



November 2024

the Messenger

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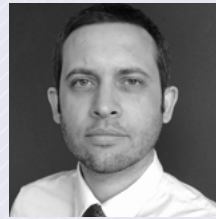
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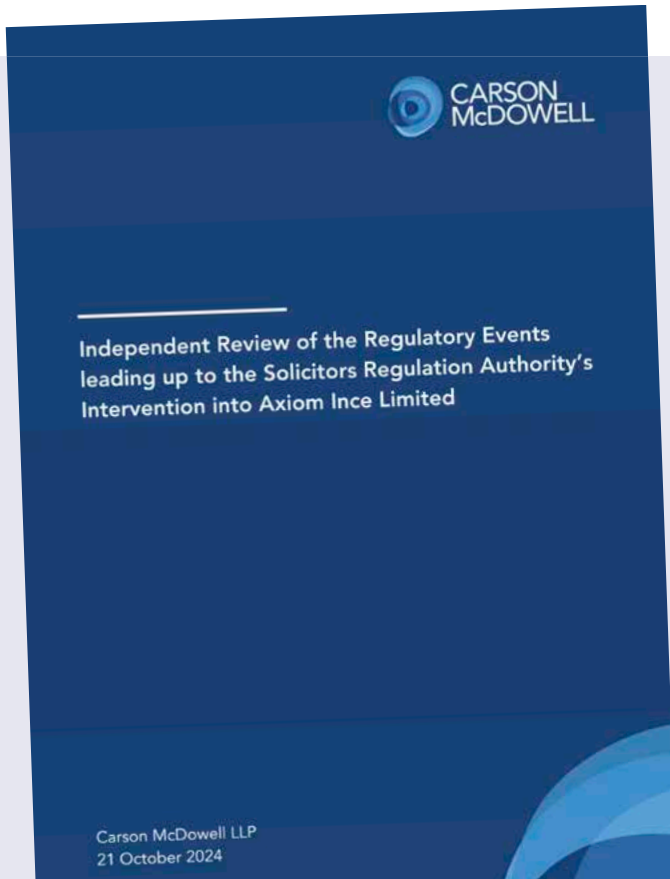


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National stress awareness day



Axiom Ince Independent Report



An independent review of the Solicitors Regulation Authority's (SRA) actions before it closed law firm Axiom Ince Limited has led to the Legal Services Board (LSB) initiating enforcement action against the SRA. When Axiom Ince stopped trading in October 2023, approximately £60 million in client money was missing and approximately 1,400 people lost their jobs.

The LSB commissioned Carson McDowell LLP, a Northern Ireland firm of solicitors not regulated by the SRA, to carry out an independent review into the SRA's handling of Axiom Ince. The aim of the review was to provide assurance to the LSB in the interests of public and professional confidence and to identify any learning based on an independent assessment of the facts.

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Manchester Law Society
Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871



From the President

David Anderson, President

Manchester Law Society is about more than representing the interests of its current members. It is also focussed on the future success of the region's firms and chambers. In an attempt to support the future success by making law more accessible to those who would not otherwise get the opportunity to showcase their ability, MLS has launched the Future Stars programme. A programme designed to assist those with a demonstrable passion for practising law and for the city of Manchester, but with no obvious route into the profession.

In the past month the Future Stars Committee came together to consider the applicants to the programme. The applicants varied in age and background, but all showed an admirable desire to join the ranks of our great profession. They also showed some common attributes:-

- a passion for the city of Manchester and community spirit
- a passion for law and helping people with it
- a passion for learning and development
- careful preparation of their response
- clear understanding of the support they would most benefit from
- fantastic support from their referees

The committee could see a clear opportunity to help a number of candidates through mentoring, work experience and with financial hardship support. The aim is to commence that support in early 2025 and we are looking forward to welcoming our first "Future Stars".

If you would like to support the Programme, please add your details to [this form](#) .

From future stars to a combination of

stars past and present, when, later on the same day as the FS Committee, we hosted the annual Past Officers and Presidents of Manchester Law Society dinner.

It was a lovely occasion, at which we were joined by such luminaries including His Honour Judge Potter, Geraldine McCool, Nigel Day, Philippa Hayes, Mark Mattison and some of our current Officers, including Nick Johnson, Fiona Ledden and Cheryl Palmer-Hughes. During a short speech, I was given the opportunity to reflect on what had changed and what had remained the same.

While the technology we use, the membership we embrace, some of the committees we host and some of the events we arrange have changed, the core of the Society has stayed steadfastly the same. And I don't mean the ever presence of Fran!

Every attendee displayed a continued commitment to and interest in the legal fraternity of Manchester and the people we serve. Everyone had stories of the sacrifices they made to selflessly serve that community and to do what they could to improve it and improve its standing. The desire to achieve that was equally evident in Fiona Ledden, next year's President and in others present who show all of the attributes of a future President of the Society. The future of the Society and what it delivers to local lawyers is in safe hands.

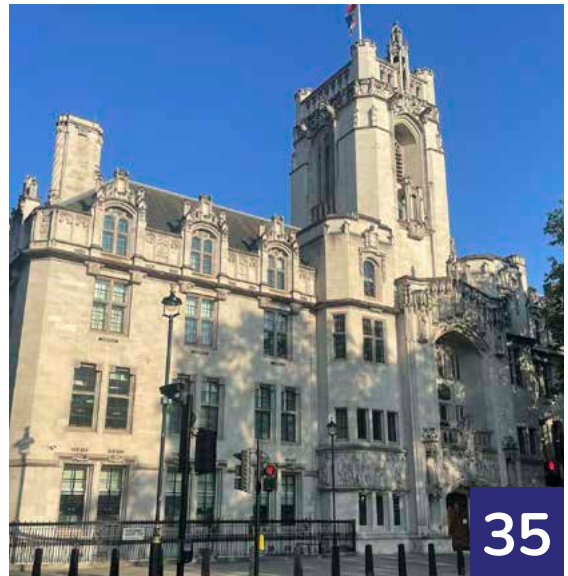
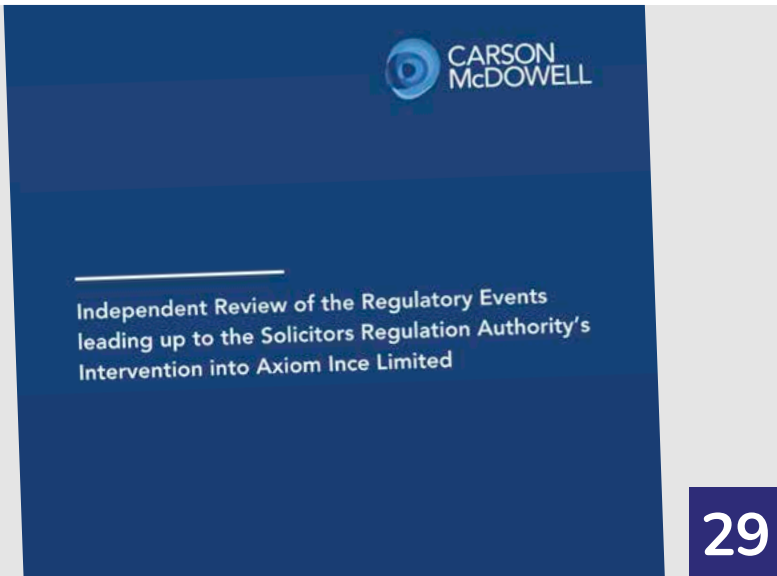
If you look at the work of the society and its committees and are interested in being involved you should contact Fran and the team. It really is a great way to engage with colleagues, get a better understanding of the wider profession and give something back. You too might have the attributes of a future President.

the Messenger



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Manchester Law Society
Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

Manchester Law Society

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Communications Committee

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Manchester Law Society

Carla Jones
Manchester Law Society

Chandre May
Manchester Law Society

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St John's Buildings

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

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Supporting growth in Greater Manchester

Free CMA event 12 November from 15:00 to 17:00

The UK's competition and consumer protection watchdog, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), is partnering with Eversheds Sutherland, to host a Manchester panel event, led by CMA Chair, Marcus Bokkerink, alongside key local influencers including the GMCA, Citizens Advice Manchester and the CBI North West.



Join the discussion to have your say on:

- How is devolution helping to accelerate growth in Greater Manchester?
- What challenges persist, what more can be done to ensure businesses can innovate, access markets, harness digital tools, upskill and grow? How can the CMA support and enable this?
- What are the challenges local people are facing, how can we ensure they are best protected in the drive for growth? How can the CMA's new stronger consumer protection enforcement powers help?

The CMA's Interim Executive Director for Consumer Protection and Markets, George Lusty is attending alongside Marcus and CMA Manchester colleagues who cover digital markets, consumer protection and business operations, to meet and hear from local stakeholders.

Sign-up to book your free place [here](#)

About the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)

The CMA is the UK's principal competition and consumer protection authority and has an expanding presence in the North West with an office established in Greater Manchester. We exist to help people,

businesses and the UK economy by promoting competitive markets and tackling unfair behaviour. Our work has never been more important, given the significant new CMA powers arising from the DMCC Act and the role that competitive markets play in meeting cost-of-living challenges, supporting growth and innovation across the UK economy.

About Marcus Bokkerink, CMA Chair

Marcus Bokkerink is from Greater Manchester; he was raised and went to school here. With close ties to the region, Marcus feels strongly about local success and growth opportunities. Marcus was appointed Chair of the CMA Board in 2022.

He also chairs the Development Board of Pembroke College, Cambridge and serves on Board of Governors of the Manchester Grammar School.

Previously, he was an investor in startups and advisor to the entrepreneurs who founded them. He was also a Senior Partner and Managing Director at Boston Consulting Group (BCG), leading the firm's UK and European Consumer Practice, Strategy Practice and a range of global client teams. He also established and developed BCG's China business.



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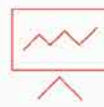
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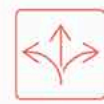
Collaboration spaces



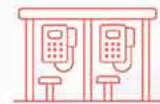
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5 LOCATIONS ACROSS MANCHESTER



Upcoming events

5 November 2024
MLS Council Meeting

6 November 2024
Communications Committee Meeting

7 November 2024
Property Law Committee Meeting

7 November 2024
Employment Law Forum Meeting

12 November 2024
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting

13 November 2024
Family Law Committee Meeting

14 November 2024
Legal Education Committee Meeting

19 November 2024
MLS Officers Meeting

20 November 2024
Private Client Committee Meeting

28 November 2024
Crown and Magistrates Court Committee Meeting

3 December 2024
MLS Council Meeting & AGM

4 December 2024
Communications Committee Meeting

11 December 2024
Civil Litigation Committee Meeting

13 December 2024
MLS Officers Meeting

Virtual Events

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



Messenger Deadlines

22 November 2024 – December Messenger

13 December 2024 – January Messenger





Starting Your Sustainability Journey – Practical Support for Law Firms

Join the [Legal Sustainability Alliance](#) for a free collaborative workshop designed for small and medium sized firms who are starting out on their sustainability journey, or for any firm which wants support and advice on overcoming barriers to embedding sustainable practices.

Lunch will be provided.

This is an in-person event hosted by DWF Law in their Manchester office; a great opportunity to move forward on your path to net zero as well as to network with colleagues old and new. This event is open to all, both LSA members and non-members.

Key themes:

- Making the business case – understanding how climate impacts law firms & their clients
- Introduction to Scopes 1,2 & 3 and the LSA free to use online carbon emissions calculator
- Introduction to net zero and target setting – the role of offsetting
- The Law Society Guidance – what does this mean for firms?
- Learning from others – guest speakers share their experiences
- Embedding sustainability and overcoming barriers – tips for bringing colleagues with you

[More info & register here](#)

Special November offer!

Our friends at [Owen's Kitchen & Bar](#) are giving you 40% off Brunch or Lunch plates throughout November, including Saturdays and Sundays. This offer is valid at both Owen's Hale and Owen's Urmston.

From seasonal produce to time-honoured recipes, Owen's menu is a tribute to the rich & diverse flavours of Britain.

Join them to savour the true taste of Britain, all lovingly prepared with authenticity in mind. Why not dine with them & experience the essence of British cuisine.

Just make sure you state **MLS** in the booking notes when you book your table to ensure you get your 40% off.

Owen's
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[To look at Owen's Kitchen & Bar for both their Hale and Urmston venues click here](#)



Updated Lawtech Fundamentals programme: attracting more attention to this dynamic sector

An updated and expanded version of the popular Lawtech Fundamentals programme (originally released in July 2023) has launched with more advice from successful lawtech founders and two new modules on Funding a Lawtech Startup and The Lawtech Landscape, in particular around Unmet Legal Need and AI. Lawtech Fundamentals is free and is one of five programmes delivered by LawtechUK, the Ministry of Justice-backed initiative, which aims to spearhead the digital transformation of the legal sector in the UK.

Aspiring entrepreneurs and legal tech enthusiasts are invited to join this updated programme, a continuous and transformative learning experience, conducted online through a series of seven modules, allowing participants to complete it at their own pace. It has been designed to appeal to various audiences from those starting up their own lawtech company needing specific advice, to others who want to broaden their knowledge of the lawtech sector to keep their careers on track.

Lawtech Fundamentals covers critical aspects such as ideation, skill acquisition, teamwork, and building a thriving culture in a startup. Its role is to empower individuals at any stage of their lawtech startup journey, offering insights and resources to help companies make their mark in the dynamic world of legal technology.

Ross McNairn, CEO of Wordsmith AI, which in June 2024 announced it had successfully raised \$5 million (around £3.94m) funding is delighted to be one of the lawtech founders contributing to the Fundamentals Programme. McNairn says “Now is a

great time to lean into lawtech: there is an incredible appetite in the legal profession. Lawyers are now really open to engaging with AI technology which represents the single most significant shift for the legal industry in decades and will completely change the way lawyers will work five years from now. But with this huge growth potential comes many challenges including finding the right product market fit, discovering how to differentiate and when to collaborate. Which is where LawtechUK’s Fundamentals Programme comes in – an extremely useful tool to anyone thinking about starting, joining or working with a lawtech company.”

