the current product capabilities along with planned enhancements and time frames.

In the May 2024 article, I covered so many processes that are essential but not in place and so much dependent on IT – capability, use, strategy, plans, process and authorisation – for example a workflow ensuring that all the processes have been followed, the resultant documentation read and authorized – could save the firm a fortune by avoiding fines.

It is also critical that the right IT infrastructure is in place – enabling business continuity and availability, back-up and recovery, flexible infrastructure in terms of working locations and accessibility, security. There have been a number of failures in this area over the last year so there are increasing demands on due diligence on potential suppliers whether they be the PMS/CMS recommendations or strong third parties. My suppliers have been very good.

## PMS/CMS Interface

As everyone must be aware now a number of PMS/CMS suppliers have been acquired and there are three main groups operating within the UK.

In [November](#) and [March](#) I covered this topic and have had constructive sessions with two of the groups and there is some movement in the realms of added value and timetables for their products and IT environment development. In the March article I suggested that firms could take an initiative in this – still important but I am also trying to get suppliers to hold use group meetings around the country to explain where they are at and where and when exciting new solutions are available.

- Strategy and timescale for product enhancement and development
- When and how will the added value necessities appear
- The proposed infrastructure solution – in house, hosted/outsourced, cloud based – if and when

One supplier has started holding group user meetings with updates – attendance will take a while.

During July I heard that one supplier was trying to charge its clients for such an update. Even heard of proposed commercial changes without any enhancements

There has been an increase in added value integrations for some of the key areas but not everywhere.

Continued on page 72



We – law firm clients, in the majority of cases own our PMS and CMS software, we have paid for support and maintenance and now need to know where and when it is going to be before decisions are made.

There are also new suppliers coming into the UK market with high technology/ infrastructure PMS/CMS solutions. Again, due diligence has been very interesting and there is certainly a potential challenge to existing suppliers. With current discussions and performance this could make quite a difference

### IT Infrastructure

This again is absolutely critical and advice certainly needed.

We hear very much about cloud solutions, which in principle could be absolutely great – most of the current PMS/CMS available is not a cloud product – when and if they will be is part of the essential product strategy discussion. Available with some new entrants.

Fundamentally – just about all of the current PMS/CMS solutions can operate in an IT hosted environment rather than being on site in the firm. It is a little scary but as long ago as 2013 I [wrote a piece](#) about advice on how to buy hosted IT. The world has changed but many of the messages still apply.

There have been some collapses of suppliers over the last few years but again the right due diligence and advice can be a great benefit. Getting the SLAs and the contract right is key. Specialists with experience of successfully hosting the current PMS/CMS is a good starting point with a demonstration of the capability of handling added value integrated solutions, evidence of performance with DR situations and contracts that are flexible to handle changes in say ownership of the firm, moves to different PMS/CMS. Experience with other PMS/CMS also useful

A chat with [MLS Advantage](#) supplier [etiCloud](#) supported by security adviser [Mitigo Group](#) would not be a waste of time.

Hosted IT should bring

- Flexible working
- Optimisation of Business Continuity/ disaster recovery risk
- More data security (secure data centres)
- One stop shop for support
- Cuts the need for special skills in house and allows IT function to focus on added value
- Cuts worry and management time
- Scalable
- Capital not required – costs flexible by user per month – costs reduced

### Apologies

I fully understand that many in law firm management like to stay away from IT but at the moment in the UK it is critical that all firms know where they are and where they are going. Strategy, operational performance, compliance, credibility, image and finance are all dependent. We need to have a clear plan for which we need to know where we stand and where we want to be.

We have to be more demanding of our PMS/ CMS suppliers and develop the right way forward.

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

The Solicitors Act 1974 has kept the courts busy again during the past month. At costs judge level, in **Stella v Hodge Jones & Allan LLP** [2024] EWHC 1704 (SCCO) Master Whalan was asked to decide whether 34 bills were interim "statutory" bills, or merely requests for payments on account, in which case, time would not run for applying for assessment under s.70 until delivery of the final bill. He held that all £225,697.60 worth of the bills, of which £198,635 had been paid, were the latter, so they could all be assessed. He added "If a solicitor wants to provide for the demand and payment of interim statute bills, then the retainer should express an unequivocal provision to this effect. The profession's consistent failure to do so is, frankly, baffling". It is surprising how often firms fail to do that!

However, in **Holcroft v Thorneycroft Solicitors Ltd** [2024] EWHC 1473 (KB), Eyre J refused to make an order for detailed assessment under the 1974 Act of a bill rendered by the solicitors to their former client for work in a personal injury claim. Before the issue of proceedings, the client had authorised the firm to accept a settlement offer of £24,200 including costs on the terms set out in a letter of 4 August 2020 which had identified the profit costs and disbursements to be deducted from the settlement sum. The client had written "I have signed and

accepted it on the attachment". That had amounted to a binding agreement not only that the offer would be accepted, but also as to the division of the offer amount between the parties and as to the precise amount recoverable by the solicitor for its costs and disbursements. It followed that the client could not seek to use the section 70 procedure to reopen that agreement.

