



the Messenger

February 2025

Inside this issue...

09

WIN a Spa Garden Experience



18

We Love MCR Charity Firewalk is back!



38

What are MLS Committees all about?



Get your entries in for the 16th Manchester Legal Awards!

We are delighted to announce the return of the sixteenth annual Manchester Legal Awards [↗](#), inviting entries from across the North West to celebrate the region's best legal talent.



Recognising achievement, impact, and hard work, the awards span a diverse range of categories, including four new additions: **Corporate Culture and Wellbeing Champions of the Year, In-House Team of the Year, Unsung Hero of the Year, and Sustainability Champions of the Year**, encouraging individuals, teams, firms, and chambers of all sizes to enter.

In a historic first, the 2025 awards ceremony will take place at a new venue - Manchester's iconic [Kimpton Clocktower Hotel](#) [↗](#). Winners will be revealed at a black-tie event on **Thursday, 3rd July**.

Continued on page 26

Members Preferred Partner Group



Legal Education Programme Sponsor



Click for more info

MIL AWARDS 2025

GUESS WHO'S BACK!

Thursday 3rd July 2025 at The Kimpton Clocktower Hotel

For more information:

www.manchesterlegalawards.co.uk @MLAwards

Event host



Manchester Law Society
Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

Media partner

The Business
Desk

Marketing partner

RMS

Charity partner





From the President

Fiona Ledden, President

I am delighted to be welcoming you to our February edition of the Messenger I cannot believe I am one month into the presidency of this wonderful society.

Towards the end of January, we have International Holocaust Remembrance Day the 27th of January. I have been privileged enough to be invited to several of the ceremonies that have been held in Manchester over the last few years, and they always leave me with great sadness as to how unfathomable, cruel and horrific humans as a species can be to each other. The theme for this year was 'for a better future' I truly hope that we have that to look forward to.

I was so pleased to represent Manchester Law Society in doing some judging for the Birmingham Law Society awards this month. I hope you are thinking about your nominations ready for the Manchester Legal Awards – entries are open now! You can read more about our four new categories and new venue [here](#) .

My theme this year is Equity Diversity and Inclusion. Manchester is a wonderful, inclusive city, and I look forward to hearing your ideas for how we can increase our inclusivity further, both as a Society and as a profession. Please do let me have your ideas.

I, as City Solicitor, receive information from time to time about progress of work on Our Town Hall. I was told about the renovation work on the picture of Alderman Sir Thomas Baker. He was Chair of the libraries

“

My theme this year is Equity Diversity and Inclusion and Manchester is a wonderful inclusive City”

committee from 1865 and he employed out of work women as library assistants and also succeeded in getting Sunday opening which meant that people working for the other 6 days could visit libraries. I see him as one of many adopted Mancunians (he was originally from Birmingham) who ran with the idea of inclusivity in the mid-1800s - sadly not so many at his time were - who advocated for social inclusion. He also had time to be President of the Manchester Law Association the earlier version of our Society!

I wanted to leave you with my thought of the month for how we can all improve inclusion and for me that is truly listening to those with lived experiences and engaging them to be part of the change which needs to happen.

My tip for the month is: remember to be kind. It is so very easy to do and so easy to forget.

Enjoy the excellent read, have a great February.

the Messenger



In this edition...

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| 03 | From the President | 20 | Regulation Update & News |
| 06 | News from HQ | 24 | Talking Heads |
| 12 | Mental Wellness | 26 | Manchester Legal Awards 2025 |
| 16 | Professional Development | 28 | Meet the Officers |
| 18 | Charity News | 37 | Upcoming Q1 & Q2 meetings |



Manchester Law Society
Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

Manchester Law Society

4th Floor, Arkwright House, Parsonage Gardens,
Manchester, M3 2LF

www.manchesterlawsociety.org.uk

Send your stories to: messenger@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk

Why not join the conversation
by following us on social media?





Supporting solicitors at every step:

How our partners are here for you



96

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| 38 | Committee Reports | 86 | Public Procurement Regulation |
| 52 | Member News | 88 | Management Matters |
| 66 | Manchester Young Lawyers Group | 94 | Legal Costs Update |
| 70 | MLS Advantage | 96 | The Solicitors' Charity |
| 76 | Movers & Shakers | 98 | Pet of the month |

Communications Committee

Fran Eccles-Bech
Manchester Law Society

Carla Jones
Manchester Law Society

Chandre May
Manchester Law Society

David Anderson
St John's Buildings

Martyn Best
Document Direct

Lucy Cresswell
JMW Solicitors LLP

Adam Entwistle
JMW Solicitors LLP

Mark Fitzgibbon
Hill Dickinson LLP

Nick Johnson
Glaisyers Solicitors LLP

Paul Johnson
Ward Hadaway LLP

Steve Kuncewicz
Glaisyers Solicitors LLP

Fiona Ledden
Manchester City Council

Jeff Lewis
Brabners LLP

Julie Mogan
Excello Law

Brigid O'Malley
McAlister Family Law Limited

Cheryl Palmer-Hughes
Irwin Mitchell

Shane Smith
Slater & Gordon Lawyers

Matthew Taylor
Eversheds Sutherland

Ruth Thomas
Irwin Mitchell

Seraphina Wilkins-Tolliday
TLT LLP

All rights reserved, reproduction in whole or part without written permission from Manchester Law Society is not permitted.

Photographic material and manuscripts are supplied at owners' risk, neither the company nor its agents accept any liability for loss or damage.

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

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



**Deadline for the
March 2025 edition
of The Messenger**

The Messenger is published by



Advertising enquiries:

Please contact Martyn Best:
Mobile: 07798 700500

Email: martyn.best@legalrss.co.uk

Design by Andy Bellis Creative



Ransomware: proposals to increase incident reporting and reduce payments to criminals

You may have seen the announcement on the 14th January that the Government is consulting on its [proposals to introduce legislation attempting to limit the threat of certain types of cybercrime](#) .

We spoke to Lindsay Hill (inset), Chief Executive, [Mitigo Cyber Security](#) , Manchester Law Society's partner for cyber risk management, to ask him about his views on the matter. "These proposals are a well-intentioned attempt to tackle the rising frequency, cost and disruption to organisations of all shapes and sizes across the UK as a result of ransomware attacks by organised criminals, many of which are based in Russia. They follow on from the Government's draft Code of Practice on cyber security governance.

However, a number of points should be born in mind.

The proposal for a complete ban on the public sector and critical national infrastructure paying ransom demands, intended to deter these types of attacks against them, may result in the redirection of attacks against businesses in the private sector, with law firms being a prime target.

Although the headlines in the press feature the high profile attacks against public bodies, the reality is that the overwhelming majority of ransomware attacks are against businesses in the private sector.

The proposals in relation to the private sector would make it mandatory to report ransomware incidents to the authorities, and also to notify an intention to pay the ransom before actually doing so. Law enforcement would then review the proposed payment to

see if there is a reason to block it, for example if it breached sanctions. This would create an additional burden on the victim firm, on top of the stress of negotiating with the criminals over payment and trying to limit the damage and disruption to its business and client affairs.



And what if the payment is blocked? It could be the difference between the firm surviving or not. Firms decide to pay ransom demands because commercially they feel forced to. Losing all client data and access to systems could leave the firm permanently crippled.

The prevention of a payment will not itself prevent criminal gangs from capitalising on data theft, for example by selling it on to facilitate other serious crime, such as card not present fraud, identity theft, breaking passwords or user names to get into bank accounts etc.

Also bear in mind that these proposals relate to ransomware attacks. Cyber crime and cyber disruption involves a much fuller range of attacks which these proposals do not touch. For law firms, the most common form of attack is email account takeover, where the criminal gains access to the firm's email, frequently resulting in data and financial loss.

The bottom line is that firms should prioritise prevention of a cyber breach in the first place. Cyber risk management should be right at the top of any firm's risk register and a board level responsibility."

If you would like to discuss this further please contact Damian Wasey, Director of Affinity Partnerships at [Mitigo](#) [at \[damianwasey@mitigogroup.com\]\(mailto:damianwasey@mitigogroup.com\)](mailto:damianwasey@mitigogroup.com) or on 07885 666635.