LawtechUK Panel members Maya Markovich and Katie Atkinson have provided the new module content via guest-authored lessons on ‘Lawtech innovations to address unmet legal need’ and ‘Using AI to solve legal challenges’ respectively.

- AI has featured prominently in LawtechUK events in the last year. Katie Atkinson explains some of the reasons for this growth and focus, while also suggesting some unsolved AI challenges and thoughts on AI’s future in lawtech. Atkinson explains “AI technologies are now, for the first time, at the stage of being able to be deployed on a range of real-world tasks. There are opportunities a plenty for use in supporting legal work, but there are also multiple technical challenges that remain to be solved for applicability to a wide range of specialist tasks, and in a manner that engenders stakeholders’ trust in the technologies. This Fundamentals Lesson unpacks the journey of AI from research to deployment today in the legal field and

what the trajectory is for the next stage of development of these technologies, highlighting opportunities for innovators in lawtech to grasp.”

- In innovating to address unmet legal need, Maya Markovich highlights the overwhelming need for solutions to the justice gap, the opportunity for technology to rapidly scale impact and build ROI, and potential use cases. Markovich says “Building ethical technology tools to address unmet legal need is impactful, rewarding, and necessary. The ‘justice tech’ sector, focused on impact-driven direct to consumer solutions to enable increased access to justice, is an exciting area in which to innovate with a powerful ecosystem of its own, and is rapidly growing to meet unmet legal need globally. The module is a launchpad to learn more and inspire entrepreneurs to build solutions that improve interactions with the justice system and level the playing field.”

Lawtech Fundamentals saw strong uptake from law students and a very high engagement from those already working in legal services, including some in innovation departments. Many were keen to understand how best to work with lawtechs and use a shared language. Other attendees explained they were interested in founding or working in a lawtech. Feedback from previous participants includes comments such as:

- It was a really good introduction to the way in which the law sector in general thinks about technology and its approach to this.
- It’s a useful course to get me thinking a bit more like an entrepreneur and a bit less like a lawyer.

“

Lawyers are now really open to engaging with AI technology which represents the single most significant shift for the legal industry in decades

- It’s useful to get outside influence from the course, getting a different perspective is really good.
- It’s given me a better understanding of what founders are thinking and what they go through.

By joining this programme, participants gain a comprehensive understanding of key areas, including:

The UK’s Lawtech Landscape: Explore the vibrant and evolving landscape of lawtech in the United Kingdom, gaining insights into opportunities and challenges within the sector.

Startup Creation and Growth: Learn the ins and outs of establishing a lawtech startup, discover strategies for sustainable growth, and understand the common pitfalls to avoid along the way.

Support Ecosystem: Get acquainted with the extensive support network available for turning a lawtech idea into a reality, including access to invaluable resources and mentorship.

Continued on page 12



One of the programme's highlights is its accessibility. Participants receive exclusive access to a wealth of resources from the Lawtech Fundamentals free online course, including engaging content, video interviews featuring accomplished lawtech founders, and thought-provoking reflective exercises to test their knowledge.

Lawtech Fundamentals is ideal for individuals who are:

- **Legal Professionals and Students:** Those studying or working in the legal field with a keen interest in tech startups and their growth potential.
- **Aspiring Entrepreneurs:** Individuals with a brilliant idea for a lawtech startup but are uncertain about how to transform it into reality.
- **Tech Enthusiasts:** Those who are not familiar with the lawtech landscape but are eager to explore how their innovative ideas can contribute to this field.
- **Legal Sector Enthusiasts:** Individuals intrigued by the prospect of collaborating with or working for the legal sector, particularly in innovation and technology.

Don't miss this opportunity to supercharge your lawtech startup journey. Enrol in the Lawtech Fundamentals programme today by visiting lawtechuk.io/programmes/fundamentals .

AI, Law and Legal Training (ALLT)

The Open University and Lincoln University are working together on a research project to co-produce free open educational resources with stakeholders that will provide knowledge, awareness and confidence in the use of Generative AI (GenAI) for understanding legal processes and accessing legal information. The resources will address ethical and responsible knowledge of and skills to use GenAI. The research is being funded by [UKRI Responsible AI](#) .

We would like to invite law firms to participate in an online workshop on Thursday 9th January 2025: 12.00 to 2.00pm. We would welcome the participation of paralegals, trainee solicitors, junior lawyers, and more experienced practitioners from different areas of legal practice. By

involving practitioners with different levels of experience and areas of specialism we aim to gain a better understanding of how these resources can effectively enhance knowledge and awareness of GenAI in legal settings. The findings from the workshop will directly inform the creation of the open educational resources, which will be freely available on The Open University, Open Learn platform.

The project is led by Francine Ryan Francine.ryan@open.ac.uk . If you would like to attend the workshop, please email open-justice@open.ac.uk and we will provide you with more details. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss the project further, please feel free to contact Francine Ryan directly.

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Quizzing the night away!

Thanks to all those that attended our autumn Posh Pub Quiz on 17th October! We had a whale of a time at the always excellent [Manchester Hall](#).

We had 13 teams thrashing it out to see who had the biggest brains – or at least retained the most trivia!

Teams were playing for the grand prize of five bottles of Champagne and a massive box of chocolates, the team with the best name won five bottles of Prosecco, and the team in last place won five £5 Greggs vouchers! All the prizes were provided by our kind sponsor, [G2 Legal](#). I could see some people eyeing up the Greggs vouchers from the start!!



Guests were greeted with a glass of fizz at our book in and bubbles portion of the evening. Everyone checked out the

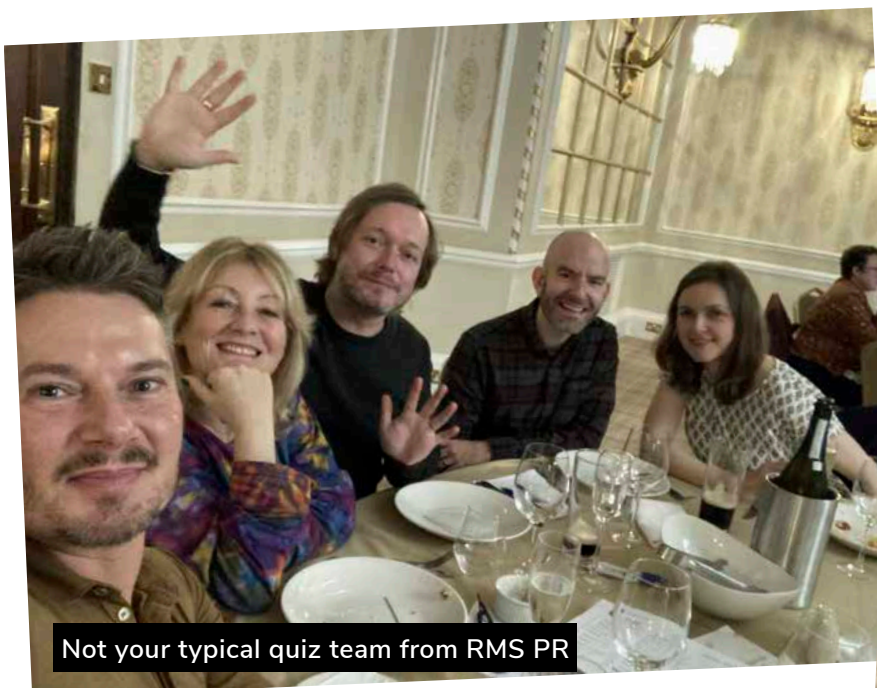


Quiz prizes

competition, secured their spot and eyed up the prizes.

The Quizmaster [Chris Payne](#) had everyone scratch their heads with rounds on music, TV general knowledge and a picture round on cartoons. Our team of MLS and We Love MCR Charity got 8.5/10 on that round so we must have only spent most, not all, of our childhoods in front of the box.

This time the Genius Round was a bit less taxing – at least for me. We had to name all the films Quentin Tarantino has a directorial



Not your typical quiz team from RMS PR



Smarty Pints

credit for. Can you name all ten? A point for each one you get right and a point off for any you get wrong!

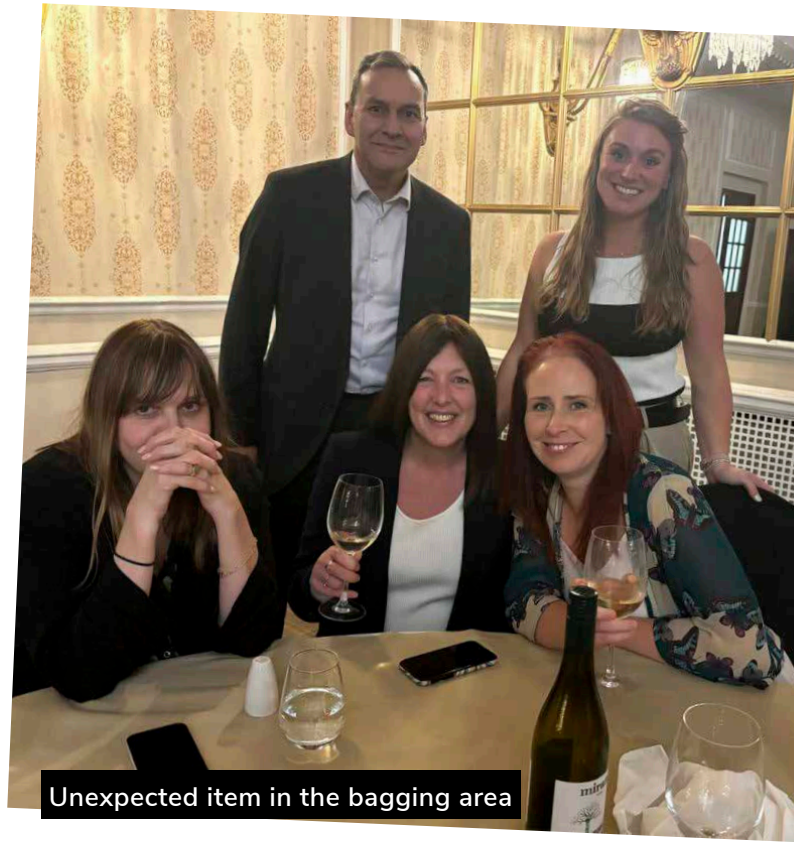
With the Genius round done all that was left was to tot up the scores. It was tight at the top with only two and a half points between the top three places! But Quizmas Rascals just managed to pip Team Fletchers and Taking Care of Quizness to the top spot.

Unexpected item in the bagging area won the best team name chosed by the Quizmaster.

Wilson’s Quiz Wizards brought up the rear with the wooden spoon prize. Hopefully a sausage roll on the way home softened the blow!

It was a really great night, and we are totting up the figures for how much was raised for [We Love Manchester](#) .

Carla Jones,
Manchester Law Society



PLACE	TEAM NAME	SCORE
1	Quizmas Rascals	51.5
2	Team Fletchers	50
3	Taking Care of Quizness	49
4	Not your typical quiz team	47.5
5	The Quizzard of Oz	43
6	And in last Place	43
7	Unexpected item in the bagging area	43
8	Smarty Pints	41.5
9	Glaisyers Golden Gavels	40.5
10	Terms and Quizditions	39.5
11	The Globetrotters	39.5
12	You’re a Quizard Harry	37
13	Wilson’s Quiz Wizards	33.5



Expansion of Committees!

With Manchester's growing legal community, we feel it may be time to expand our committees. We are looking at potentially creating four new committees:

- International – proposed to be a cross-specialism committee that looks at all aspects of international law
- Corporate and Commercial
- Business and Property Court
- Personal Injury and Clinical Negligence
- Regulatory Law

What do our Committees do?

MLS Committees meet regularly, usually quarterly or bimonthly, for an hour.

The Committees that focus on an area of law discuss consultations from the Law Society, SRA or other bodies, and put together a response on behalf of the Society.

Our Committees are a safe space to discuss with peers any issues you may be facing in the sector and hear advice on how others are managing the same difficulties.

Many Committees put together education events ranging from a speaker at a committee meeting to a full day conference.

The Committees are a great way to network in your area of specialism and to give back to the legal community in Manchester.

What would I have to do as a Committee member?

As a Committee member you will need to engage with the Committee by attending meetings. You can become more involved by taking on projects, inviting speakers, taking up a secretary or deputy chair role to support the chair.

How do I join a Committee?

To join the Committee you need to be a member of Manchester Law Society.

To express your interest in joining a Committee please email enquiries@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk stating the Committee(s) you are interested in. We will let you know your membership status, when the next meeting is, and add you to the list.

Poll

Which Committees do you think we should create?

- International Law
- Corporate and Commercial
- Business and Property Court
- Personal Injury and Clinical Negligence
- Regulatory Law

[CLICK HERE TO VOTE](#)

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Conquering the email avalanche

Managing your inbox can feel like a full-time job. The never-ending stream of emails can be overwhelming and stressful, leading to anxiety and burnout from the pressure to respond quickly and stay organised. So why is it so hard to keep up with emails when you work in the legal sector?

Firstly, the sheer volume of emails can be overwhelming; with some emails requiring urgent attention because of deadlines, negotiations, or pressing questions. These emails need prompt and careful responses. Legal emails often contain detailed, complex information that must be thoroughly read and considered to avoid mistakes.

Secondly, there's such a lot of administrative work involved in legal work. Most people working in the legal sector need to coordinate with other people, each needing different responses and follow-ups. One email can quickly turn into many more emails - an email avalanche. Every email must be carefully documented and filed for future reference to comply with legal standards, adding more work.

Thirdly, frequent interruptions and high workloads make it even harder to keep up with emails. When you are busy it likely that you have very little dedicated time for non-billable tasks like email management. This can result in a backlog of unread emails, or ones you have simply flagged to come back to later.

Tips for keeping your inbox under control

Understanding these challenges can help you simplify your email management, reduce stress, and respond quickly to important messages.