Next, non-party costs orders. In a decision which has only just come to light although handed down on 20 May, in **Transomas Ltd v Kheri Trading Ltd** [2024] EWHC 1349 (Ch) Joanna Smith J, made a non-party costs order against the sole director of the two claimant companies, to prevent her from hiding behind a corporate identity and thus engaging in what would otherwise have been, for her, risk-free litigation. Her conduct over the course of the litigation had justified the order since she had repeatedly made very serious and unsubstantiated allegations which the court had found to be completely misconceived.

For guidance about varying an order for security for costs, see **Exporien Mining Private Ltd Co v Aggreko International Projects Ltd** [2024] EWHC 1463 (Comm) in which Phillip Marshall KC dealt with an application for an extension of time to provide security as previously ordered, and for a variation of the order in terms of the

type of security to be provided. The judge held that under CPR 3.1(7), the court could entertain a claimant's application to vary the form of security it had been ordered to provide, despite a lack of material change in circumstances since the order had been made. However, the judge went on to direct that an After-the-Event insurance policy offered as security required dealing with, within 21 days, in order to address points of objection raised by the defendant which the judge had accepted.

As usual, Part 36 has provided for almost monthly caselaw. In [Elbanna v Clark](#) [2024] EWHC 1471 (KB) Sweeting J held that an offer to settle on terms that "The Claimant will settle the issue of liability in this claim on the basis that the Defendant will accept 75% of the Claimant's claim for damages to be assessed", was not an offer effective so as to give rise to the Part 36 consequences which would otherwise follow from the claimant's success at the trial. The wording had not made reference expressly to breach of duty or to a causation issue which was initially to be determined at a preliminary issue hearing. However, the judge went on to say that the offer might have those consequences at a later stage when all liability issues had been determined, but that would be a matter for further argument if it arose.

Judgment in what is probably the largest costs budgeting case was also heard this month. In [Pan NOx Emissions Litigations, Re](#) [2024] EWHC 1728 (KB), Constable J and Senior Costs Judge Gordon-Saker were asked to approve budgets where the claimants sought over £342 million and the defendants £306 million. They were

unimpressed and did not hold back "The incurred costs to date are as eye-watering as the costs that are said yet to be incurred", they said and approved "only" £52m for the claimants for tranches 1 and 2 and £114m for the defendants! Also interesting was the number of counsel who were needed to "budget" at the hearing -5 silks and 18 juniors who took three days to present their arguments!

Space constraints permit only a mention of two other cases. **Houssein v London Credit Ltd** [2024] EWCA Civ 721 is principally about whether default interest amounted to a penalty, but the Court of Appeal also gave interesting guidance about issue based costs orders and indemnity basis costs. Finally in [McAteer v Hat & Mitre \(In Liquidation\)](#) [2024] EWHC 1746 (Ch) Sir Anthony Mann dealt with "consequential" and payments on account, having one or two choice remarks about "...the technique of a practitioner who submits a skeleton argument also providing submissions directly from the client without actually adopting them [was] not to be encouraged."

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

## The Big Report 2024 highlights The Solicitors' Charity's key role in supporting the profession

- 33% increase in number of solicitors supported by The Solicitors' Charity
- Wellbeing support to clients totalled £972,064
- Rising demand for wellbeing support led to more funded referrals
- Disproportionately high demand from diverse ethnicities

"The support we offer is a real lifeline to the solicitors we help in times of hardship or crisis – it really validates The Solicitors' Charity as a key safety net for the profession," says a Case Manager from the Wellbeing & Grants Team.

The Big Report 2024 reflects this – with 33 per cent more solicitors being helped by

the charity in 2023, compared with previous year, together with an increase in the overall awards made to clients.

A total of £972,064 of wellbeing support was given to solicitors in need last year or paid to partners to provide services.

The rise in demand for the charity's support with emotional, physical, professional, and financial wellbeing in 2023 led to more funded referrals for all the charity's partners – LawCare, Onebright, Renovo, Citizens Advice Manchester, and AdviceWorks.

The demographic breakdown also revealed that demand for services was high from those with diverse ethnic backgrounds. Industry data shows that this figure

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for solicitors through  
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usually represents 18-19% of the solicitor workforce. However, the Solicitors' Charity reports double this proportion of new clients from different ethnicities.

The Solicitors' Charity CEO, Nick Gallagher, said: "We are proud to publish such a positive Big Report this year, reflecting the financial support we have provided over the past year to more than a third more solicitors facing challenges.

"The Big Report shows there is a real demand for our wellbeing services in all four wellbeing pillars – emotional, professional, physical and financial – and we are providing more support than ever before.