TAILORED FITNESS FOR BUSY PROFESSIONALS

Achieve longevity and sustainable results with premium 1-2-1 personal training at FORM. Our programs are designed to create lasting change and support your long-term health and lifestyle.

YOUR EXCLUSIVE OFFER:

Complimentary Consultation

50% OFF Your First Month of Personal Training


Free Nutrition Consultation with our in-house nutritionist

Personalised fitness and lifestyle plan

Focused on longevity and sustainable results

Email info@formmcr.com to book your consultation and use promo code: **MESSENGER50** to unlock your exclusive offer.

 FORM Personal Training

 **Call:** 07411657979

 **Visit:** www.formmcr.com

Two hybrid events from The European Circuit

6 February 2025: *[“DARK MONEY: Going after the proceeds and those involved in the London Laundromat and further afield”](#)* [↗](#)

In order to comply with the Corporate Sustainability and Due Diligence Directive (EU) 2024/1760, companies across the EU are cleaning up their supply chains. In England and Wales, profits made in breach of environmental and social laws, both here and abroad, are increasingly being treated as the proceeds of crime liable to forfeiture. Registers of beneficial ownership, combined with new Companies House powers to remove companies furthering frauds, aim to tackle what some call “Dark Money” in the “London Laundromat”. However, with shell companies being used prolifically, after the money has long gone, uncovering frauds and holding corporate controllers personally liable for wrongdoing can be difficult, as witnessed in *Alpha v Barclay-Watt* [2022] EWCA Civ 1169. With these developments in mind, there is no better time to re-visit the conversation about tackling the misuse of companies for money laundering and other frauds.

This event will take place at The Middle Temple, The Sherrard Rooms and by Zoom at 18:00 on 6th February 2025. There is no charge to attend this event.

The panel will consist of:

- The Rt Hon. Lord Justice Edis PC (Chair), Senior Presiding Judge for England and Wales.
- Jamas Hodivala KC, Matrix Chambers (discussing capturing corporate profits as the proceeds of crime).
- Graham Barrow, the Dark Money Files (discussing widespread misuse of incorporation and the recent regulatory response).

- Franz Wild, Bureau of Investigative Journalism (the “London Laundromat”).
- Dr Mike Wilkinson, 18 St John Street Chambers (discussing director personal responsibility in criminal and civil law).

For further details about speakers, registration and access to the Zoom link, please [click here](#) [↗](#).

19 March 2025: *[“Ukraine, Sanctions and Security in Europe for 2025”](#)* [↗](#)

Sanctions, supported by diplomacy, are important rule-of-law tools to discourage belligerence, disrupt war, indicate opposition to corruption and defend international norms. On 19 March 2025 leading sanctions experts will consider how imminent changes to what is somewhat euphemistically called “the international order” will play out in Ukraine, and how the law on sanctions will be deployed going forwards: as a call to arms to wider European nations, a weapon to fight unlawful acts and a defence of the European legal order.

This event will take place at King’s College London, Nash Lecture Theatre, The Strand, or virtually by MS Teams, at 17.00 on 19th March 2025.

The panel will consist of:

- Paul James Cardwell (Chair), Professor of Law at Kings College London.
- Lord Dan Brennan KC, Matrix Chambers and the House of Lords.
- Olena Sukmanova, Head of Litigation at Sayenko Kharenko in Kyiv and previously Deputy and First Deputy Minister of Justice in Ukraine.
- Maria Kostytska, Lawyer and Head of Arbitration at Winston & Strawn, Paris.

For further details about speakers and registration, please [click here](#).

WIN a twilight spa garden experience for two with dinner included



FREE Prize Draw



Carden Park Hotel & Spa

Scan the QR code below to enter:



Voucher valid for 12-months upon issue



Enter by the 28th February 2025



The importance of ESG amid investor fatigue and greenwashing concerns

In our latest report: [Reflections and predictions for sustainability in the property sector in 2025](#), Landmark's Sustainability Director Chris Loaring explores the law firm's perspective on greenwashing risks, integrating ESG policies effectively, and technology's role in supporting ESG due diligence.

With near-term net zero targets just five years away, and global scrutiny intensifying over corporate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investments, greenwashing is an ever-present risk.

Greenwashing on the rise?

According to The EY 2024 Institutional Investor Survey¹, which polled 350 investment decision-makers across the world, 85% of investors believe that greenwashing is a bigger problem now than

five years ago. Consequently, greenwashing litigation has naturally become a growing area of practice for commercial real estate lawyers.

Greenwashing risk has certainly become a prominent area of focus for the law firms we speak to. Not only are they advising clients with strategies for addressing potential greenwashing head on, but they're also helping to identify risks early – not only in terms of a client's own operations, but also their broader supply chain.

Embrace the value of ESG

EY's research also found that 88% of investors have increased their use of ESG information, which correlates with the emergence of mandatory ESG reporting rules. However, an alarming 92% of investors are worried that ESG initiatives

Blog

The importance of ESG amid investor fatigue and greenwashing concerns ●

Read now >



adversely affect short-term corporate performance.

This tallies with anecdotal reports of so-called 'ESG fatigue' – both within the property industry and beyond. However, we must try to move beyond this type of short-termism mindset and embrace the long-term value that is inevitably derived from integrating ESG and sustainable initiatives into business-as-usual activities.

Sustainable supply chains

One area that can certainly benefit from ESG screening is supply chain due diligence. With sustainable supply chains an increasingly hot topic, particularly through the lens of the [Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive \(CSDDD\)](#) [↗](#), law firms are working hard to ensure their own ESG policies are in order, as a vital element of the supply chain themselves.

Law firms are on a journey that involves assessing their own ESG initiatives and determining how best to report on those, what policies to have in place, and what developments they need to address. Even with the great strides being made, there is always more that can be done with ESG. It's a constantly evolving space and because it continues to evolve, law firms will continue to evolve with it.

The role of technology

Key to that evolutionary process is blending cutting-edge technologies, such as AI and machine-learning, with traditional human initiative. One such technology is our [RiskHorizon ESG screening tool](#) [↗](#), which standardises risk management, saves time,

“

Law firms are working hard to ensure their own ESG policies are in order, as a vital element of the supply chain themselves”

and empowers better investment decisions., which standardises risk management, saves time, and empowers better investment decisions.

With an ongoing uptick in ESG due diligence work, law firms that capitalise on new technologies like RiskHorizon are likely to reap the rewards. Our AI-driven solution aggregates over 100 of the world's most credible datasets, enabling lawyers to quickly understand ESG risks and frame due diligence questions. It is just one example of how technology can assist the industry's sustainability ambitions.

Read our report

We believe that peer collaboration is essential to achieve sustainability targets. That's why Landmark spoke to a panel of leading industry sustainability experts from Latham & Watkins, Taylor Wimpey, Savills, OSB Group, and our own Sustainability division to discuss the direction of travel for sustainability in the property market in 2025.

Read our report now: [Reflections and Predictions for Sustainability in the Property Sector in 2025](#) [↗](#).

1 https://www.ey.com/en_gl/insights/climate-change-sustainability-services/institutional-investor-survey

Your voice matters – help improve mental health in the legal sector

Be part of Life in the Law 2025

By Niamh Warnock and Trish McLellan

The legal sector is known for its high-pressure environment, long hours, and demanding workloads, all of which can take a toll on mental health and wellbeing. In 2021, LawCare's first Life in the Law survey provided groundbreaking insight into these issues. More than 1,700 legal professionals shared their experiences, exposing widespread burnout, stress, and stigma. While the findings prompted important conversations and called for meaningful change, significant issues remain. With Life in the Law 2025, we now have an opportunity to reassess where we are and uncover what still needs to be addressed.

Your voice adds strength to the findings. The research isn't just about data. It's about people in the legal sector; their experiences, challenges, and successes. Your insights – whether as an individual navigating the challenges of legal work or as part of an organisation striving to support colleagues – are vital.