- 1. Set clear boundaries** - You could set specific times for checking and responding to emails, rather than allowing them to interrupt your workflow throughout the day. For instance, checking emails at designated times in the morning, after lunch, and before the end of the day can help manage the influx without constant distractions.
- 2. Prioritise and categorise** - You can use features like flags, labels, or folders to sort emails by urgency and subject matter. This way, you can quickly identify and address the most critical emails first, ensuring that urgent matters are not overlooked.



- 3. Use filters and rules** - These can automatically sort incoming emails into relevant folders can save time. For example, emails from specific people can be directed to designated folders, allowing for easier tracking and follow-up.
- 4. Manage the inbox size** - A cluttered inbox can be overwhelming and counterproductive. Regularly archiving old emails and deleting unnecessary ones helps keep the inbox manageable. Keep your inbox size small by moving emails to appropriate folders or archives, ensuring that only active and pending matters remain in the inbox.
- 5. Effective subject lines** - A well-written subject line helps the recipient understand the email's purpose at a glance and can aid quicker and more efficient communication. It also helps if you need to search for the email again in the future.
- 6. Keep emails concise** - Long, wordy emails can lead to miscommunication and take more time to read and respond to. Focus on the essential information and any required actions.
- 7. Ask yourself if it needs to be an email** - We are all used to sending emails, but sometimes a phone call or Teams chat can be quicker and can save a lot of back and forth of emails.
- 8. Be careful about who you send emails to** - Only include people who really need see them. When replying, avoid using "Reply all" unless everyone needs to see your response. This keeps inboxes less cluttered and helps make sure the right people get the right information.

“

The never-ending stream of emails can be overwhelming and stressful, leading to anxiety and burnout from the pressure to respond quickly and stay organised

- 9. Disable notifications** - Constant email notifications can be a significant source of distraction. Turning off non-essential notifications allows you to focus better on the task at hand.
- 10. Use the 'two-minute rule'** - If an email can be responded to in two minutes or less, handle it immediately. This practice, known as the 'two-minute rule', helps prevent minor tasks from accumulating and becoming overwhelming.
- 11. Set up an out-of-office message and voicemail when you're on holiday** - If you're worried about being overwhelmed with emails, ask for important ones to be resent after you return, or consider saying you'll be back a day or two later than you actually are to give yourself time to catch up.
- 12. Checking emails at home** - Again, only do this at set times instead of constantly looking at your inbox. This helps you keep a good balance between work and personal time. When you do check, focus on urgent emails first and save the rest for later. This way, you stay organised and avoid burnout.

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From page 19

As individuals, we can improve how we handle emails by setting clear boundaries, prioritising important tasks, using tools to automate repetitive tasks, and keeping messages concise. These steps can help us stay productive and reduce stress.

Workplaces also play an important role in managing emails and supporting employees' mental health. They should set

clear rules, such as limiting emails outside of working hours and avoiding unnecessary "Reply all" messages. Encouraging good email habits helps employees focus on their work without feeling overwhelmed, prevents burnout, improves productivity, and supports a better work-life balance. Overall, good email management is key to creating a supportive and mentally healthy workplace.

LawCare

For more guidance on email management and other mental health and wellbeing tips, visit LawCare's website. LawCare also have a helpline open to anyone working in the legal sector in the UK. It's free and confidential, and they are there to listen and support you, no matter what you're going through. Call LawCare on 0800 279 6888, email support@lawcare.org.uk or get in touch using the online chat on: www.lawcare.org.uk

Webinars from LawCare



Menopause and the legal sector webinar – 5 November

Join LawCare for a special webinar on **Tuesday 5 November from 12:30 to 13:30** called *Menopause and the legal sector: How to support your colleagues without getting your briefs in a twist*.

This insightful webinar will explore the impact of menopause in the legal sector.

For more details on the content of the session please [click here](#).

Don't miss this opportunity to enhance understanding and create a supportive environment for all colleagues.

[Book you place now](#).

Let's talk about grief and loss webinar – 7 November

On **Thursday 7 November, from 12.30 to 1.30pm**, join LawCare for a webinar on how grief and loss affect those in the legal sector. The webinar will help you understand these issues better and provide practical strategies to support your colleagues. Hear from our panel as they share valuable insights and experiences.

[Sign up for the webinar here](#)

2024: THE YEAR CONVEYANCERS TOOK MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS.

For our **NEW Market Research Report**, we interviewed 100 residential property solicitors and conveyancers across England, Scotland and Wales. **What did they say?**

Find out by downloading it below.



DOWNLOAD YOUR COPY NOW



The Generation Game

Do you have a mix of ages across your team? Whatever title you want to give the diverse generations of people you work with is irrelevant. The reality is that each generation is different and potentially they need managing slightly differently. Each generations outlook on life and work differs for lots of reasons:

- Changes in the way people bring up their children
- Changes in teaching methods at school
- Society has changed
- Advances in technology
- The dreaded social media!

I've heard so many managers who are around 40 years old and upwards talk about managing people who are 19 – 25. I can't say what they call them but it's not always complimentary! They talk about how the 'youth' has changed.

- They are more demanding
- They think the world owes them a living
- They want everything now
- They are always asking why!

This opinion is highlighted in this [Law Society Gazette article; Gen Z: Coming Through](#) [↗](#). I particularly love the line that Gen Z only eat avocados!

This article, [5 red flags that show you don't understand your Gen Z employees](#) [↗](#), provides evidence that potentially Gen Z might be misunderstood

My generation was one of 'do as you're told' and 'speak when you're spoken to'. I took this mentality into the world of work. A lot of my generation are now managers and struggle with people not mirroring their own mentality.



I sense their frustration when they are talking about them. However, they are fighting a losing battle. Gen Z (1997-2012) aren't going anywhere, so maybe it's time for managers to adapt to the different generations of people they work with. Embrace their outlook on life, the way they challenge, their desire to not settle for a 'job for life' and to explore and try new things. As a manager it's dangerous to adopt one style of managing people. Treating everyone the same just doesn't work. It might be easier for the manager, but they will pay the price in the long run

Personally, I do think all the generations cross over and it's far too simplistic to categorise people, but I do think it's something you can't ignore and certainly as a manager you can't lose sight of.

One more thing – the next batch are on their way – Gen Alpha (born 2013 – 2022). It won't be long before they are venturing into the world of work, and it'll be time to adapt once again

Need a hand developing the managers in your team? Contact Mike on [07825301660](tel:07825301660) or email him direct on mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk [↗](#)



Management Closing the Gap

In some teams, the gap between the team and the manager can be huge. It's more of a transactional relationship and this leads to distrust, a lack of rapport and a lack of creativity. In this webinar, Management – Closing the Gap, Mike Ode from Potential Unearthed will help you to close the gap so your team feel actively engaged and empowered.

Here's what we'll cover:

- Mind the Gap – How big is the gap between you and your team? What's the impact?
- Assess your team – Who in your team would like more involvement and who is happy how things are?
- An introduction to 8 questions to help get under the skin of your team.
- Shake up your meetings – Learn different ways to stop your meetings being one-way traffic.
- Participative management – Learn why this style of management can help to engage your team.

Time: 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 [here](#)

24 Regulation Update & News

By **Andrea Cohen**, Compli, Weightmans



Stop press!

The LSB released the Carson McDowell report on the SRA Axiom Ince debacle yesterday, 29 October, and, as a result of the findings, will be initiating enforcement action against the SRA.

There will be much comment over the next few days/weeks/months, but important to note, and make preparation for, is the ramifications of the recommendations. This includes law firms not going for long periods without an SRA visit, with an inspection regime based on risk profile, taking account of complaints, changes in approved role holders, type of work undertaken, size of firm, recent mergers or acquisitions etc. Are you comfortable that your firm would stand up to scrutiny if the SRA contacted you?

The report recommends reforms including:

- increasing numbers of firm inspections
- changes to Accounts rules relating to accountant's reports
- taking proactive steps in relation to accumulator firms
- increased scrutiny of sales and purchases of firms
- introducing an alternative, short of intervention, to allow more detailed investigation of a firm to take place

Compli can provide expertise and advice on risk and compliance, AML, disciplinary assistance etc. so please get in touch if you need assistance.

After the recent unseasonably warm days, we've definitely hit Autumn, with the heating kicking in not only in our homes and offices, but in the regulatory world as well, and the Compli team is back with our monthly round-up to update you on developments in the world of risk and compliance and recent disciplinary decisions.

Data breaches and cyber attacks

As a reminder of the importance of ensuring confidentiality and having appropriate security measures in place, a law firm specialising in criminal and military law has been reprimanded by the ICO after client details relating to 8,234 UK data subjects, including over 850 deemed to be at 'high-risk' of harm or detriment due to the special category of data, were accessed due to having insufficient security measures. It did not have multi-factor

authentication (MFA) in place, outsourced its IT management to a third party under a contract signed in 2012 and relied on password strength etc.

Cyber attacks against law firms increased dramatically in the 12 months to August 2024, with a 77% rise in successful attacks, and almost 75% of top 100 law firms have, at some time, been impacted by cyber-attacks. In its recently published annual Law Firms Survey, PwC notes that cyber threats are the main concern for law firms. As the



large amount of data held is often very sensitive, firms are lucrative targets with hackers threatening to put the data on the internet or lock firms out until payment of a ransom.

If we, or our CyXcel team can help, please get in touch.

Response to SRA consultation

In previous months we have referred to the SRA's consultation on its financial penalty proposals, which closed on 20 September, the responses reported have not, to put it mildly, been favourable. The Law Society opposes the majority of the proposals, having serious concerns on the basis they are confusing, and appear 'flawed and inconsistent with the principles set out in the Legal Services Act', and it confirms its 'strong opposition to the SRA's ambitions for any further extension to its fining powers'. It also questions the timing, when the SRA is being investigated for its conduct in relation to the Axiom Ince and SSB case. The report of the findings has still not, at the date of writing, been published by the LSB. Local law societies, firms and individuals have also criticised the proposals. Watch this space!

SRA revised business plan 2024/25

The SRA has recently issued a revised business plan for the next 12 months. Points to note regarding SRA plans between November 2024 and October 2025 include:

- delivering its programme of proactive thematic reviews in key areas, including an AML review focused on source of funds, and a review on the roles of compliance officers.

- undertaking training record reviews and a thematic review focused on family law and landlord and tenant solicitors and firms, to understand whether and how solicitors meet their professional obligations to maintain competence.
- continue to regulate proactively and strive towards a full-market understanding of AML, compliance approaches, risks and sanctions, and other core information
- develop the regulatory approach to AI
- expect to build the use of financial penalties, and the thematic team will continue to review key areas of interest

Transparency rules

We referred last month to CiLEx regulation changes, requiring firms it regulates to publish price and service information for all legal services and raised the question as to whether the SRA would follow suit. On 30 September the SRA issued updated guidance and pricing templates and noted that as a result of its ongoing checks of websites and declarations made by firms that they are compliant, it has issued almost 500 warnings and fines for breaches since the Rules were introduced.

New practice notes and guidance

SRA guidance

[Transparency in price and service](#) 

[Online reviews: How to engage with them](#) 

Continued on page 26



Law Society practice notes

[Freelance Solicitors](#)

[Professional undertakings](#)

[Social media](#)

Manchester Law Society Events

Another successful and interesting annual Regulatory conference was held a few weeks ago with subjects ranging from 'Net Zero and climate action' to 'Hot topics in the regulatory world', and 'Routes into a career in law' to 'AI, Cyber and Data Security' and AML.

Date for your diary:

The next COLP, COFA, MLRO forum will be held on Tuesday 14 January – all welcome. Email ChandreMay@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk if you would like to attend.

Disciplinary and regulatory decisions

There have been a number of decisions and judgments reported since our last update, including:

Former partner struck off after 'sting' operation

A former partner was struck off following a conviction for attempting to engage in sexual communications with a minor. He was sentenced to a community order, including 20 rehabilitation activity days and placed on the sex offenders register for five years. The SDT approved the agreed outcome and he was struck off and ordered to pay £3,000 costs.

Struck off after conviction for blackmail

A solicitor has been struck off by the SDT and ordered to pay over £4000 costs following a conviction for blackmail. The solicitor had threatened a fellow director

manchesterlawsociety.org.uk

that he would go to the FCA if his settlement demands relating to his leaving the company were not met.

Solicitor suspended after losing company over £200,000

Approving an agreed outcome with the SRA, the SDT has suspended a sole practitioner for 12 months with conditions to be placed on his ability to practice at the end of the suspension period, following his 'reckless' participation or facilitation of transactions which bore the hallmarks of advance fee fraud. He also failed to complete an undertaking, allowed the client account to be used as a banking facility and failed to make sure accounting records were maintained. He was also ordered to pay costs of £15,000.

Managing partner suspended for instructing solicitor to lie

A solicitor, who had only been admitted three weeks earlier, was instructed to send a misleading email to a client by her supervisor, the managing partner. She refused, the email was not sent, and the underlying transaction was not affected. While the SDT found the partner had acted dishonestly, it imposed a 9 month suspension, taking into account exceptional circumstances, the fact the solicitor showed remorse and that in the three years it took the matter to reach the SDT, the solicitor was issued practising certificates free from conditions. He was ordered to pay £14000 costs.

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.

Job Vacancy: Family Lawyer – Private and Finance

Summary

As a Family Lawyer at [AFG Law](#), you will play a key role in managing and overseeing such cases from start to finish. You will provide expert advice to clients, ensure compliance with legal requirements, and deliver a high level of service. This position requires a strong knowledge of the relevant law, excellent communication skills, and a client-focused approach.

- Job Title: Family Lawyer
- Department: Family
- Reports to: Family Directors
- Position: Full-time, permanent
- Office Location: Hybrid/Bolton, Bury and Stockport
- Salary: Competitive and dependent on relevant experience

Job description

Who are AFG Law?

Established in 1897, AFG Law is a multi-disciplinary law firm who provides a range of services across the Northwest and beyond. It is built on traditional foundations combined with modern values and a fresh, forward-thinking approach. It is our mission to offer outstanding legal services, utilising our wealth of expertise and knowledge to advocate for our clients and simplify the process, cut the jargon, and achieve the best possible outcomes.