"Our clients came from a wide demographic across England and Wales – 66% identified as having some type of disability and over 60% were aged between 30 and 50. This demonstrates that we are helping a large proportion of people in mid-career or when their professional lives are (or should be)

in full flow. The biggest stress factors were identified as time pressures, high workload and client demands and the charity has provided wellbeing support to help solicitors with tackling these.

"Now, more than ever, the growing demand for wellbeing support from solicitors and the increase in awards we have made over the past year demonstrates that The Solicitors' Charity plays a key role in providing all our clients with the help they need to achieve a healthy work-life balance."

The Solicitors' Charity funded 324 clients to receive wellbeing support from LawCare, which was almost double the previous year's number of solicitors, seeking help with bullying and harassment concerns. Onebright was funded to provide mental health assessments and therapy referrals to 28 solicitors and their dependants.

Career transition counselling was provided to 19 clients by Renovo, with 40% already having secured a new job and others actively searching for work after receiving this targeted support. A further 37 solicitors were helped with money management advice by AdviceWorks and 32 received welfare benefit or debt advice from Citizens Advice Manchester, all with The Solicitors' Charity funding.

The charity also supported solicitors (and former solicitors) with their physical wellbeing, including funding a specially adapted car for wheelchair transport.

If you would like more information about The Solicitors' Charity services or to make a donation to support the charity, visit [thesolicitorscharity.org](https://thesolicitorscharity.org).

Read the Big Report 2024 at [thesolicitorscharity.org/big-report](https://thesolicitorscharity.org/big-report)





# Pet of the month

**Name:** Sarah Buxton

**Firm:** Bromleys Solicitors

**Pet Name:** Sergio

**Pet Nickname:** Serge, dooby doo, Sergerton

**What kind of pet do you have?** Lion Head rabbit

**Is your pet: Male/Female/other?**  
 Male. Sergio is a rabbit but identifies as mummy's fur baby.

**How old is your pet?** 3

**Favourite Toy?** Cardboard

**Favourite Activity?** Eating phone wires

**Favourite Treat?** Love heart rabbit treats from B&M

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

*My perfect day would be...* eat, sleep and lots of zoomies and binkies in the garden.

*Favourite thing my parent/s do...* cuddles and brushes.



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

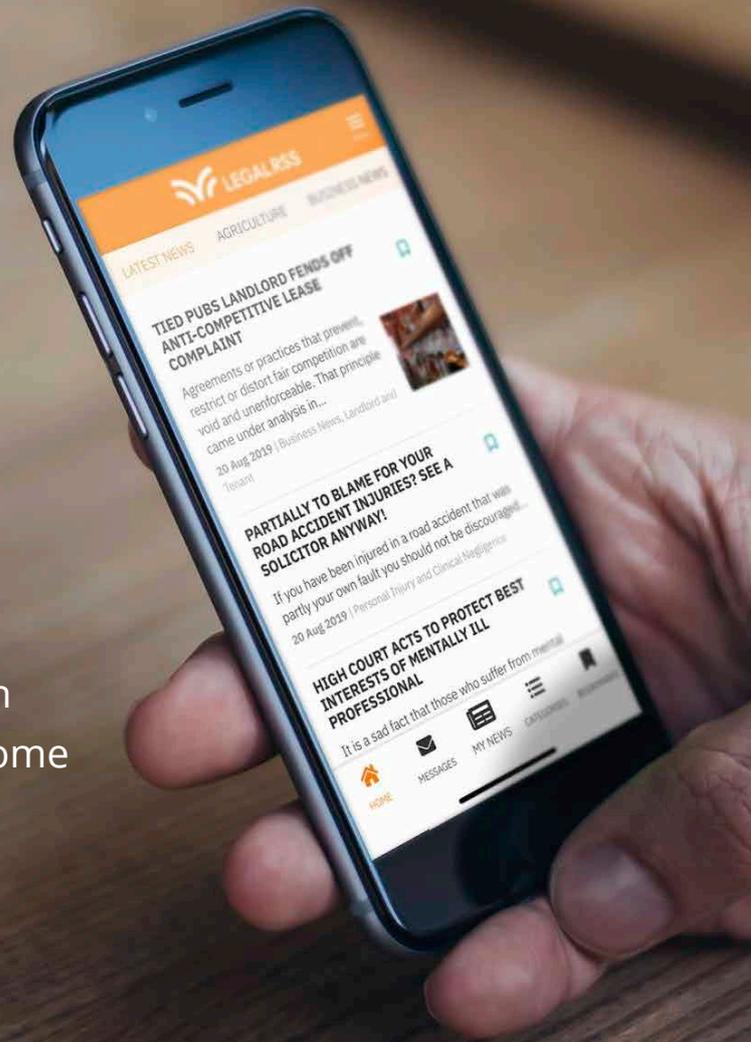
Each month we'll pick a couple of 'Pets of the Month' for the next edition so keep a look out to see if your pet has made it, modelling in *The Messenger* magazine!

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



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