Some might ask why further surveys are necessary, especially when the issues seem well known. The answer is simple: we need up to date data to measure progress and understand whether the sector is moving in the right direction. Your voice ensures that the current realities of working in law are heard and that the changes needed to better support mental health and wellbeing are based on lived experiences. By taking part, you're contributing to improving working practices in the law for you, your

peers and future generations of legal professionals.

Help shape the future of the legal sector

The Life in the Law 2025 surveys will provide a detailed, up-to-date understanding of mental health and wellbeing in the legal sector. The results from this research will go beyond simply identifying problems – they will help shape the future of work in the legal sector by providing evidence-based recommendations for how individuals and organisations can drive meaningful change. From how to measure wellbeing in your workplace, to improving workplace practices, to tackling stigma and fostering a healthier culture, your input will directly inform the solutions that can make life in the law better for everyone.

Elizabeth Rimmer, CEO of LawCare, says: "Life in the Law 2025 is a real opportunity to improve mental health in the legal sector. These surveys are open to everyone working in law, and they'll help us understand why people in our sector may be experiencing poor mental health and what practical steps organisations and individuals can take to prevent this. By sharing your experiences, you're contributing to building a more supportive and healthier working environment for the future. Together, we can make a real difference."

The findings will be released in October 2025. They will provide a platform for



understanding how collectively we tackle systemic factors in law that can undermine mental health and wellbeing and provide practical recommendations as to how we can address these to achieve positive change.

What do the surveys ask about:

- Working hours and job pressure
- Burnout
- Mental health and wellbeing at work
- Bullying, harassment, and discrimination
- Future aspirations in the legal sector
- Current workplace measures to support mental health and wellbeing

Who should take part?

We're inviting everyone in the legal sector – both individuals and organisations – to take part. There are two surveys:

- 1. For individuals:** This survey is open to anyone working in any capacity in the legal sector, from solicitors and barristers to support staff and paralegals. By sharing personal experiences, challenges and areas for improvement your input will provide a crucial perspective. Every response adds a vital additional angle, providing valuable depth and breadth to the findings.
- 2. For legal organisations:** This survey is for workplaces such as law firms, chambers, and in-house legal departments, to find out more about mental health initiatives, policies and practices and their impact on wellbeing. It's aimed at those responsible for




people management or wellbeing. By participating, organisations can help produce evidence based best practice guidance that supports mental health and contributes to healthy work environments.

The surveys are anonymous, take around 10 to 15 minutes to complete, and are open to people in the UK, Jersey, Guernsey, and the Isle of Man.

Take part now

Both surveys are available until Friday 21 March 2025, and are entirely confidential. Your responses will remain anonymous, ensuring you can share your experiences openly and honestly.

[Complete the Life in the Law 2025 survey for individuals](#) 

[Complete the Life in the Law 2025 survey for organisations](#) 

In just 10 to 15 minutes, you can help shape the future of mental health and wellbeing in the legal sector. These surveys provide a chance to make your voice heard and drive meaningful change. Let's build on the momentum of the 2021 research and work towards a sector that prioritises mental health and wellbeing.

Actionstep

MLS Legal Education
Programme Sponsor

11KBW



Manchester Law Society

Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

Local Authority Conference

Join us at the Local Authority Conference 2025, a joint event from Manchester Law Society and 11KBW Chambers.

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



TUESDAY 11 MARCH 2025
09:45 TO 15:50



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



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

Please see the full programme opposite for details of the content of the day.

You can book your place now by emailing ChandreMay@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk with details of the attendee.

[Find out more](#)

Kindly sponsored by



For what comes next

Conference Programme

09:45 Registration

10:15 Introduction from the Morning Chair

Joanne Clement KC, 11KBW

10:20 Section 114 Reports: All you need to know

James Goudie KC, 11KBW

10:50 Subsidy Control update

Joanne Clement KC, 11KBW

11:20 Q&A

11:30 Refreshments and networking

11:45 Education Update

Paul Greatorex, 11KBW

12:15 Community Care Update

Joanne Clement KC, 11KBW

12:45 Q&A

12:55 Networking lunch

13:55 Welcome back from Afternoon Chair

Joseph Barrett KC, 11KBW

14:00 Procurement Update

Joseph Barrett KC, 11KBW

14:30 Judicial Review Update

Cecilia Ivimy, 11KBW

15:00 GDPR and Information Law Update

Leo Davidson, 11KBW

15:30 Q&A

15:40 Closing Comments from the Chair

Joseph Barrett KC

15:50 Conference closes

Juggling your Tasks, Team and Individuals

Let's be honest, leading and managing a team can be a tough gig at times. There's so much to do. As the manager, you are conscious of the individuals who sit in your team. You need to get to know each one and learn what makes each individual tick and learn how to manage each person differently.

Then there's the whole team. As the manager you are trying your best to create a positive healthy culture where people bring their best selves to work. A team that feels safe and trusting.

Once you've managed to get everyone in a happy place, you can't forget the tasks/objectives of the team that need completing every day, week and month.

It's never ending! Trying to juggle all of this can be overwhelming for some managers.

John Adair created a simple model back in 1973 called Action-Centered Leadership. This model highlights the balance a manager must maintain between three core responsibilities that are shown as three overlapping circles:

- Task
- Team
- Individual

Here's a quick overview:

1. Task Needs

This focuses on achieving the goal or completing the task.

This might include:

- Defining clear objectives for the team.
- Planning and allocating resources.
- Setting performance standards.
- Monitoring and reviewing progress.

2. Team Needs

This focuses on building and maintaining a cohesive and collaborative team.

This might include:

- Encouraging teamwork and collaboration.
- Building trust and morale within the group.
- Resolving conflicts.
- Ensuring effective communication.

3. Individual Needs

This part of the model concentrates on supporting, motivating, and developing individual team members.

Key activities include:

- Recognising individual contributions.
- Providing feedback and coaching.
- Addressing personal development needs.
- Offering support during challenges.

The link between the three areas

John Adair stresses that these three areas are interconnected:


For example:

As a manager, you can't focus on all of your attention on the task. If you do, the team and individuals will suffer. Basically, you'll have a performing team, but at the heart of it everyone is unhappy.

Similarly, you can't focus all of your time creating a positive and cohesive team with happy individuals. If you do, you'll take your eye of the task. You'll have a happy team, but nothing gets done!

Adair's model takes the view that task, team and individual needs must be constantly considered. Never lose sight of either part of the model!

mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk 

Do you need help developing the management skills of your team? Contact Mike direct for a chat mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk 



THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

HELPING DEFINE THE FUTURE



5TH MARCH 2025



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



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

Want to get your legal career off to the best start? Join us for advice and tips on how to make the most of your career in the law.

Created in partnership with, and hosted by, Mike Ode of Potential Unearthed this event will support those at the early stages of their career.

To book your place please email ChandreMay@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk



[SEE THE FULL PROGRAMME HERE](#)



We Love MCR Charity Firewalk is back!

A group of brave Firewalkers made history with [We Love MCR Charity](#) in January 2024, raising a scorching £26,000+ for our work with Manchester's unbeatable communities and young people.

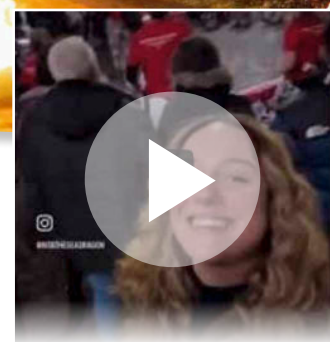
We're yet again giving fearless fundraisers the chance to test their resolve and brave the coals in this ultimate mind-over-matter challenge...

At 6pm on Thursday 27th February fundraisers will be briefed by our expert operators in the Grade I listed St. Ann's Church. As the Firewalkers take to the coals, they'll be soundtracked by award-winning samba drummers Batala – adding to the atmosphere with ferocious beats, and making it a spectacle for the crowd!

Dare you join us?

For more info and event registration, click [here](#) and we'll be in touch!

Read about the MLS team's experience at the 2024 Firewalk [here](#).