At AFG Law, it is our vision to grow, invest and innovate, to be the law firm of choice in our region and beyond with a reputation for exceptional levels of client service. We provide a great place to work, that offers tangible paths of progression and rewards

for a job well done. We will shout about our successes both internally and externally, understanding that effective communication is crucial to build both our team and our client base as we expand into new geographical areas.

Through building strong relationships with our clients and always working with the utmost professionalism, we ensure they feel secure in our hands. We have a social conscience and value our local community, supporting several noble causes, as well as being a key presence on the regional business circuit.

The Opportunity

As a Family Lawyer at AFG Law, you will be fully supported to showcase and develop your knowledge within the legal industry.

You will have the opportunity to demonstrate your expertise by providing a service to clients and guiding colleagues.

You will enjoy a challenging and rewarding career that allows you to grow and develop your vision, talent and originality.

Key Duties and Responsibilities

Provide expert legal advice to clients on family matters.

- Experience in advocacy.
- Drafting and reviewing legal documents.
- Liaise with clients and other relevant parties.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

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- Maintain accurate and up-to-date records of the file.
- Keep clients informed about the progress of their case.
- Resolve any legal issues or disputes related to the client's case.
- Lead and mentor your pod to deliver outstanding client care.
- 25 days' annual leave, in addition to bank holidays
- Additional leave for your length of service
- 1-day annual leave for your birthday
- 1-day recharge day
- The opportunity to buy and sell annual leave
- Annual Christmas company shutdown
- Attendance bonus
- Social Committee events
- Innovation Group contributions to help build better ways of working
- Being entered into prize draws for sharing and receiving employee praise
- Employee gift scheme for important dates and milestones
- Refer a client incentive
- Refer a colleague incentive
- Continuous learning and development opportunities
- Flexible working – subject to business needs and your role within the Firm
- Hybrid working – subject to business needs and your role within the Firm

Qualifications and Skills

We are looking for a highly skilled candidate with the following qualifications and skills:

- Qualified Solicitor or Chartered Legal Executive
- Registered with the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) or the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEX).
- Minimum of 2 years of experience in finance and private law. 3 years of experience would be preferred.
- Strong knowledge of finance and private law.
- Proficiency in using case management systems and relevant legal databases.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Effective time management and organisational skills.
- Attention to detail and accuracy in legal documentation.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Client-focused with a commitment to delivering exceptional service.

Employee Benefits

Following the successful completion of a three-month probation period, the successful applicant will benefit from:

Contact Details

Should you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact hrdepartment@afglaw.co.uk or call 01204 377600. We will be more than happy to assist you.



From page 1

Axiom Ince Independent Report (continued)

The review found that, in the lead-up to the SRA closing Axiom Ince in October 2023:

- The SRA did not act adequately, effectively and efficiently,
- The SRA did not take all the steps it could or should have taken, and
- The SRA's actions and omissions in this matter necessitate change in its procedures to mitigate the possibility of a similar situation arising again.


The LSB Board has considered the independent report and its findings. In the light of the impact on the achievement of the regulatory objectives set out in the Legal Services Act, which include promoting the public interest and protecting the interests of consumers, the Board decided to initiate action in accordance with its enforcement policy.


Having considered all the options available to it, the Board agreed to initiate the

process to set directions under section 32 of the Act.

The directions, if imposed, would be aimed at requiring the SRA to make changes to better achieve the regulatory objectives.

Under the Act, the LSB must consult the Lord Chancellor, the Competition and Markets Authority, the Legal Services Consumer Panel and the Lady Chief Justice before imposing directions. The SRA and the Law Society will have opportunities to make representations before any final decision is taken as to whether directions should be imposed, and if so, in what terms.

The Law Society has issued a media response which can be found [here](#) 

The SRA have issued a response which can be found [here](#) 

See more on this in our **Regulation Update** on [page 26](#)



“

Under the Act, the LSB must consult the Lord Chancellor, the Competition and Markets Authority, the Legal Services Consumer Panel and the Lady Chief Justice before imposing directions”



What do you need to know about digital marketing for your firm?

We see a lot of time and money being 'spent' on new websites, rather than 'invested'. A lot of money being spent on content that is actually harming the website's performance. A lot of firms who aren't tracking the right metrics, or don't know what metrics they should be tracking.

There's a lot of opacity around enquiries from websites once the phone rings or an email arrives – tracking the enquiries back to digital marketing activity is vital for optimising ongoing work.

Too many law firms still don't have the right knowledge in-house and have to either pay agencies like ours lots of money each month, or they just don't invest at all.

We're looking to change that. As an agency that doesn't really care about being massive – we can afford to tell you everything we know about digital marketing so you can implement in-house, and save lots of money each month on agency fees.

Our core principles are based around charity and 'giving back' and as someone with a MSc in Globalisation and Development, I have underlying interests in fairness and justice in society. We donate large amounts of money to charities each year for this very reason. We've helped build schools in India, and fed and clothed vulnerable people in and around Manchester.

So, on the subject of charity and goodwill – and as we're getting into that time of year again – we are continuing to provide knowledge and insight for law firms

manchesterlawsociety.org.uk

(for free) on how to make more money online: Following on from our webinar for Manchester Law Society members on 'how to make more money online' funnily enough.

We want to know what your burning questions or issues are in the broad spectrum of digital marketing. If we get a consensus or some similar questions, we'll base the next webinars around those specific issues.

Please answer the poll below:

Please find the poll [here](#) where you can also add your email address to the mailing list for future events

What do you need to know about digital marketing for your firm?

Please complete the poll below

Not shared

I want more information about (select all that apply):

- How to create optimised content for the website
- What digital marketing metrics to measure
- What digital marketing tools to use
- How to review our website performance
- How to optimise the website for Local SEO
- How to know what content is and isn't working on the site
- What people we should recruit into our digital marketing department
- How to track leads internally and optimise the 'onboarding'
- How best to use our social media accounts and channels
- How to do link-building effectively
- Other: _____

If you would like to be contacted about any digital marketing events please leave your email below

Your answer _____

[CLICK HERE TO VOTE](#)

Alternatively send your questions to CarlaJones@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk [↗](#) if there is anything you want to hear about that's not covered in the poll.

Not only are we giving away our legal sector digital marketing knowledge and experience, but we've just created a completely free tier for accessing the Digital Dashboard – our database of over 5,000 law firm websites and their website performance data with details on what aspects of the site to address for improved performance.

This means that it is now FREE to get your weekly data updates and track the progress of your competitors through the Legrank system.

Just visit reports.legmark.com to register, or email hazel@legmark.com [↗](#) and she'll set a free account up for you.

Sam Borrett, Legmark



Sam Borrett

News from HQ

Family Law Committee Meeting Invitation

Wednesday 13th November 16:30 - 17:30

In our upcoming committee meeting on Wednesday 13th of November, we will be joined by a guest speaker from [CYFOR](#) [↗](#), who specialise in using digital forensics to support family law investigations.

This presentation will cover key digital forensics specialisms essential in Family Law. CYFOR will focus on mobile phone forensics, computer forensics, cell site analysis, and social media investigations.

If you have specific interests, let us know in advance, or there will be time for questions at the end.

All members are welcome to join the meeting and learn more about how digital evidence can support family law cases. You must register to attend and you can do so in person or virtually.

To book your place please email ChandreMay@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk [↗](#)

If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact CarlaJones@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk [↗](#)



Pearson Solicitors strengthens care department

Pearson Solicitors and Financial Advisers has expanded its care department with the appointment of a new head of child care and a paralegal - both appointments bring a wealth of experience and a continued commitment to children and families in the area.

New Head of Child Care, Rachel Early, joins Pearson Solicitors with over 30 years of experience in child care law. She has a proven track record of handling complex child protection cases and has represented both local authorities and families.

Also joining the team is paralegal Charlotte Wilson.

Rachel represents children, parents and relatives in the most complex child care cases which involve physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, drug and alcohol misuse, and neglect.

Her deep knowledge of key legislation, such as the Children Act 1989 and her ability to

effectively communicate with clients, makes her a force in care proceedings.

Welcoming them to the team, Director and Practice Manager, Joanne Ormston, said: "Rachel's compassionate approach and dedication to ensuring that the voices of children and vulnerable individuals are heard and respected makes her a valuable addition to our team."

"She is committed to building trust and rapport with clients, guiding them through the often challenging legal processes with empathy and professionalism. As head of child care, she will steer our team and provide guidance and mentorship to our new paralegal Charlotte, who we also welcome to the firm."

"Working alongside established Child Care Solicitor, Rebecca Wolfenden and paralegal Nicole Brown, the growing team have not only extensive legal expertise, but these appointments further strengthen our commitment to providing exceptional legal services in care law."

Commenting on her new role, Rachel Early said: "I am pleased to have joined such a well-established firm with a long history of undertaking family work and providing excellent representation to parents and relatives in care proceedings."

Whilst Charlotte Wilson added: "I am delighted to have joined the team at Pearsons. I am eager to contribute to the company's success and excited about the opportunities for professional growth and development here. The value of Pearsons aligns perfectly with my career aspirations, and I look forward to having a meaningful contribution to the shared goals of the firm."



Paralegal Charlotte Wilson and Head of Child Care Solicitor Rachel Early

AFG LAW offers legal aid for family matters at new Stockport office

AFG LAW [↗](#), has announced that it will now be offering legal aid for family law from its recently opened Stockport office, enabling the firm to offer top legal advice to an even greater number of people.

As one of only a handful of law firms that offer legal aid across the Stockport borough, this will enable AFG to offer legal assistance to an even wider reach of people, including those who need it the most. With an award-winning family department consisting of 16 fee earners, AFG have huge scope to assist and support many people across the borough now that the legal aid contract has been granted.

Emma Cordock, Director and Head of Family Law explained more: "We are delighted that we are now able to extend out legal aid services to the Stockport Area to enable us to help those on low incomes, at risk and vulnerable – whether that be due to a domestic abuse, drugs and alcohol, mental health or children's services being involved. To extend our reach to try and help those families throughout Greater Manchester has always been a driving force for AFG as a firm, and the legal aid offering will now allow us to do this even more".

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

The recently opened Stockport office, which



opened in May, is based at Pure Offices at Cheadle Royal Business Park, South Manchester, offers all of AFG's services.

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

The Family department has seen record growth over the past 12 months, with an excellent reputation within the field and amongst clients. Last year it won the accolade of Family Law Firm of the Year in the Talk of Manchester Awards which celebrates regional businesses that have thrived and have proven their success over the past 12 months. The department also won Legal Aid Support Team of The Year. The department now stands at 36, with 16 fee earners. Professional and personal growth within the team is of the utmost importance and all staff have detailed training plans to enhance their ongoing development. This includes everything from business apprenticeships to LPC, SQE, SCILEX, some of which the firm contribute to financially, which also allows staff the study time they require.



TLT improves ranking in the Social Mobility Employer Index

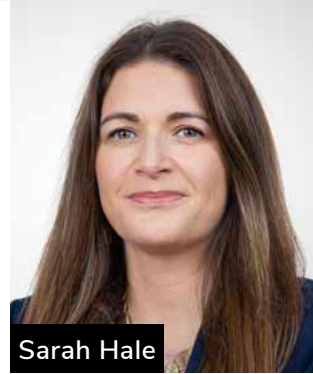
TLT has climbed the rankings in the 2024 Social Mobility Employer Index for the third consecutive year.

The ranking was created by the Social Mobility Foundation in 2017 and ranks UK employers on the action they take to ensure they are open to and progressing talent from all backgrounds. Now in its eighth year, it is considered the leading authority on employer best practice and the definitive benchmark of organisations committed to improving social mobility in the workplace. This year's index ranked 150 organisations, representing 26 sectors and just under one million employees.

In this year's entry, **TLT** has climbed eight places, rising from 47th to 39th. This recognises the steps the firm has taken to improve social mobility and accessibility to the legal profession over the past year.

TLT's achievements in improving social mobility have been driven by a number of initiatives. These have included:

- Partnering with charities including Ablaze in Bristol and My Big Career in London, to open up the legal sector and encourage students from lower socio-economic backgrounds to consider a career in law;
- Partnering with Speakers for Schools – one of the largest social mobility charities – to deliver virtual work experience sessions. This allowed young people from rural and coastal areas to learn more about the legal profession;
- Launching three different pathways to qualify solicitors, prioritising giving those



Sarah Hale



Helen Hodgkinson

with or without university degrees the chance to enter the legal profession;

- Partnering with work-based learning platform Springpod to provide a free interactive platform for young people of all backgrounds to explore, interact and learn about the legal profession;
- Running a 'workplace safari' event in partnership with Manchester Greater Authority, giving young people the chance to experience what it is like to work at a law firm, and to learn about the qualifications required to enter the profession.

Alongside its market-leading initiatives, TLT formalised its ambitions to improve social mobility by committing to ensuring greater diversity in early careers and setting a target to achieve 35% ethnic minority representation across its early career roles (trainees and apprentices) to be achieved by October 2030. Aligning with these commitments, TLT has also introduced a new diversity access programme aimed at eliminating barriers to entry into the legal profession for aspiring ethnic minority lawyers and improving diversity in early careers.

Sarah Hale, partner and social mobility champion at TLT said: "TLT's Social Mobility Network has been instrumental in fostering an inclusive culture where colleagues can bring their whole selves to work – many of these results are thanks to their continued efforts."

“TLT’s continued climbing of the rankings demonstrates that we are not only consolidating our position as the firm of opportunity, but actively improving our openness and accessibility to people of all backgrounds, year on year.”

Helen Hodgkinson, chief people officer at TLT commented: “Our continued progress demonstrates our ongoing commitment to listening to our people and communities and to improving our processes. We

appreciate that improving social mobility starts early and our work with schools, in conjunction with our charity partners, as well as our focus on early careers has been an important part of our success in improving social mobility over the past year.

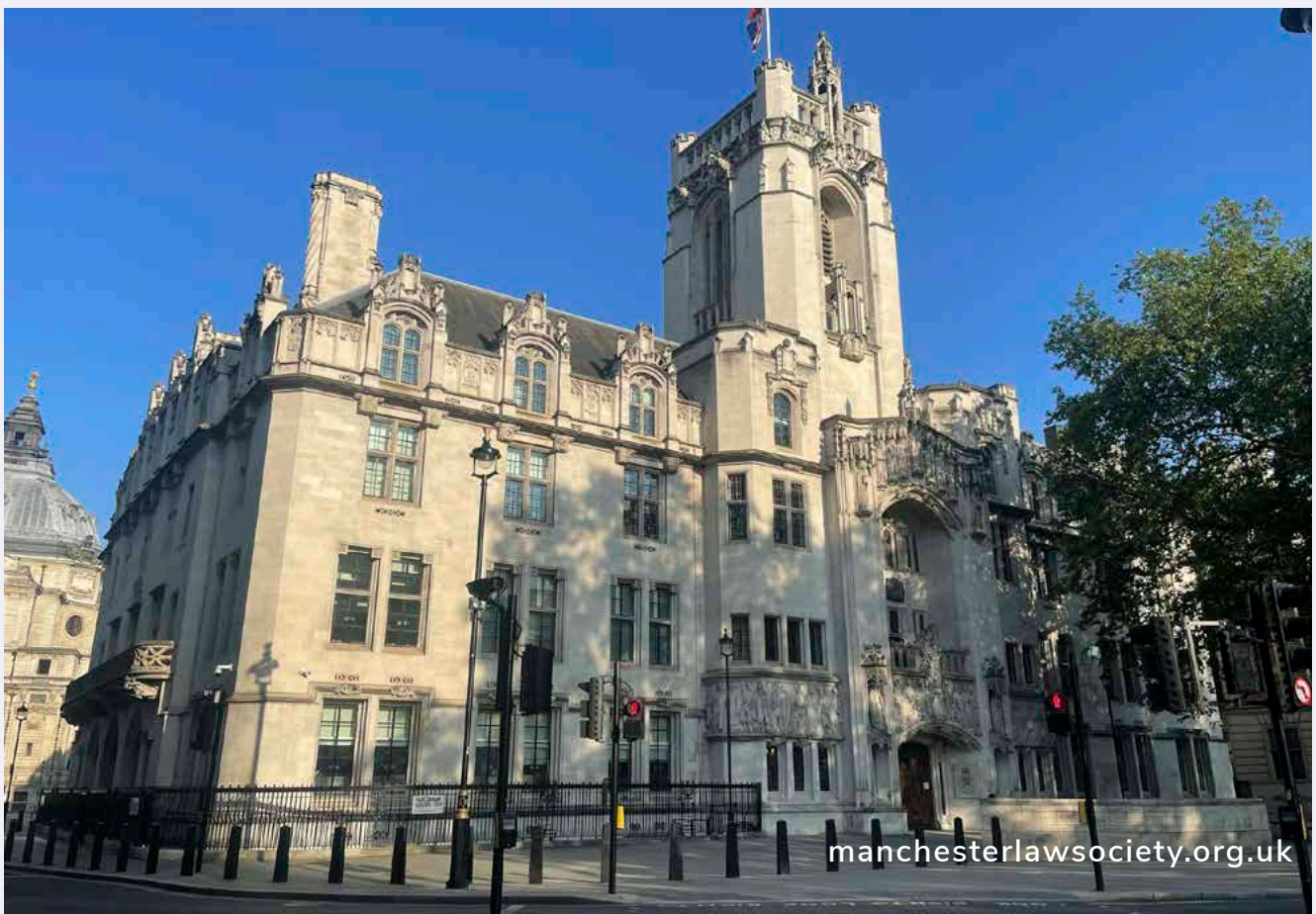
“We recognise that there is still further progress we can make but we are proud of the work done to date and excited to be paving the way to diversifying the legal sector.”

Supreme Court rules clients must agree to costs deductions

Two of our very own Manchester Chambers, [18 St John Street](#) and [King’s Chambers](#) were involved in a Supreme Court judgement where it has been ruled that personal injury clients must have been informed of, and agree to, their solicitors’ bill. It was agreed in *Oakwood v Menzies* that it was of central importance that clients may consider the detail of their bill.

This overturning of the Court of Appeal Judgement could impact the firms’ business and charging models as well as being a boon for clients pursuing costs challenges.

You can read the full details of the judgement [here](#).





Johnson Law Group launches client portal

Portal makes law firm one of the few in its sector to create in-house, unique app

[Johnson Law Group](#) has launched its own client portal, created to enhance their clients experience throughout the claim process.

A web-based portal which is compatible with mobile phones, it launched with JLG's PCP claims, giving clients the ability to upload files, see the progress of their claim, fill in any necessary forms and documents, complete tasks and communicate with the team, all with the aim of significantly reducing reliance on emails and phone calls throughout the case lifecycle.



Jamie Patton

With ambitions to be a market leader in the sector, JLG currently have over 40,000 PCP clients and believe the portal is a huge step forward in streamlining the process for both clients and company. While PCP is the first case type supported with the new web app, there are plans in place to launch other case types in the coming months.

Jamie Patton, Managing Director at Johnson Law Group, said: "Our goal in creating this portal is to use modern technology to continue making it easier for consumers to file and manage their legal cases. Building our own software has enabled us to directly leverage our team's many years of expertise and deliver the most intuitive client experience. And by keeping the software development in-house, we're able to tailor solutions as and when necessary to meet client needs, and continuously enhance the platform based on direct feedback from clients.

"The plan is to continually invest in client-facing software to simplify case management and eliminate the headaches of legacy law firm processes."

Opening its first UK office in February 2020, for the last 30 years Johnson Law Group has been a leader in the US legal mass-tort market and brings a wealth of experience into the UK market, offering legal advice and assistance in a variety of practice areas, from Pension Mis-selling claims to Data Breach claims, Vehicle Emissions Claims and Mis-sold car finance PCP.

Over the past four years, JLG's client base has grown exponentially, with over 400,000 claimants in the diesel emissions group action alone.

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Glaisyers revamps benefits and training offering following employee feedback

Glaisyers ETL [↗](#) has introduced a range of new employee benefits and training opportunities after carrying out a comprehensive colleague survey earlier this year.

The survey covered topics ranging from team culture and values to management style, training, communication and pay and conditions.

It followed a transformational year for Glaisyers ETL, in which it moved to new high-specification headquarters at 3 Hardman Street in Spinningfields in autumn 2023, as well as opening its first office in Liverpool.

In terms of culture, 97 per cent of respondents to the survey said they felt satisfied in their current role and 94 per cent agreed that they felt proud to work at Glaisyers ETL. One hundred per cent agreed that the firm had a culture of openness and honesty, and that management had an open-door policy and could be approached with any concerns.



Janet Westwell

All respondents also agreed that they were “seen as a person not a number”, and that they were satisfied, overall, with communication at the firm.

Janet Westwell, people and organisational development manager at Glaisyers ETL, said, “Overall the responses we received were really positive, and I was particularly happy with how highly the firm was rated in terms of communication. When people feel they can speak freely, and that their input will be valued, you have the foundation without which no amount of other initiatives, processes or strategies will be able to succeed.”

Benefits training and reappraising appraisals

In instances, however, where survey responses indicated an area of potential concern, the firm carried out a review of the issue in question. As a result of this review Glaisyers ETL has introduced a new bonus scheme for non-fee-earners, along with additional management training, a more regular schedule of team meetings and a range of new or enhanced employee benefits.

The firm has also replaced annual appraisals with monthly meetings between staff and their line managers.

Janet explained, “Although 89 per cent of respondents agreed that their overall reward package was good in relation to other law firms, we wanted to go further, in particular providing a mechanism for us to recognise the contribution made to the firm by high-performing support staff.



Russell Brown

“We also came to the conclusion that the annual appraisal system could be improved upon by introducing an ongoing schedule of meetings throughout the year. Sometimes they might last an hour, and at other times just ten minutes, but dedicating some time every month to a dialogue about team members’ needs, performance and aspirations, means that any potential issues can be dealt with before they become problems, and colleagues can receive the support and training they need to achieve to the best of their abilities, for themselves and the firm.”

Embedding values

The survey, and the initiatives implemented in response, are part of a wider programme of employee engagement at the firm, which in 2018 became part of the international professional services network ETL Global. The programme began in earnest last since last year.

As part of this programme the firm, which in 2024 celebrates its 50th anniversary, has developed and embedded a set of three core values: shared ambition, balance and growth.

Russell Brown, managing partner at Glaisyers ETL, said, “I started with the firm as a trainee in 1996, and I have never experienced such a transformational change in workplace culture. The investment by ETL in 2018 ushered in a period of rapid change and investment for our firm and, having initially focused on technology and commercial and operational issues, we have spent the last two years concentrating on team culture and values, with incredible results.

“There has been a significant investment in time and cost by many within the firm attempting to identify the values that truly reflect us and then starting the process of acting in accordance with them. We have always maintained that it is actions not words that will define the culture of the firm and we are satisfied that our values genuinely reflect our people and how we want to, and do, behave.”

Line in the sand

The extensive colleague survey carried out this year has, as well as inspiring a range of initiatives, also drawn a line in the sand, providing Glaisyers ETL’s management with a picture of the firm as it stands.

The firm plans to build on its findings in future years with shorter, targeted colleague surveys focused on specific topics and issues. Janet concluded, “This year’s survey has been invaluable to us as a leadership team, and has led to some important developments as well as clarifying our understanding of our colleagues’ feelings and priorities in relation to the firm, and their careers.

“We are grateful to all respondents for taking the time to share their thoughts and opinions. I can assure them that every response has contributed to making a real difference.”



TLT named a Top 30 Employer for Working Families 2024

TLT [✓](#) has been named one of the UK's top family-friendly and flexible employers by national charity Working Families.

Now in its fifteenth year, the prestigious and competitive list features employers from across public, private and third sectors who have gone above and beyond to build working environments to support working families.

Employers were assessed using Working Families' Benchmark and were scored on four key areas to build a comprehensive picture of their flexible and family-friendly policies and practices that specifically support parents and carers.

TLT was included in the list after introducing several market-leading initiatives aimed at creating an inclusive working environment, underpinned by a robust programme to support working parents. These have included an award-winning flexible approach to working, generous family leave support and later-in-life-programmes.

Helen Hodgkinson, chief people office at TLT commented: "People are at the heart of what we do. So, ensuring we're meeting the needs and requirements of those people throughout their working life is paramount to our success. The world of work has changed and it's important businesses adopt new ways of working, or they risk losing out on valuable talent and getting left behind. TLT is a passionate supporter and advocate of helping all of our people balance home and work commitments, recognising family support is not exclusive to women.



Helen Hodgkinson

"Securing a spot on Working Families' list of top employers for working families is hugely competitive and coveted by hundreds of businesses across the UK. Our inclusion in this year's list is a confirmation that TLT is a top player when it comes to supporting working parents. We're hugely proud of this achievement and will continue to advocate for policies that promote family support and provide all carers with the ability to contribute to their own circumstances.

Jane van Zyl, CEO of Working Families, said: "It's inspiring to see our Benchmark employers leading the way in flexible, family-friendly workplaces. With 85% starting with job design for flexible roles and 96% having strategic plans for family-friendly support, they're making flexible work a reality. Nearly all provide line manager training and encourage managers to work flexibly, showing a strong commitment to inclusive work environments."

This news follows TLT's appointment to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Flexible and Family-Friendly Working and the launch of its leading neurodiversity support, which covers private testing and diagnosis for TLT colleagues' partners and children.

The firm's flexible working approach – TLT World - won an award at the Legal Cheek Awards in May 2024 and was a significant contributor to the firm winning law firm of the year three years in a row at The Lawyer Awards 2021, the British Legal Awards 2022 and the Legal Business Awards in 2023.

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Disability History Month

This year's [Disability History Month's](#) theme is Disability, Livelihood and Employment.

With a focus on employment and accessibility, we reflect on the history of disabled people in the workplace.

Societal perspectives have changed from when it was the case that disability was synonymous with non-employment (not even looking for work) or unemployment. Disabled people in the workforce are now 5.63 million in 2023 from 2.2 million in 2013. The number of disabled people working in the legal profession is also on the increase, and not just because some of our work can be conducted remotely.

Throughout history people with disability have faced discrimination, exclusion and prejudice. Disability in the early 20th century was inevitably impacted by WW1 where vast numbers of ex-servicemen were permanently disabled by their wounds. Finding gainful employment was hard and although a 1919 scheme "King's National Roll" which encouraged firms to employ disabled ex-servicemen was a start, it was not a success. For those with mental ill health or cognitive disability, the situation was worse.

By 1941 the newspaper ad run by the Ministry of Labour with the catchy title "Cripples can do Vital War Work", did succeed in encouraging some disabled people into work during WW2.

Thankfully, we moved quickly to the post war environment and a new societal model which included the new NHS. "Designing for the Disabled" in 1963 was the first guidance

for architects on disability access and the working world continued to open up for disabled people.

Often the hardest challenge for disabled people in the legal profession is not the work itself, but the environment within which they must work. In 2020 the Cardiff Business School "Legally Disabled" study found that 60% of solicitors and paralegals felt that inaccessible working environments limited their career opportunities. This includes travel to places of work. Anyone who follows Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson will know the frequent challenges faced by disabled people using public transport.

Although many of our courts are listed buildings over 100 years old, accessibility is improving all the time. The same with barristers' chambers with a number of those in historic buildings having installed wheelchair accessible entrances.

There are more and more high profile disabled senior lawyers, including Judges, who are an inspiration to us all. Most law firms and Chambers are fantastic at supporting their disabled people and have an authentic culture of inclusivity allowing disabled people to feel both valued and psychologically safe. These cultures require hard work and engagement from the top.