Click here to Watch a video of last year's We Love MCR Firewalk

Click for more info



Greenbank

Preparatory School
and Day Nursery



NURSERY, PRESCHOOL & SCHOOL

OPEN MORNING - SATURDAY 1ST MARCH 2025 - 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Greenbank

Preparatory School and Day Nursery

Cheadle Hulme

Cheshire SK8 6HU



0161 485 3724

SMALL SCHOOL, BIG EXPERIENCE

20 Regulation Update & News

By **Andrea Cohen**, Compli, Weightmans



As we come out of the freezing weather (for now!), Compli is back with our monthly round-up of developments in the world of risk and compliance, regulatory matters and disciplinary decisions.

SRA reports

When most of us were trying to wind down and relax as much as possible just before the Christmas and New Year break, the SRA went into overdrive, producing a raft of reports that you may well have missed, particularly as they were all published on its website on 19/20 December 2024. These included:

[SRA Annual Reports for 2022/23](#)

[Upholding Professional Standards Annual Report 2022/23](#)

[Upholding Professional Standards – Diversity Monitoring Annual Report 2022/23](#)

[Education and Training Annual Report 2022/23](#)

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2022/23](#)

[Client Protection Annual Report 2022/23](#)

[Authorisation Annual Report 2022/23](#)

[Risk Outlook report: Serving clients' needs in a changing legal market](#)

In addition, there were a large number of other publications in December. In its Professional obligations thematic review, published 13 December 2024, the SRA found that firms tend to review regulatory resources on a reactive basis and there is

a lack of systemised dissemination of SRA resources. In addition, and, some would say, an explanation for the findings, many solicitors said they found it difficult to navigate the website and find information. Even those of us whose role and areas of expertise mean we spend considerable time on the SRA website find it difficult to navigate, and are made aware of publications from colleagues or make other colleagues aware of findings on LinkedIn!

SRA warning on marketing legal services to the public

The SRA recently issued a warning notice regarding the regulatory responsibilities and obligations when marketing services, particularly making reference to unsolicited approaches in breach of rules by cold calling, door knocking and directly targeted online messaging, and inaccurate or misleading publicity and marketing material [Marketing your services to members of the public](#). Interestingly, the SRA website headline link to the warning notice reads 'Warning notice calls out 'no win, no fee' agreements', but the content does not appear to do so. It confirms there should be a clear explanation of what 'no win, no fee' means, and the risks to clients in relation to potential liability for costs, but does not 'call them out'. The notice includes links to previous guidance on unsolicited approaches, claims management, and representing clients during claims for financial services or products, and the warning notice on high volume financial services claims.



Sham litigation

The SRA has published a [guidance note on the potential threat posed by sham litigation](#). It confirms that litigation is not within scope of MLR, but all firms, whatever legal services they provide, are subject to the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (PoCA). The guidance provides information as to how sham litigation works, key indicators to help spot potential sham litigation and steps firms must take, including identifying clients (8.1. SRA Code of Conduct for Solicitors), keep detailed records (Rule 8.1, SRA Accounts Rules) scrutinise account policies and procedures (2.1 SRA Code of Conduct for Firms) and submit a SAR to the NCA if you have suspicions of money laundering. The guidance also warns about not over-relying on E-verification.

Automatic disclosure of documents in the SDT

A new policy has been introduced by the SDT to automatically disclose core documents to the press and public at the start of the hearing, to improve the transparency of hearings and reduce costs to reduce the number of non-party applications for disclosure (NPDs). Under the new process, specified classes of documents, including the rule 12 statement of allegations and facts by the SRA, other than exhibits and any anonymity schedule, the answer without exhibits, and the reply and skeleton arguments, will all be disclosed by being put on the tribunal's website during the hearing and for a period afterwards. Revised practice directions will also give parties more time to understand the case before giving a reply or answer and before the hearing date is set.

Reminder – SRA Consultation responses by 21 February 2025

The closing date for responses to the SRA consultation on potential changes to how client money is handled in the legal sector is 21 February 2025. The consultation is divided into 3 parts; solicitors holding client money, protecting the client money that solicitors hold, and delivering and paying for a sustainable compensation fund. A number of people have commented that the consultation period is short, taking into account the complexity, length, width of areas raised, and the numbers who will need to be involved in preparing considered responses, and have asked the SRA to extend the closing date, bearing in mind how long the SRA had taken to compile the consultation following feedback received after publication of its Consumer Protection Review discussion paper in February 2024. At a recent SRA roundtable discussion, the SRA representative said he would take the request away to consider, but it is unlikely that the closing date will be changed. There have been a number of meetings to discuss the issues, including the recent MLS COLP/COFA/MLRO Forum, Law Society committees, local Law Societies etc, as well as the SRA meetings. The proposals are wide reaching, and it is important that as many as possible engage in the process and respond to at least part, if not all, of the consultation.

Continued on page 22



Disciplinary and regulatory decisions

Fines for AML breaches continue, including:

Solicitor fined £27,500 over AML compliance failings

A partner who failed to conduct adequate client due diligence while handling a property transaction has been fined. The solicitor also failed to conduct sufficient ongoing monitoring of the business relationship with the client and acted in transactions involving fraud. In the same case, the COLP was cleared of failing to adequately investigate concerns that the development was fraudulent, the SDT deciding that he was justified in relying on assurances made by a senior property partner.

Maximum fine for firm for AML breaches

A firm has been fined £25,000 and £1350 costs for failing, for six years, to have an appropriate risk assessment and policies, controls and procedures in place to manage the risk of money laundering. The issue was discovered after an SRA risk-based review in October 2023 and referred for formal investigation. The firm cooperated with the investigation, took remedial action and now has compliant documents in place.

ABS fined over £27,000 for AML breaches

A firm that did not have a risk assessment and PCPs in place for 7 years, from 2017, has been fined more than £27,000, with £600 costs. The SRA said the firm showed no regard for its obligations and had the potential to cause harm by facilitating dubious transactions, although there was no evidence of harm to clients or

third parties. The firm had implemented compliant processes 'promptly' after feedback was provided and cooperated fully with the investigators.

Solicitor suspended for failing to pay earlier fine and accounts breaches

A sole practitioner, the COLP and COFA for the firm, has been suspended for one year after failing to comply with a 2020 tribunal order to pay a fine of £10,000 and repeated breaches of SRA accounts rules, including shortages on client account and transfers from client to office account on 7 occasions without submitting a bill. The suspension will be suspended for two years if a range of conditions are complied with, including stopping holding client money and holding a compliance office role for an indefinite period. He also has to pay SRA costs of £27000.

SDT allows solicitor who backdated letter to continue in practice

A solicitor who backdated a letter to make it appear that work had been done on a file when in fact it had not, and was dismissed from the firm for gross misconduct, has been suspended from practice for one year, suspended for two years, and ordered to pay £10,000 costs. The solicitor had been struggling with the volume of work and backdated the letter to avoid a colleague chasing the work. The SDT stated that 'the act of dishonesty was an isolated incident' though 'it was nonetheless capable of affecting the reputation of the profession.'

Partner fined for using client account as banking facility

A partner has been fined £14,000 for authorising the firm to make payments totalling over £570,000 over 18 months on behalf of four clients where there were no

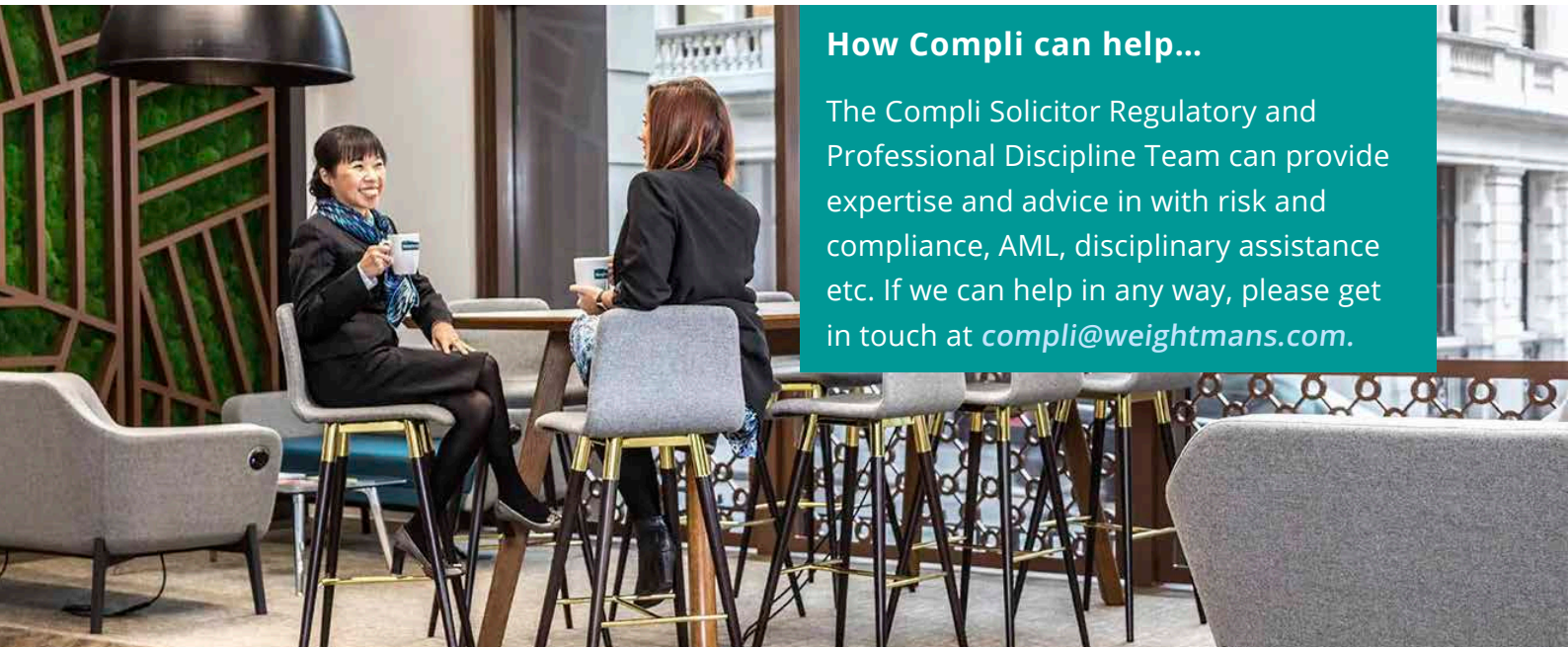
underlying legal transactions, in breach of rule 3.3 SRA Accounts Rules.

Struck off for payments to personal account

A solicitor who told clients to pay money to his personal account, deleted emails requesting payment, created false invoices, lied to clients and created a false audit trail on the firm's system has been struck off. The solicitor admitted acting dishonestly and apologised for his misconduct. He said the money, totalling around £1000, had been repaid. Due to his financial situation, the SRA did not seek costs.

Struck off for trying to save client SDLT and a potential claim

A partner who asked the seller's solicitor to backdate completion by one day, to the final day of the 2021 SDLT 'holiday' to save the client paying £6000 to HMRC, and 'to avoid a claim', has been struck off. The monies had been in client account but not transferred until the following day due to the volume of work for the accounts department and he had not checked the monies had been sent. He admitted lack of integrity but denied dishonesty. The SDT accepted his remorse was genuine but there were no exceptional circumstances to justify from departing from the usual sanction in cases of dishonesty.



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.

Upcoming events: Legal Education

27 February 2025 – [Criminal Law Update with HHJ Potter](#)

05 March 2025 – [The Next Generation of Legal Professionals – Helping Define the Future](#)

11 March 2025 – [Local Authority Conference](#)





With Valentines Day this month, love is in the air, and what better way to celebrate than by indulging in some heartwarming romantic comedies? We asked this month's talking heads:

“What is your all-time favourite romantic comedy film, and why does it hold a special place in your heart?”

Molly Souter
Solicitor, McAlister
Family Law

It has to be *When Harry Met Sally!*

It's just such a feel-good heartwarming story of two friends who fall in love.



The dialogue is brilliant as is the chemistry - you can't help but want them to get together! It holds a special place

because I love love, and the real life stories from the

older couples and how they met is so sweet. I have also been to Katz Deli where the famous diner scene is filmed and very much relate to Meg Ryan's character and her fussy ordering!

Chandre May
Society Administrator, Manchester Law
Society

13 Going on 30 is my favourite rom com because it's funny and heartwarming. Watching Jenna navigate life as an adult with a teenager's mindset is hilarious. The chemistry between Jennifer Garner and Mark Ruffalo is great. Plus, the Thriller dance scene is unforgettable!



Nicola Walker
Partner, Private Client
Solicitors

It has to be *Bridget Jones's Diary* - it takes me back to early dating years and navigating love and heartbreak - at some point in their lives I'm sure 90% of the female population can relate to it, whether that's too much wine, cake, big pants or all three at once!



Jill Eastwood**Partner, Tuckers Solicitors**

Pretty Woman stands out to me because of its memorable characters, storyline and undeniable chemistry between Julia Roberts and Richard Gere (I think I always hoped I could fall in love like that). The portrayal of Vivian Ward by Julia Roberts is captivating making each scene heartfelt.

One moment that resonates with me is the iconic shopping spree scene, where Vivian confidently reclaims her worth. This to me captures the essence of transformation and self-discovery.

Watching the film reminds me of the importance of kindness, self-worth and believing in unexpected possibilities life can offer. It



never fails to uplift my spirits and remind me of the power of resilience and love. The film is more than just entertainment; it's a delightful reminder of the magic that happens when we stay true to ourselves and embrace life's surprises.

If only I looked like that and had the body to go with it!

Kirsty Varley**Partner and Higher Courts Advocate, Forbes Solicitors**

This is a really good question, and, as someone who loves a good rom-com, I had to think long and hard about this. I have a few favourites, all for different reasons.

After discounting *Bridget Jones' Diary* (having been the single girl once that the film is about), *Legally Blonde* (close but maybe too cliché), and *10 Things I Hate About You* (sorry dad – you still remind me of their dad!), I plumped for *How To Lose A Guy in 10 Days*.



I love the way that stereotypes of the male and female sexes are lampooned in the film, and Kate Hudson gatecrashing

Matthew McConaughey's boys' night and then turning "psycho" with the love fern always makes me laugh. Fundamentally – the characters do love each other and once they get out of their own way and are being themselves – we have the obligatory happy ending, which we all secretly want!

“

I love the way that stereotypes of the male and female sexes are lampooned in the film”



ML
AWARDS
2025



Fran Eccles-Bech, Chief Executive of the Manchester Law Society, said:

“We’re proud to showcase the exceptional talent that makes Manchester stand out as a hub for legal excellence. These awards offer a platform for everyone to showcase their hard work and achievements.

“This year, we’re very excited to host the awards at a new, larger venue - the Kimpton Clocktower Hotel allowing us to bring even more people together to celebrate the fabulous talent across our region.

“If modesty or a belief that you don’t stand a chance of winning has prevented you from submitting an entry in the past, I want to assure you that everyone has an equal chance of winning, irrespective of the size, weight or reputation of the firm or chambers they represent.

“Our judging process is fair and transparent, with a panel of judges that represent a wonderfully varied cross-section of experience and opinion.

“With 23 categories, including four exciting new ones, there’s an opportunity for everyone to shine. These awards aren’t just about winning - they’re about celebrating the remarkable work being done in our field.

“We are delighted to once again be working with [TheBusinessDesk.com](https://www.thebusinessdesk.com) as our media partner, [RMS PR](#) as our marketing partner and [We Love MCR](#) as our charity partner.”

All entries will be assessed against four criteria by a panel of judges from the legal and business community. Apart from the Lifetime Achievement Award which will be in the gift of the Manchester Law Society Council.