With the government Access to Work scheme also helping facilitate disabled people in the workplace, the basic framework should be there to enable everyone to achieve their potential in the legal profession.

For those of us with a physical disability, there has been a noticeable shift in

recent years. Combined with improved accessibility and genuinely supportive work environments, barriers to progression and career success are being removed all the time.

There will always be additional challenges for those with a disability, but as Robert M Hensel, (brilliantly famous for holding

the world record for the longest non-stop wheelie in a wheelchair (6.178 miles)), said: "Being disabled means taking a slightly different path, but it does not hinder our potential".

**Liz Wallace, Partner, Weightmans
Member of the MLS ED&I Committee**

National stress awareness day

Having a day dedicated to awareness of stress – 6 November 2024 - is sensible. The statistics make for stark reading. According to the 2023 ALM and Law.com Compass mental health survey of the legal profession, approximately 71% of the nearly 3,000 lawyers surveyed said they had anxiety – a 5% increase from 2022. Last year there was a 24% increase on the previous year in the number of people contacting LawCare, the mental health and wellbeing charity for legal professionals.


Stress can be good if used properly, but it needs to be managed. Here are three ways that may assist:

Take control of what you can. We tend to focus on things we have little influence over, which only serves to make stress worse. Noting down your causes of stress and whether you can take action to address it may help. This is easier said than done, especially when you are feeling overwhelmed. Speak to a friend if writing something down is difficult. However you do it, a question to ask yourself is "can I do anything about this right now?". If the answer is no, then find something else to do to take your mind off your stress.



Prioritise good sleep. Again, this is easy to say and less easy to do, but poor sleep leads to low mood and difficulty focusing and thinking. Avoid alcohol and electronic devices before bed and get some natural light early in the day to reset the body's natural rhythms.

Undertake physical exercise. Exercise can help manage the effects of stress by producing endorphins that boost your mood. It can be hard to motivate yourself when stressed, but even a little bit of activity can make a difference.

Manchester Law Society has links to organisations that support legal professionals with stress and managing their mental health. Links to some of these organisations can be found [here](#) .

**Kenneth Tang, Solicitor, Pannone
Corporate, Member of the MLS ED&I
Committee**



Unit Chambers welcomes three new barristers, strengthening its family law expertise

Unit Chambers [✓](#) is delighted to announce the arrival of three highly skilled barristers to its growing team: Dr. Alex Khan, Misha Ryan, and Jennifer Grehan. Each brings a wealth of experience and expertise, significantly expanding Unit Chambers' offering in family law, child protection, and Court of Protection matters, both domestically and internationally.

Dr. Alex Khan



With nearly 25 years of experience in family law, Dr. Alex Khan is a highly respected barrister, specialising in complex financial applications arising from divorce. A native of Manchester, Alex's deep understanding of the local community, combined with his extensive experience in multicultural and religious issues, enables him to provide tailored support to clients navigating sensitive family law matters. His practice includes handling disputes over pensions, property, and company law, as well as cases with international assets and cross-border complexities.

Alex's expertise extends to mediation, arbitration, private Financial Dispute Resolutions (FDRs), and Early Neutral Evaluations (ENEs), ensuring that clients have access to a broad range of resolution options. His legal acumen in family and Chancery disputes, including trusts of land applications (TOLATA) and probate issues, further enhances Unit Chambers' service offering.

In addition to his practice, Alex has international legal experience, having worked in Dubai, and maintains a global network to assist with cross-jurisdictional cases. He is also the lead tutor for the LPC Family Unit at Manchester Law School, underscoring his commitment to mentoring the next generation of legal professionals.

Misha Ryan



Specialising in child protection, Misha Ryan brings substantial experience representing local authorities across the North West

as an In-House Advocate, most recently at Manchester City Council. Her expertise includes Deprivation of Liberty applications, international care order applications, and complex finding-of-fact hearings. Misha is known for her fearless approach and has gained a strong reputation with clients and opponents alike.

Misha's practice at Unit Chambers will continue to focus on child protection and Court of Protection work, including tribunal cases. While her work will primarily be remote, she remains open to attending in-person hearings when necessary, offering flexibility to her clients.

Her addition to the team further strengthens Unit Chambers' already strong offering in public law matters, providing comprehensive representation for both local authorities and private clients in highly sensitive child protection cases.

Jennifer Grehan

Jennifer Grehan brings a diverse range of expertise in Children's Law, Court of Protection, and



International Family Law. She has appeared regularly in the High Court and family courts throughout London, Liverpool, Manchester, and the North West, representing clients in complex matters involving non-accidental injuries, parental alienation, and international child abduction.

Jennifer's extensive experience in both Hague Convention and non-Hague Convention jurisdictions, coupled with her work in neglect, sexual abuse, and Deprivation of Liberty cases, positions her as a formidable advocate for vulnerable clients, including those with learning difficulties. Her expertise also includes acting in Public and Private Law cases, representing local authorities, vulnerable parents, and guardians.

In the Court of Protection, Jennifer is frequently engaged in personal welfare disputes and best interest decisions, representing families, local authorities, and the Official Solicitor in complex and sensitive matters.

A Growing Commitment to Excellence

The addition of these three exceptional barristers reflects Unit Chambers' ongoing commitment to delivering expert legal services in family law and associated areas. By welcoming Dr. Alex Khan, Misha Ryan, and Jennifer Grehan, Unit Chambers significantly enhances its ability

“

Their wealth of expertise, dedication, and passion for family law will undoubtedly strengthen our team and enhance the range of services we provide to our clients”

to offer comprehensive, high-quality legal representation across a wide spectrum of family law matters, from financial disputes to child protection and Court of Protection cases.

Quote from Lisa Edmunds, Head of Chambers and CEO, Unit Chambers:

“We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Alex Khan, Misha Ryan, and Jennifer Grehan to Unit Chambers. Their wealth of expertise, dedication, and passion for family law will undoubtedly strengthen our team and enhance the range of services we provide to our clients. Each of them brings a unique set of skills and experiences—from complex financial disputes and international family law matters to child protection and Court of Protection cases—allowing us to offer even more comprehensive and tailored legal support. Their addition aligns perfectly with our vision of providing exceptional advocacy and legal solutions across all areas of family law, and we look forward to the positive impact they will have on our chambers and clients.”



Farleys Solicitors announces latest round of Partner and Associate Partner Promotions

Farleys Solicitors [↗](#) is pleased to announce a significant round of promotions within its team, further strengthening the firm's leadership.

Jo Smith and Victoria Marsh have been appointed as Associate Partners, while Sally Eastwood, Ashlea Thornton, and Emma Proctor have been promoted to Partners at the firm, which boasts a team of over 150 legal professionals and provides comprehensive legal services.

Jo Smith, an experienced personal injury solicitor, joined Farleys in 2023 as part of the firm's acquisition of Mulderrigs in Rawtenstall. With more than 20 years of legal expertise, Jo specialises in personal injury and medical negligence claims. She has carved out a particular niche in handling claims related to hairdressing injuries and has achieved numerous successful outcomes for clients who have suffered significant hair and scalp damage due to negligent treatment.

Victoria Marsh joined the firm in December 2023 after an impressive 17-year tenure at a Bolton-based firm. She brings a wealth of

knowledge in Court of Protection work and has extensive experience in Wills, Probate, and Lasting Powers of Attorney, making her a key addition to the team's private client services.

Sally Eastwood, an employment law specialist, delivers clear, practical advice across a broad spectrum of employment law and HR issues. Her client-focused approach ensures tailored solutions that meet the specific needs of each case, further enhancing Farleys' reputation for providing expert employment law guidance.

Ashlea Thornton has been with Farleys since 2019, specialising in commercial property law. She began her legal career in 2015 and has developed substantial expertise in handling complex commercial property transactions in the form of leases, sales and acquisitions, for SMEs, corporations, and individuals.

Emma Procter has over a decade of experience in family law children act matters, particularly care proceedings, where her in-depth knowledge and experience are invaluable.

Managing Partner Ian Liddle commented,

"These promotions reflect the exceptional talent, dedication, and client focus of each of these individuals. They are highly respected by both colleagues and clients, and their contributions continue to drive the firm's success."

He added, "This latest round of promotions, along with other recent developments, ensures Farleys is well-positioned for continued growth in 2024 and beyond."



L-R – Emma Procter, Victoria Marsh, Ashlea Thornton, Joanne Smith, Sally Eastwood

Pannone Corporate welcomes trio of new hires

Pannone Corporate [✉](#) has welcomed a trio of new hires, as it continues to grow its Manchester team.

Emma Haymes joins the law firm as a senior associate in the dispute resolution team, having previously spent seven years working in-house at a FTSE 100 telecoms company. Emma will support the team on a range of commercial dispute issues, including contractual and intellectual property disputes, risk management and dispute avoidance, bringing vast experience in the IT and telecoms sectors, further strengthening Pannone's specialist TMT team.

Emma is joined at the firm by Sophie Adshead, who has been appointed as an associate in the corporate team. Joining from SAS Daniels, Sophie will assist the team across a wide range of corporate activity – from acquisitions and disposals of companies in a variety of business sectors, to venture capital investments and private equity transactions.

Burak Demir completes the trio of appointments. Burak joins Pannone as a solicitor in the real estate litigation team. Burak will support the growing team in advising on a wide range of property litigation issues for a number of sectors including retail, owner occupiers and commercial landlords.

Paul Jonson, senior partner at Pannone, said: "Our team is the lifeblood of our business, with new talent playing a pivotal role in our ongoing growth.

"Each new appointment brings a fresh perspective and expertise to the firm. We're delighted to welcome to the firm Emma, Sophie and Burak, who will add to our legal and sector capabilities, as we continue to support clients as they strive to meet their own growth ambitions."

L-R: Emma Haymes, Burak Demir, Sophie Adshead





Hudgells Solicitors' reputation for doing the best by both clients and employees helps attract another experienced lawyer to firm

Hudgell Solicitors' growing reputation as a firm committed to doing the best by both clients and employees was the reason behind another highly-experienced serious injury lawyer making the decision to join.

Mark Ellis, who qualified as a solicitor in 2002, has joined having worked as an associate in the serious injury department at Minster Law for the past five years.

Mark says Hudgells' move to become employee owned last December, and its work with charities such as Day One Trauma Support, for which it is now a panel member to provide legal advice and support to people at Greater Manchester Major Trauma Hospital, influenced his decision to join.

The prospect of being able to be part of the team supporting the victims of the Post Office Horizon scandal and the Manchester Arena Attack in 2017 also influenced his decision to join.

"The work the firm has been doing in recent times, and how it has represented its clients has helped it rise to prominence in the legal sector," he said.

"I also know quite a few people who I've worked with previously in my career who are now at Hudgells and they all speak so highly about the culture at the firm, and how rewarding the work is because it is so client-focussed."

"I think becoming employee owned sent out a strong message across the industry about just how much stock the firm puts into its



Mark Ellis

people, and how they are involved in its work and development. I think that sets it apart," he said.

"Equally I think it's exciting to see how the firm is supporting more seriously injured people through its work and campaigning for the likes of Day One Trauma Support and the Spinal Injuries Association (SIA), organisations I am looking forward to working with, as we can offer great help to people together."

'Entwined in the lives of clients'

Hudgells supports a large number of people who have suffered serious injury, including survivors of the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing, having helped establish packages of rehabilitation support and much-needed financial assistance whilst a Public Inquiry was held.

“

In this job you may close the laptop down at the end of the working day, but your clients are always with you. You are still thinking about the people you are helping and their cases are can often still be on your mind”

That work stands out for Mark, along with other high-profile case such as the ongoing support being offered to hundreds of former subpostmasters.

“I think the work that the firm has done for the Manchester Arena survivors and the victims of the Post Office Horizon scandal has been really impressive, as like all serious injury claims, they have become entwined in the lives of their clients,” he said.

“In this job you may close the laptop down at the end of the working day, but your clients are always with you. You are still thinking about the people you are helping and their cases are can often still be on your mind.

“I find the work stimulating and rewarding. People turn to us at what is usually the lowest point of their lives and we can use our expertise to make a really positive difference for them.

“There’s nothing better than securing a good result for a client and knowing it has set them up for the next stage of their lives. To be able to see what you have achieved for people is really special.

“I’ve always wanted to use my legal

expertise to help people. I am proud to be a personal injury solicitor and our clients – the people who have suffered life-changing injuries – really appreciate what we do.

“They need somebody on their side to help them through the process. I try speak to them in plain English rather than in legal jargon, and in a way I’d like someone to speak to me if I wasn’t a lawyer and had been injured. That’s what people want, and I know that is the Hudgells way.”

Rachel Di Clemente, chief executive of Hudgell Solicitors, says she is delighted with the appointment.

“I worked with Mark during my time at Minster Law and I have the upmost respect for him, so I know we are getting a highly-talented solicitor who makes client care, and getting the very best results for those clients, his number one priority,” she said.

“He brings experience of manging high-value catastrophic injury cases, including challenging motorcycle accident claims, and experience of managing teams of solicitors.

“As our work in representing people who suffer serious injuries continues to grow, I have no doubt that he will be a very important member of our team.”



Irwin Mitchell appoints two new Senior Heads of Property

Guy Sackett to lead Irwin Mitchell's National Real Estate Team and Garrath Reayer to lead Residential Property

[Irwin Mitchell](#) has appointed partner Guy Sackett as its new Head of Real Estate. Guy is replacing Adrian Barlow, who is retiring from the partnership.

In addition, Garrath Reayer has been appointed new Head of Residential Property, following the retirement of Jeremy Raj earlier this year.

Guy Sackett, National Head of Real Estate

Irwin Mitchell's National Real Estate Division offers full-service advice across the sector including property transactional advice, including investment and development, planning and environment, construction, real estate disputes and tax.



Guy joined the firm in 2015 following its merger with Thomas Eggar and is a real estate development lawyer with over 25 years' experience in commercial and residential development. Prior to his new national head role, he led the firm's Southern real estate division.