The awards are free to enter and there are 23 categories:

- Corporate Culture and Wellbeing Champions of the Year
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Champions of the Year
- Sustainability Champions of the Year
- Corporate/Commercial Team of the Year
- Crime Team of the Year
- Employment Team of the Year
- Family Team of the Year
- In-house Team of the Year
- Litigation Team of the Year
- Personal Injury/Clinical Negligence Team of the Year
- Private Client Team of the Year
- Property Team of the Year
- Regulatory Team of the Year
- Trainee/Paralegal/Apprentice/Legal Executive of the Year
- Solicitor of the Year
- Barrister of the Year
- Partner of the Year
- Unsung Hero of the Year
- Barristers' Chambers of the Year
- Small Law Firm of the Year (1-5 partners nationally)
- Medium Law Firm of the Year (6-20 partners nationally)
- Large Law Firm of the Year (20+ partners nationally)
- Lifetime Achievement

The deadline for entries is Friday 28th March.



Important dates for your diary

3 rd February 2025	Entries open
28 th March 2025	Entries close
6 th May 2025	Shortlist announced
30 th May 2025	Judging Day
3 rd July 2025	Awards Ceremony

For more information visit:
www.manchesterlegalawards.co.uk and follow @MLAwards.

There are limited sponsorship and advertising opportunities available. Please contact mlawards@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk for further information.





Meet the Officers of Manchester Law Society

Fiona Ledden
President



What's your area of practice, job title and/or role at your organisation?

Original area of practice Child protection, now Local Government Law City Solicitor

What made you want to be involved in the running of Manchester Law Society?

I was keen to give back to the Society and legal community that is so welcoming, as well as believing it important that Local Government Colleagues are more involved with Committee and the Society which enables better understanding of different areas of practice.

What do you find most rewarding about working in the legal profession?

For me it is making that difference in people's lives when we undertake our roles as well as we possibly can and then being able to work in this wonderful City and her residents

What advice would you give to someone starting their career in the law?

One to be determined, you need a lot of determination, as well as patience and also be open minded about the area of work and whether in house or Private Practice there are a lot of choices and options.

“

Apart from our dogs my hobbies and interests are walking round lovely Gardens and National Trust places”

Tell us about a memorable case or project you've worked on and what you learnt from it

One of the more memorable cases was while I worked in London and in a year of brutal cuts the decision was made to close half of the Authority's libraries we won the expected Judicial Review at every level up to the Supreme Court. It was in the early days of Equality Impact assessments - ours was the size of a small book!

What's your top Manchester fact?

When they were constructing the original Town Hall, they had a small train that circumvented it to bring the supplies round.

Outside of work, what are your hobbies and interests?

Apart from our dogs my hobbies and interests are walking round lovely Gardens and National Trust places, with my daughter and spending time with the family.

How do you manage work-life balance, and what strategies do you find most effective in maintaining it?

Work life balance is something I have struggled with, and I think it is easy to get overwhelmed with work. My strategies include not leaving work after 5:30 unless there is a really good reason, helpfully I know need to ring security to drive away if I leave later than that! Also, I am a firm believer that when on holiday or the weekends do not take work home unless there is a real imperative, my way of checking that is would I agree with one of my colleagues it was an imperative!

Ian McConkey
Vice President



What's your area of practice, job title and/or role at your organisation?

I am at Partner and Solicitor Advocate at DAC Beachcroft, specialising in claims against Professionals, Company Directors and Media Organisations. I was previously Location Head of the DACB Manchester office for 9 years. I also do some tutoring at the law school.

What made you want to be involved in the running of Manchester Law Society?

I was first introduced to Manchester Law Society through the Manchester Legal Awards. I was interested to find out more about the work of MLS so I joined Council. MLS undertakes fantastic work for the profession in Manchester and the community more widely. It combines lobbying, promoting justice within the City,

“

I was first introduced to Manchester Law Society through the Manchester Legal Awards”

training, pro-bono and social activities.

What do you find most rewarding about working in the legal profession?

After 30 odd years of working as a lawyer I can honestly say that I have never spent a day watching the clock, wishing my time away. Every day is different and there is rarely a day when I am not presented with something new. Working in litigation means you are often dealing with people in very difficult circumstances and it is great to be able to help clients navigate their way to a resolution. I like being around colleagues and working with an interesting and diverse bunch of people. Having recently become involved tutoring law students, their enthusiasm is infectious and is a good reminder of how lucky I have been to have had a career that I love.

What advice would you give to someone starting their career in the law?

At the heart of what we do is honesty and integrity. It is very easy for people starting a career to get carried away with everything else, but those are the most important qualities. Trust your gut and if you have to think if something is wrong, it probably is. Also, most things are fixable if you tell someone as soon as you can. This might be the professional negligence lawyer talking here!

Continued on page 29



Tell us about a memorable case or project you've worked on and what you learnt from it

I have had one case reported in the law reports, and numerous cases reported in Metro and the Sun. I am not sure that is a good thing, and it certainly doesn't contribute much to the development of the common law. It has made for an interesting career though.

What's your top Manchester fact?

It might not seem like it, but it only rains on average 152 days per year in Manchester.

Outside of work, what are your hobbies and interests?

Outside of work I cycle at the weekends and try and get at least one trip a year which involves going up a long hill somewhere. Last summer I had 2 weeks cycling the Wild Atlantic Way around the West of Ireland. I keep thinking about starting piano lessons, but haven't yet taken the plunge. I make frequent trips to Northern Ireland to see family and friends.

How do you manage work-life balance, and what strategies do you find most effective in maintaining it?

Exercise is probably my main way of controlling stress. I enjoy my cycle commute to and from work and the 45 minutes or so after work definitely creates a bit of mental distance between work and home.

Stuart Cartwright Deputy Vice President



What's your area of practice, job title and/or role at your organisation?

Criminal lawyer by trade but I now head our Lawshare team and am a board member at the firm.

What made you want to be involved in the running of Manchester Law Society?

I am Manchester born and bred and feel passionately that the Manchester legal community is second to none. Manchester Law Society provides a fantastic opportunity to share ideas with your peers and have your finger on the pulse of all the pertinent issues and initiatives.

What do you find most rewarding about working in the legal profession?

I love to solve problems and find solutions and whilst it's a cliché I also like to help people!

What advice would you give to someone starting their career in the law?

Work hard, speak to clients, do what you say you are going to do, treat people properly and (if you have ability) you won't go far wrong.

Tell us about a memorable case or project you've worked on and what you learnt from it.

I always remember the first and last cases I was involved in when fee-earning. The first, taking notes in 'care case' hearing for

“

I am Manchester born and bred and feel passionately that the Manchester legal community is second to none”

Iain Hamilton. A parent (amongst other things) had allegedly put a cigarette out on a baby. I remembered getting the train home, recounting what I'd heard in court and thinking “this is a proper job”. One of the last criminal cases I dealt with – a first hearing at the Magistrates court involving a Manslaughter case. The defendant and deceased were both in their early 20's. Basically, it was a mass of devastation. Both taught me that I'm extremely lucky and am privileged to have had a good, normal, upbringing.

What's your top Manchester fact?

I always love the 'fact' that Mr Rolls first met Mr Royce at the Midland Hotel. Not sure if it's true but I've certainly told my boys that it is.

Outside of work, what are your hobbies and interests?

The 3 F's. Football, friends and family.

How do you manage work-life balance, and what strategies do you find most effective in maintaining it?

Exercise, usually football. Whilst it gets more and more difficult the older I get, I keep finding an even lower standard to play in.

Mark Fitzgibbon
Honorary Treasurer



What's your area of practice, job title and/or role at your organisation?

Commercial, Public Procurement; Partner, Head of Commercial, TMT & IP Team at Hill Dickinson, Manchester

What made you want to be involved in the running of Manchester Law Society?

To me it's important to give a voice to members of the legal profession in the city and Fran and her team have continued to do an excellent job of ensuring that MLS is the predominant Law Society outside of London (and the national Law Society) – constantly being consulted on matters of policy and procedure and whose opinion is genuinely respected. In addition, I get the opportunity to work with a group of highly experienced lawyers from other firms which provides the opportunity to share best practice in a non-partisan environment which proves very fruitful.

What do you find most rewarding about working in the legal profession?

Probably the mental stimulation and the challenges it poses in solving client issues, but also the privilege (most of the time) to work with some of the best professional minds (both colleagues, contemporaries and clients) in their fields.

What advice would you give to someone starting their career in the law?

Take as many opportunities you can to

Continued on page 32



speak to people working in the profession already before you commit to any particular career path through mentoring schemes or other outreach programmes now offered by most law firms and MLS itself (usually under the auspices of EDI programmes). Be better informed about the range of options and opportunities available and pick your practice area carefully and with it the kind of firm you want to work at. You could be working at this job for 35 years, so you need to be working in a field which you enjoy, which stimulates you and within a working environment which resonates with your values.

Tell us about a memorable case or project you've worked on and what you learnt from it.

Probably one of my earliest projects in Manchester, when I arrived as a relatively junior solicitor from London back in 1996, was to advise a small local charity, Zion Community Health & Resource Centres enter into a ground-breaking contract to run a primary care resource centre funded by the then Manchester Health Authority and to be built by North British Housing (as it then was). This resulted in the building of the award winning Kath Locke Centre in Hulme which opened its doors to the public in late 1996/1997. I got to work with and to become a friend of their inspirational chief exec Fay Selvan. It also resulted in my being invited to become a trustee of the newly incorporated charity I had set up for them as part of the transaction. The outstanding lesson from being introduced to this amazing group of people was to believe in the power of community and the human spirit's willingness never to give up the fight, against all odds, to achieve greater equality in some of the then most deprived areas of Manchester.

What's your top Manchester fact?

Attending the Commonwealth Games here in 2002 was a truly high point in the city's evolution and kickstarted a revolution in terms of optimism and belief!

Outside of work, what are your hobbies and interests?

We travel as far afield as we can when we get the chance but equally, we love nothing more than packing up the car and driving up to the Outer Hebrides for a couple of weeks of complete seclusion and beautiful scenery. Photography, cooking, gardening and trying to stay relatively fit are all full time hobbies which try to keep me sane....

How do you manage work-life balance, and what strategies do you find most effective in maintaining it?

Always a struggle to gain a proper balance but take the opportunities when they arise to switch off completely (evenings, weekends, holidays when you can) It's not healthy to be operating at a heightened level of stress / anticipation constantly.

Michelle Garlick
Joint Honorary
Secretary



What's your area of practice, job title and/or role at your organisation?

I am a partner at Weightmans LLP specialising in regulation, risk and compliance in the legal sector. I am the firm's Money Laundering reporting Officer (MLRO)

What made you want to be involved in the running of Manchester Law Society?

Many years ago, in my role as head of the Compli team at Weightmans, Fran asked me to chair the regulatory committee to help with responses to consultations. At the same time, the COLP and COFA roles were being introduced by the SRA so we also established a COLP and COFA Forum to provide support to compliance officers in a “safe space” where they could share experiences and risk issues with their peers. I have, since then, been an MLS Council member and in 2019 I agreed (after much persuasion from Fran!) to be President which was a huge honour. This gave me even greater insight into the running of MLS and I have since agreed to continue to be an Officer as Joint Honorary Secretary.

What do you find most rewarding about working in the legal profession?

There is nothing more satisfying than doing a good job for a satisfied client. My work has been extremely varied over the years from professional indemnity to advising law firm clients and now also taking on an internal role for Weightmans so it keeps my ageing grey cells working!

What advice would you give to someone starting their career in the law?

Be open to all opportunities that come your way and be prepared to go outside of your comfort zone.

Tell us about a memorable case or project you’ve worked on and what you learnt from it

Years ago, I acted against a litigant in person who, after we successfully struck out his claim, told me that he was going to move to the Highlands of Scotland in a caravan

and write his film script of the issues in the case and that Goldie Hawn would play me! Not sure I learned anything from it but it made me laugh and I felt better that Goldie Hawn was the chosen one and not Charlie Dimmock!

What’s your top Manchester fact?

Apart from it having the best football team in the world?! I love that the Suffragette movement was started in Manchester and yet surprisingly, Manchester had to wait until 2019 before it had a statue of a woman apart from Queen Victoria. A proud moment for the city when Our Emmeline appeared in St. Peter’s Square.

Outside of work, what are your hobbies and interests?

As well as football, wine, good food and Italy, I do tap dancing which is fantastic exercise both physically and mentally and I even got to perform on stage last year with legendary celebrities Anita Harris, Tommy Cannon and Bernie Clifton!

How do you manage work-life balance, and what strategies do you find most effective in maintaining it?

It can be a struggle sometimes (mobile phones have a lot to answer for!) but I make sure I have set times of the day/week where I exercise which then forms part of my routine. I’m also pretty good at being able to sit and relax whether that is watching TV, reading a book or playing mind-numbing games like Candy Crush!

Continued on page 34



**Cheryl
Palmer-Hughes**
Joint Honorary
Secretary



What is your area of practice, job title and/or role at your firm?

International Serious Injury, Irwin Mitchell LLP

What made you want to be involved in the running of Manchester Law Society?

I studied in France and Sheffield and started my career at Irwin Mitchell in Birmingham. When I returned to work in Manchester I wanted to develop my network in the city. A colleague recommended that I became involved in Manchester Law Society. As I got to know the organisation and the people involved through committee and council meetings, I could see how focussed the organisation is on moving forward in a world that has been changing at a rapid rate. There is clear focus on ensuring that members get what they need out of MLS and that MLS itself contributes to the legal profession at a national level and leads the way in terms of representing its members. I was particularly inspired to see the work that was being done on career events, embracing technology and ensuring that junior lawyers had access to training on legal issues as well as all important "soft skills" no matter what firm they were at. That is an ethos that is very closely aligned with my own and so I was happy to volunteer to become a part of the organisation's leadership in the hope of helping to shape the future of the legal profession.

What do you find most rewarding about working in the legal profession?

I consider myself very lucky to be able to make a difference to people's day to day lives after they have experienced trauma and loss. I think it is quite rare to find a job that is satisfying both morally and intellectually and cross border personal injury is an area that once I understood what it was (or that it even existed) I realised I would be able to apply the academic learning I had undertaken to real life cases. The area that I work in is not for everyone it is a bit like marmite. No two days are the same and I relish the opportunity to learn on each case, as the facts and circumstances are unique to each one, and to become comfortable with not always working to a fixed plan and finding new ways of helping people.

What advice would you give to someone starting their career in the law?

I very strongly anyone who is considering a career in law to think about what it is that they want to do every day. When I was looking for a training contract, I focussed on pay and geography. I now recognise that you spend as much, if not more, time at work than at home. I realised that, for example, areas of law that focused on contracts and transactions would largely be paper based with less face to face contact with clients and that was never suited to me. I wish I had sat down and thought about whether I wanted to be out and about, speaking with people, or working on documents before I started applying for jobs. I could have saved recruiters, firms and myself a lot of time! Sit down and think about all the things that you are good at or the things that you enjoy and identify which items on those lists might also be of use to clients or a law firm.

Tell us about a memorable case or project you've worked on and what you learnt from it

One of the very first cases that I worked on at Irwin Mitchell was on behalf of a lady who suffered complex regional pain syndrome. She had been injured whilst participating in pool games at a hotel in Cuba. The case is memorable because I was thrown in the deep end (pun intended) as a trainee as the Partner with conduct of the file was leaving.

I had previously worked for holiday companies and so I knew that the hotel entertainments team will have had a manual which I was certain contained advice on how to behave in pool games, including not exhibiting the behaviour that the individuals in question exhibited in the course of this incident. The realisation that actually you can bring real life experience into cases to helpful effect for your clients came from working on this case. I also learnt an incredible amount in a very short space of time about medical issues relating to pain and I spent a lot of time with the client and her husband trying to ensure that they understood how the medical issues interplayed with claiming compensation.

The settlement meeting of that case will always stick in my memory. It took place 3 days before a full trial was due to go ahead. I was based in Birmingham at the time but we had instructed Manchester barristers and we had a cut off deadline of 1.30pm as the barristers had to leave. We settled the case at 1.15pm and I hopped back on to a train to Birmingham absolutely thrilled that we would not have to face a fully contested trial three days later. I was thrilled that we achieved what our client wanted, and that her future was more certain as a result.