Guy's focus over the past five years has been on large scale residential and mixed-use regeneration schemes. He also has significant expertise in the strategic land and student accommodation sectors, and acts for a number of leading developers, promoters and operators.

He brings strong hands-on experience to the new role together with strategic knowledge of the real estate sector, strong client relationships and a track record of success in the transactional arena.

Commenting on his appointment, Guy Sackett said, "I am excited to be taking over the reins of IM's Real Estate Division at a time when the new government's policies are fixed firmly on addressing the housing crisis and delivering on planning and environmental reform. All of these play to IM's strengths and provide us with a great platform for growth."

Garrath Reayer, National Head of Residential Property

Irwin Mitchell's National Residential Property Team covers the full remit of residential property advice including residential sales, acquisitions, refinances, leasehold enfranchisement and secured lending across the UK. The Team offers market competitive fee rates, providing an advisory rather than mere executory service. The provision of a "Platinum Service" being of paramount importance.



Garrath joined the firm in 2015 following its merger with Thomas Eggar and has over 25 years' experience in the high net worth / ultra-high net worth London and South-East property markets. Garrath's particular area of expertise lies in the secured lending sector of the residential


market, working alongside top financial institutions.

In addition, Garrath has numerous long-standing celebrity clients from the world of film, TV, entertainment and sport.

Garrath brings long and successful hands-on experience to the role together with strategic knowledge of the residential market (in particular the secured lending sector), strong and long-established client relationships and a proven record of success.

Commenting on his appointment, Garrath Reayer said, "I am obviously very excited to be appointed to the role. We have a well-established, experienced and very dedicated Team who work tirelessly for our clients. I am extremely confident that we will build on the Team's existing strong foundations. It is an exciting time to be a part of Irwin Mitchell with the firm going from strength to strength!"

Kuits strengthens family law team

Kuits  has announced the appointment of Janine Hutson as a Senior Associate in their family team, further enhancing the firm's commitment to delivering exceptional legal services in family law.

Janine brings a wealth of experience in all areas of family law, including divorce, financial settlements, and children matters. Her empathetic approach and in-depth legal knowledge have earned her a strong reputation for providing sensitive, yet practical advice to clients navigating complex personal situations.

With over fifteen years of experience, Janine has a proven track record of successfully handling high-net-worth cases and resolving family disputes through both negotiation and litigation. Her dedication to achieving the best outcomes for clients aligns perfectly with Kuits' values of excellence and client-focused service.

Janine Hutson, Family Solicitor at Kuits, said: "I am thrilled to join such a prestigious and dynamic team at Kuits. The firm's reputation for delivering high-quality legal services and their collaborative approach



attracted me to this role. I look forward to contributing to the growth of the family law team and supporting our clients through what can often be challenging times."

Colin Davies, Head of Family Law at Kuits, commented: "We are pleased to welcome Janine to the firm. Her extensive experience and personal approach to family law will be a great asset to our team. At Kuits, we pride ourselves on offering tailored solutions to meet the unique needs of our clients, and Janine's expertise will further strengthen our family law offering."



TLT grows Manchester team with appointment of project infrastructure and construction partner

Law firm [TLT](#) has hired infrastructure specialist Alex Murdie as a partner in the projects, infrastructure and construction (PIC) team. Alex will be based in the firm's Manchester office.

Alex's appointment demonstrates the firm's commitment to investing in and establishing itself in the North West's thriving infrastructure market, which is a hub for major projects.

Alex qualified at TLT in 2011 and has been re-appointed after having worked at Pinsent Masons and DLA Piper.

Bringing over a decade of specialist expertise advising on a broad range of construction, infrastructure and energy projects, Alex has built a reputation for being a well-respected and trusted advisor in the sector, both nationally and regionally.

His extensive infrastructure experience includes advising on framework agreements for the development, repair and maintenance of significant transport routes, annual maintenance and infrastructure development in the water sector, advising investors on the demolition and renovation contracts for a football stadium for a high-profile football club and advising on the contracts for the procurement of an eFuels facility.

Alex's practice also encompasses the future energy sector, in particular in respect of the development of grid infrastructure and grid stabilisation projects across the United Kingdom and other European jurisdictions. Alex has a particular focus in the clean energy sector, having acted for a range of developers and funders on grid-scale solar, onshore wind developments and battery storage projects.

MSB Solicitors announces growth and expansion of crime team

[MSB Solicitors](#) is announcing the expansion of its Crime team, reflecting the firm's commitment to providing exceptional services in criminal law.

At the forefront of this expansion is the recent appointment of Allan Maidment, who joined MSB Solicitors in a strategic role at the beginning of 2024. Allan, formerly of Maidment's and JMW, brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the firm.

Together with Paul Gallagher, the Head of Crime, Allan is championing the growth of the crime practice, which has seen its headcount more than double throughout 2024. This significant increase in personnel underscores

the firm's dedication to meeting the rising demand for high-quality legal representation in criminal matters.

In June 2024, MSB Solicitors established a new office in Birmingham, further expanding its geographical reach. Mahan Manu, who previously worked with ESN, Maidment's, and McGraths, was appointed to lead the crime team in the West Midlands. This strategic move allows MSB to better serve clients in the region and enhances the firm's ability to handle a diverse range of criminal cases.

Additionally, MSB Solicitors welcomed John Davies to head up the newly formed



At TLT, Alex will be supporting the development of the firm's infrastructure practice in the Northwest, working closely with the future energy and public sector teams.

Commenting on his appointment, Alex said: "It is a really exciting time to re-join the TLT team, particularly given the national focus on the infrastructure and future energy sectors. The demand for new infrastructure is consistently increasing and clients are under significant time pressure to deliver new projects to meet those requirements. TLT's significant experience in these markets means we are well positioned to help those clients achieve delivery of their projects on time. I am excited to be joining TLT at their new Eden office and look forward to playing an important role in continuing to grow and expand TLT's offering in the infrastructure and future energy sectors."

James Chadwick, partner and head of location for Manchester added: "Alex's appointment is the latest demonstration of our strength

and ambition in Manchester, as we continue to

attract some of the finest legal talent in the region. It is also a move that recognises the legal landscape of the North West and the increasing demand for legal advisors with experience in advising on major infrastructure projects.

"We look forward to welcoming Alex to our new office in Eden and to working alongside him going forwards."

Simon Goss, partner and head of TLT's PIC team added: "When we embarked on the strategic hire process to bolster and drive forward our expanding infrastructure practice, I don't think I could have hoped for a better outcome than the appointment of Alex. Not only is he one of the best lawyers in his field significantly enhancing our infrastructure capability, he is a colleague who has lived and breathed TLT's people and client focussed values and one who is welcomed back by the TLT community."

Manchester crime team. John, who has an impressive background with Rradar, Irwin Mitchell, and Cartwright King, brings invaluable insights and experience to the firm. His leadership will be instrumental as MSB Solicitors continues to expand its presence in key markets across the UK.

Looking ahead, MSB Solicitors is poised for further growth, with plans to seek new crime contracts in four locations by 2025: Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and Widnes.

The firm is also offering private crime services at its new Chester office, enhancing its ability to provide comprehensive legal support to clients in various jurisdictions.

The expectation is that the crime team's headcount will continue to grow rapidly as

the practice develops its serious crime and regulatory work on a national scale.

This expansion aligns with MSB Solicitors' broader strategy to enhance its all-service practice, which aims to provide existing and new areas of legal service to clients through its expanding office network.

Emma Carey, Managing Partner at MSB Solicitors, said: "Our crime team has experienced unprecedented growth in a short period, and we are thrilled to welcome such talented professionals to our firm.

"The expertise of our new team members means we are well-positioned to meet the evolving needs of our clients and to continue our commitment to excellence in criminal defence."

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Continued on page 58



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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 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



Gateley supporting girls' sport through their sponsorship of Maiden

Gateley is showing its support for girls in sport by partnering up with cricket apparel range, **Maiden**, supplying 20 girls from the ages of 9-23.

Maiden Cricket, started by schoolgirls Honor (16) and Cat (15), was created after the sisters were fed up with a lack of cricket clothing available to young female sportswomen. The only options available were unflattering, old, hand-me-downs from brothers or uncomfortable unisex options. With the support of their family, these two teenage entrepreneurs have created four pieces of kit: Night Watch Trousers, Pace Pullover, Mid – On Top and Test Match Trousers.

Andlyn White, Responsible Business Manager at Gateley expresses her support of Maiden, saying, "We are proud to champion this inspiring small business that supports the female sporting community. At Gateley, we understand the importance of giving all genders equal opportunities from day one and we are thrilled to help young females in experiencing the value of achievement, camaraderie and the long-term benefits on mental health and confidence as a result of being part of a team sport".

Gateley is eager to support inspiring businesses, through sponsorship and promotion on its podcast "Purpose Pod". Honor, founder of Maiden, and her father Ollie have appeared on an episode of the podcast, discussing the importance of championing women in sport, the inspiration behind the brand, and the changes they want to make in the cricket community.

Honor Black from Maiden says, "We are so grateful to Gateley for supporting our small business from the very beginning, providing advice and a platform for us to share our important story of female empowerment in sport and sponsoring the Rising Stars."

From this initial partnership between Gateley and Maiden, the two companies have continued to work together, with Gateley sponsoring the "Rising Stars" initiative that Maiden Cricket has started. Budding female cricketers can join this new community, where they will receive discounts on kit, webinars from inspirational women in sports, invitations to events and many more opportunities.

Ashneet Chahal, a Rising Star who has been sponsored by Gateley says, "I have received the clothes, and I am in love!" after opening her Maiden Cricket kit and "can't wait to be part of your journey and see how far women's cricket can go."

Maiden are currently on the lookout for Maiden ambassadors – young female cricketers keen to wear the apparel on the field and inspire other girls to play and look their best. Those interested in becoming an ambassador please fill out a form [here](#).



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The Brabners Foundation supports the emerging charity, Escape2Make – Helping Young People Unplug, Connect, and Thrive

In today's world, young people face immense pressures from social media, academic demands, and a lack of safe spaces to simply be themselves.

Escape2Make (E2M) offers a solution through free, inclusive workshops led by local artists and businesses. These workshops help 11-18-year-olds develop skills, make friends, and find purpose by contributing to community events like festivals and markets.

"It's heartening that Brabners has recognised the vital work Escape2Make carries out with this, one of our first major projects, in Lancaster and Morecombe with this donation. The social impact we can make with the support of local businesses is huge."

Jenny Natusch, founder of Escape2Make (pictured right), said: "More than ever, 11-18-year-olds urgently need more opportunities to express themselves and socialise with each other in a safe environment away from the pressures of social media.



The Brabners Foundation is an independent charity designed to channel the fundraising efforts of Brabners employees and clients. Employees are invited to nominate charities to receive those funds which are considered by the firm's charity committee.

Escape2Make Green Festival





Escape2Make Youth Board and Design consultants are Reimagining Creative Youth Spaces for the 21st Century

“

It's heartening that Brabners has recognised the vital work Escape2Make carries out with this

Sarah Murphy, head of private client at Brabners Lancashire, is a supporter and founding friend of the charity. She nominated Escape2Make to receive the Brabners Foundation donation.

Sarah said: "As a company, it is Brabners' mission to make the difference, not just to our clients and our people but also within the local community. Escape2Make helps young people to make new friends whilst developing their skills and encouraging creativity.

"I live close to Lancaster and have supported the charity for around 18 months. I'm proud that the Brabners Foundation has made this contribution, which will contribute greatly toward the press club's long-term future."



Escape2Make Heritage Market Festival

E2M is opening a new youth-designed centre in Lancaster, offering a safe, creative space for all, including marginalised groups. With plans to expand, and with Manchester very much on its horizons, E2M aims to create more opportunities for young people across the UK, and of course is looking for support from any business for whom this amazing charity resonates with.

Learn more at www.escape2make.org or contact Jenny at j.natusch@escape2make.org

Management Matters

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



This Month

- **Following up on the business challenges – some alternative considerations**
- **Enhancing service to firm and clients**
- **Cutting costs and dependencies**

Since January this year many of my articles have related to the urgent need for firms to sort their organisations in terms of where are they at, what is the strategy for the next three years, what are the operational and performance plans and how and when are we going to get them done and be capable of perpetual forecasting and plans to recover downward trends and/or exploit upward ones.

The articles can all be seen [here](#) or in the [Manchester Law Society Messenger](#) Management Matters section. Related to this piece I would recommend at least a look at June, August and October 2024.

As law firms we cannot avoid the fact that we need to be commercially performing with a significant added burden of compliance and regulation (that cannot be avoided) plus our essential clients are getting much stronger from a performance expectation demand but are also sharing their views.

- We need to be ensuring that we have the right people being developed and available (recruitment and retention for all isn't easy).
- We are generating our expected revenue by work-type and location and our gross profit bis being achieved

- We are in control of our overheads and we have the MI and BI to make sure that our working capital is going the right way going forward and that we are able top forecast it and take the necessary remedial steps
- We have to follow all compliance and regulations as the impact on credibility, costs (fines) and impact on PII insurance availability and rates can be devastating

Referred to in some of the previous articles has been the consideration of outsourcing of some key roles. There has also been evidence of a massive increase in demand for this activity from firms of all sizes as they are beginning to see some essential becoming available.

This is for the benefit of being able achieve essentials to help support and retain clients with high performance and communications, maximise revenue and gross profit, cut costs and achieve compliance essentials.

Firms of all sizes need the availability of the same level of skills and even accountancy firms are opening their doors beyond auditing to offer additional advice on specific topics or even part time consultants or even FDs.

Similar with IT and whether the firm is using its investment as effectively as it should be. Potentially added value solutions that can provide some essential solutions quickly and a lower costs and changing the timing needed for PMS/CMS upgrades. IT security and availability from the right suppliers also being considered.



In addition to this it is becoming increasingly apparent that many lawyers in firms do not have all the experience and skill necessary to undertake their legal tasks and requests – there are in some cases a growing concern that firms not deploying the right experience and skills on some tasks, irrespective of compliance and regulations, some clients or inheritors will be coming litigious – costs and reputation at risk. Being a little more positive the availability of the right skills allows a small firm to grow into something grander.

Considerations

There are three examples here that could be looked at. There are a number of alternate suppliers to potentially consider also. Due diligence is also recommended across all aspects

Documents

Despite technology enhancement there is still a major need for the production of documents that can be shared with clients, be warehoused but also recoverable, secure sharing of data with the latest portals, enhancing client relationships.

Delays in document production can prove to be expensive adding to the length of a file and consequently revenue delays and dissatisfaction.

Document Direct [↗](#) offers three principal services which includes a 24/7 delivery of transcription easily created by the lawyer in the middle of the night if helpful – covers everything from letters, contracts and file notes plus court documents, barristers

advice, can be multi speaker even court hearings and Zoom/Team meetings.

Speed of production is one thing and being able to share with the internal CMS system and other parties.

There is also document production including re typing, conversions to latest technology, copy typing etc

Next – Court Bundle creations to HMCTS guidelines.

So, one considers a quality services, being delivered by the experienced, quickly and effectively – this reduces the requirements required in house for busy times but also covering peaks, staff shortages and allowing enhanced services at overall reduced costs.

Cost down because less office space needed, less payroll and recruitment cost.

Accounting

There is certainly evidence whereas until recently this could have been regarded as a book keeping solution for small businesses but the world has changed with more pressure on law firms in terms of the standards of book keeping, the provision of KPIs, MI and BI, management accounts and business forecasts as well as compliance and bank relationships – let alone the right information for Ops Boards to make the right decisions in time.

The supplier with the experience of more than 300 law firms is **The Cashroom** [↗](#)

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The benefits for firms are – the cost saving of space and salaries and recruitment costs – holiday cover and sick-leave covered, frees lawyers up with more time to support clients.

Operates with most of the existing PMS/ CMS suppliers and also with open banking. The level of service is negotiable to match skills available with the firm. Certainly, a compliance aid and a risk limiter. Security in place for communications with the firm. Client account management under control.

Legal Resource and Skills

There can often be a general assumption that because “we are lawyers” the necessary skills and experience are in place to meet customer experience and needs.

“

As law firms we need to reconsider how we operate in order to achieve our personal and business objectives

The last few years has begun to demonstrate that is not the case with many law firms struggling to recruit the right people with the right skills and whether we like it or not the service needs to be there for our clients – from their perspective but also the development of the business.

We could be a small or start up firm wanting to grow and say for private client stuff the ability to speak and service broader than just producing a Will is essential. The potential implications with advice about inheritance, tax, access to capital such as equity release is essential. So, we need broader advice availability.

There are a number of specialist lawyers who want to be independent consultants and we have seen quite a growth in organisations offering this facility.

Our current consideration is [Lawshare](#) part of JMW headquartered in Manchester.

They are a very credible firm and Lawshare has more than 700 firms using their service – sole practitioners to big firms. There is a commercial deal that uses the service without the potential loss of a client.

Last month we covered the whole aspect of looking after our clients properly and effectively.

Going Forward

Dealing with our business challenges is essential. As law firms we need to reconsider how we operate in order to achieve our personal and business objectives. The world is changing and for areas like legal expertise and support, book-keeping and accounting and document production we should all be looking at this to up performance, be more efficient and cut costs and keep out clients and the banks and regulation authorities loving us.

Happy to receive any input.

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

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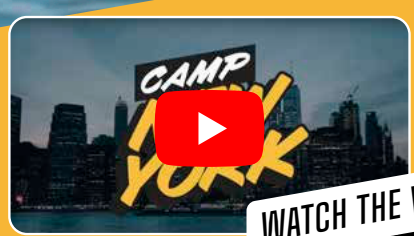
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Legal Costs Update



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.

With the High Court back from the Long Vacation, we can expect a pick up in the number of costs judgments at that level and above, with the awaited decision of the Supreme Court in **Menzies v Oakwood Solicitors** (see [2023] Costs LR 1983)at the top of the list. Oakwood is another appeal under the Solicitors Act 1974 which will decide the meaning of the single word "payment" in the context of the Act. Must the client agree to the use of monies to pay a specific bill or is a prior general agreement sufficient? A surprising question to ask in the 21st century but the answer so far has led the courts to trawl through five Victorian authorities, with Bourne J and the Court of Appeal reaching different conclusions. One or other must be wrong : the Supreme Court will decide when its judgment is given.

Next costs of amendments to pleadings. The general rule is that the party amending pays the consequential costs. In **Magee v Crocker** [2024] EWHC 2353 (Ch), the claimant had applied successfully at the start of the trial to amend the claim form, particulars of claim and amended reply and counterclaim, to allege that there had been a novation. That claim had succeeded at trial, but the defendants wanted costs to the date of the amendment because without the amendment, the claim would have failed. HHJ Cawson ordered that the costs should be limited to those costs of, and occasioned by the amendments, to be assessed if not agreed, because the case on novation had

not been pleaded and needed correction. As to the costs of claim and counterclaim, the judge decided that if a case in novation had been included in the claim as initially formulated, or introduced by way of amendment much earlier, the claim would still have been vigorously resisted, and that the defendants had not been deprived of the opportunity of making a Part 36 offer. It followed that the defendants were ordered to pay (1) the claimant's costs of the claim and Part 20 counterclaim as to 90%, with a payment on account of £400,000 and (2) the fourth party's costs of the Part 20 claim against him as to 100%, with a payment on account of £385,723 against whom the defendants had alleged fraudulent misrepresentation.

Costs budgeting and sanctions is next. **Deng v Zhang** [\[2024\] EWHC 2392 \(KB\)](#) concerned an action for damages for breach of data protection rights, breach of confidence, misuse of private information and malicious falsehood. The claimant had failed to file a cost budget in time but had obtained relief from sanctions. The defendant had served a notice of appeal arguing that the court had been misled about the date of service of the budget. Notice of the hearing date for the appeal had been sent out by the court, but the claimant failed to notice the listing and did not attend the appeal hearing when the appeal was allowed and the claimant's budget was confined to court fees. Further delay and default followed in the conduct of

the application to set aside the appeal decision, which culminated in a witness statement being filed the day before the hearing itself. Hill J held that the claimant's explanation of solicitor's "overwork" was not an acceptable reason for default and the fact that the initial failure to notice that an appeal was listed was not a good reason, so the claimant's application to set aside the appeal judgment, re-imposing the sanction, failed.

Asertis v Bloch [2024] EWHC 2393 (Ch) concerns security for costs under CPR 25 and whether the security offered in the form of an After-the-Event insurance policy offered as security afforded sufficient protection to the defendant. ICC Judge Mullen held that five features of the policy undermined the sufficiency of the protection offered. They included (i) provisions entitling the insurer to withdraw cover if it believed that the claim lacked reasonable prospects of success; (ii) limits on the scope of cover in relation to interim or incurred costs; (iii) redaction of relevant policy terms; (iv) potential for the policy to be avoided for fraud; and (v) an absence of direct benefits conferred on the defendant. It followed, that the policy could not be regarded as providing the defendant with sufficient protection and a payment into was appropriate instead.

Finally a very strong judgment by Ritchie J about the perils of applying for wasted costs against solicitors who have acted for a claimant found to have been fundamentally dishonest in a personal injury claim to which Qualified One Way Costs Shifting in section II of CPR 44 applied – see **Williams-Henry v Associated Ports** [2024] EWHC 2415 (KB). The claimant had suffered a brain injury having fallen off Aberavon

pier. At her trial, the judge had dismissed the claim, holding that the claimant had been fundamentally dishonest with costs awarded against her, but unenforceable up to the level of the assessed "honest" damages of just under £600,000. The upshot was that and the claimant's solicitors would go unpaid and the defendant would not recover their costs. For that reason, the defendant looked to the claimant's solicitors for those costs. That application failed. Ritchie J held that the defendant had failed to comply with the procedural requirements for simple, clear allegations in respect of the solicitors' conduct, had not clearly identified the wasted costs allegedly incurred as a result of the claimant's lies, and had failed to establish the causal link between the conduct and the costs. He recognised that as the claimant's solicitors had declined to waive privilege on their files, that had provided a barrier to many of the Applicant's accusations. However, the accusation that the solicitors should have terminated the retainer had not been made out and did not constitute unreasonable or negligent behaviour. Ritchie J added that he questioned the use of two silks at the hearing and the proportionality of the application, leading the inference to be drawn that insurers who pursue claimants' solicitors for wasted costs where their clients have lied and let them down, will face a very uphill task.

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



CASE STUDY

Nina's Story: How support from The Solicitors' Charity helped her on road to recovery

Giving birth to twins whilst in hospital caused Nina life-changing injuries and multiple medical complications. Unable to work, or to provide hands-on care for her babies for a time, she contacted The Solicitors' Charity to see if it could help with the cost of immediate childcare to enable her to start the long recovery back to health and mobility.

Talking to Nina now, one would have no idea of the extremely difficult period she has been through over the last 18 months, but the trauma is still there all the time. She is articulate and eager to help with the case study interview. And she is clearly bursting with good news as she has just secured a new job!

She goes on to say: "I'm delighted to be going back to work in a manageable role that can be done from home and one that has fixed hours. With two young twins, and being a single parent, I need to have time to look after them. I now have physical limitations which make commuting difficult.

"I don't know how I would have got through if I had not contacted The Solicitors' Charity. I wasn't aware of its existence, and it was only because a good friend had found it that I was aware. I was uncomfortable about contacting the charity as I am super-independent, but I was desperate for help."

Working as a freelancer for most of her career, she lost her job during the



pandemic, as did many in certain sectors of the law. She did not qualify for the furlough scheme, as she was not a permanent employee. Nina had just about got back on her feet after the COVID-19 disruption and back into work, when disaster struck again.

She worked long hours to accumulate some surplus to fund her maternity leave but could not have foreseen how the experience of childbirth and its complications would adversely affect her physical, mental, and financial wellbeing. Nina had prudently taken out a critical illness insurance policy but found that when she came to make a claim, she did not qualify for a pay-out because the range of medical conditions specified did not include hers.

"The Solicitors' Charity was a lifesaver. My levels of stress were high, I was dealing with the aftermath of the birth, making sure I had applied for statutory help I was entitled to and looking after the twins. Finding the charity was a Godsend and, knowing it would help, lifted a huge weight from me."

“

I don't know how I would have got through if I had not contacted The Solicitors' Charity

Funding from the charity enabled Nina to engage childcare to help to look after her twin babies while she recovered from her injuries. She's feeling more optimistic about the future and wants to encourage more people to contact the charity to find out if it can help them.

Get Help - thesolicitorscharity.org/supporting-you/make-an-enquiry

If you would like more information about The Solicitors' Charity support, or to make a donation to the charity, visit thesolicitorscharity.org.





Pet of the Month

Name: Karen Godden

Firm: Document Direct

Pet Name: Tea and Biscuit

Pet Nickname: TT and Bikky

What kind of pet do you have? Dwarf rabbits

Is your pet: Female

How old is your pet: Not sure as were found after they were dumped outside a pet shop in Croydon last year, think around 2/3 years old

Favourite Toy: Biscuit hider ball

Favourite Activity: Digging!

Favourite Treat: Carrots or spinach

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

My perfect day would be... running around the garden and digging in the plant pots.

My favourite thing my parents do is... give us cuddles and feed us treats.



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

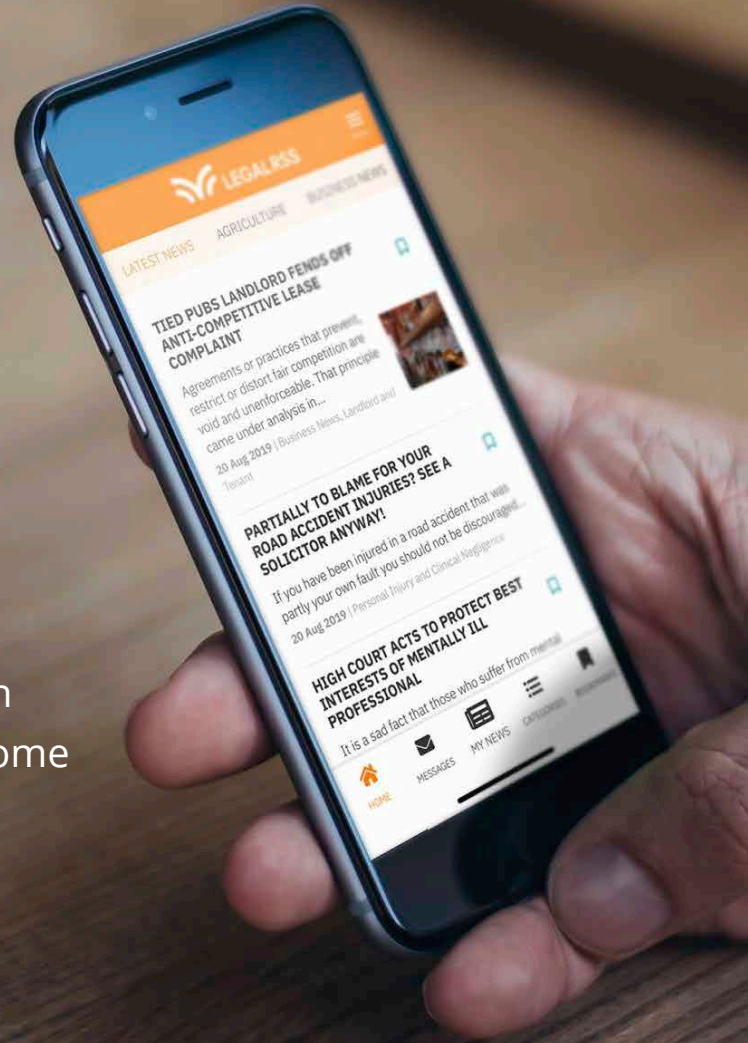
Each month we'll pick a couple of 'Pets of the Month' for the next edition so keep a look out to see if your pet has made it, modelling in *The Messenger* magazine!

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



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