What's your top Manchester fact?

"I am not sure if this counts but when I was at secondary school we did a project on whether the Trafford Centre should be built or not because it was across part of the green belt. As a class aged 13 or 14 I think we all decided that it was better for the world if the Trafford Centre was not built. It was then built and we all promptly went and got part time jobs there for the weekend.

Outside of work, what are your hobbies and interests?

I enjoy yoga, walking, body combat and taking photos of my cats.

How do you manage work-life balance, and what strategies do you find most effective in maintaining it?

I think it is important to remember that everyone is different. We all have a different idea of what an optimal work environment or hours looks like. If we can identify when it is that we work best and how it is that we work best, we can then organise our time accordingly and communicate that to others. The important point is that not everything works for everyone and only you can identify how it is that you will work best and how you can best take care of yourself outside of work. Once you have found those parameters it is for you to communicate them and the flip side is for you to respect the boundaries others communicate to you.

I think it is important moving forward that leaders in law firms and other businesses role model prioritising downtime and family life. I think everybody owes it to themselves and those around them to continually assess what works best for each individual, to be open minded to what other people might need - and recognise that what you might need might not be the best for somebody else.

Continued on page 36



David Anderson
Immediate Past
President



What's your area of practice, job title and/or role at your organisation?

Chief Operating Officer of St John's Buildings Chambers

What made you want to be involved in the running of Manchester Law Society?

This answer may get repetitive, but it was the people. From Fran and the team through to those on Council and the Officers and on to the membership, everyone I have engaged with has added something to my enjoyment of my work and helped improve me.

What do you find most rewarding about working in the legal profession?

The willingness of people to help people. The value of pro-bono activities, community initiatives and CSR is entirely overlooked by those who want to bash lawyers. I cannot think of a time where I have said to a colleague, "can you do me a favour" and they have said "no". The willingness to help where possible is inspiring.

What advice would you give to someone starting their career in the law?

Engage in activities that develop you as a lawyer and a person and be ruthless about not attending activities which do neither. Do what you love and not what you think pays. Eventually, you will be better at what you love and that will pay in many more ways than just money.

Tell us about a memorable case or project you've worked on and what you learnt from it

A very long time ago, I was a member of the project team that delivered a merger of St John's Buildings and Chambers in Sheffield and Liverpool. What I learnt was that there is no substitute for communication. Change makes people vulnerable and creates fear. Gaps in knowledge are filled, more often than not, with something that drives their fear rather than reality. The only way to tackle that is to talk openly about what you are trying to achieve, but also honestly about any limitations in what can be delivered.

What's your top Manchester fact?

Newcastle United have only won one of 34 top flight matches against Manchester City. A fact that makes me sad!

Outside of work, what are your hobbies and interests?

I'm annoyed that this answer plays to a stereotype, but I do Hyrox. I am aware that the major criticism of anyone who has completed a Hyrox event is that they only ever talk about Hyrox, so I will leave it at that.

How do you manage work-life balance, and what strategies do you find most effective in maintaining it?

The correct balance between work and life is individual to every person. I am not sure many people would like to mirror my work life balance, and I don't really have a strategy for maintaining a balance, but my balance works for me. Find what works for you.



Upcoming Q1 & Q2 meetings

Tuesday 4 February 2025

MLS Council Meeting

Wednesday 5 February 2025

Communications Committee Meeting

Wednesday 5 February 2025

Family Law Committee Meeting

Thursday 6 February 2025

Crown and Magistrates Court Committee Meeting

Tuesday 11 February 2025

Membership & Social Committee Meeting

Tuesday 25 February 2025

MLS Officers Meeting

Wednesday 26 February 2025

Private Client Committee Meeting

Thursday 27 February 2025

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting

Tuesday 4 March 2025

MLS Council Meeting

Thursday 6 March 2025

Employment Law Forum

Thursday 6 March 2025

Property Law Committee Meeting

Wednesday 12 March 2025

Communications Committee Meeting

Tuesday 18 March 2025

MLS Officers Meeting

Thursday 27 March 2025

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting

Tuesday 1 April 2025

MLS Council Meeting

Wednesday 2 April 2025

Communications Committee Meeting

Tuesday 29 April 2025

MLS Officers Meeting

Wednesday 30 April 2025

Private Client Committee Meeting

Wednesday 7 May 2025

Communications Committee Meeting

Tuesday 13 May 2025

MLS Council Meeting

Wednesday 21 May 2025

MLS Officers Meeting

Thursday 22 May 2025

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting

Tuesday 3 June 2025

MLS Council Meeting

Wednesday 11 June 2025

Communications Committee Meeting

Tuesday 17 June 2025

MLS Officers Meeting

Wednesday 25 June 2025

Private Client Committee Meeting



What are MLS Committees all about?

The Manchester Law Society (MLS) operates through a Committee and Council structure, with 13 committees focusing on various aspects of law, Society activities, and broader initiatives.

These committees are essential to the Society, providing a platform for members to voice their needs and concerns. We value new Committee members, as diverse perspectives help keep the Society relevant and responsive.

In this edition of *The Messenger*, we feature reports from Committees on their 2024 activities and plans for 2025. We are also considering expanding the number of committees to better serve Manchester's growing legal community.

Getting Involved

Joining a Committee is an excellent way to engage more deeply with the Society and expand your network in Manchester. If you're passionate about supporting new professionals, consider the Future Stars Committee. If you have innovative ideas for networking events, the Membership and Social Committee might be a perfect fit.

What Do Our Committees Do?

- **Regular Meetings:** Committees typically meet quarterly or bimonthly for about an hour.
- **Consultations:** Committees focusing on specific areas of law discuss consultations from the Law Society, SRA, or other bodies and draft responses on behalf of the Society.

- **Peer Support:** Committees provide a safe space to discuss sector challenges and share advice.
- **Educational Events:** Many Committees organize events, from guest speakers to full-day conferences.
- **Networking:** Committees offer excellent networking opportunities within your specialization and a chance to give back to Manchester's legal community.

Responsibilities of a Committee Member

As a Committee member, you'll need to attend meetings and can take on additional roles such as project management, inviting speakers, or serving as a secretary or deputy chair to support the chair.

How to Join a Committee

To join a Committee, you must be a member of the Manchester Law Society. Express your interest by emailing enquiries@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk, specifying the Committee(s) you're interested in. We'll inform you about your membership status, the next meeting date, and add you to the list.

COLP, COFA and MLRO Forum

The COLP, COFA and MLRO Forum meets quarterly at Weightmans' offices in Spinningfields starting from 8.30am for refreshments with a meeting start time of 8.45 and finishing by 10am. It is an opportunity for members holding these important roles in firms and others involved in risk management to:

- keep up to date with developments in SRA regulation and compliance;
- share experiences of day to day issues of mutual concern and ideas on best practice
- discuss SRA consultations which are responded to on behalf of MLS members
- discuss potential reportable breaches
- all in a "safe space" under Chatham House Rules.

The roles can sometimes be lonely and difficult roles to fill so the forum gives everyone attending a support network and reassurance that they are on the right track. Examples of things we discussed in 2024 included the increase in SRA activity around AML, the SRA's approach to fining powers, the SRA's consumer protection review and the impact it could have on firms and continuing competence.

“

Remember that there is no competition in compliance – we are all trying to do our best!”

Our first meeting of 2025 was held on 14 January where we discussed the current consultation on consumer protection and the implications of the SRA's long term plan to remove the ability of firms to hold client money. We had a great attendance in person including a few new faces but it would be fantastic to see more new people join us in 2025! It is possible to join virtually if necessary although in person creates a better opportunity for open discussion.

Remember that there is no competition in compliance – we are all trying to do our best!- and the support of the group is invaluable to those who attend. If you are able to spare an hour or so once a quarter to join us, we would love to see you and you will be made to feel very welcome!

Our next meeting will be held on 8th April at Weightmans offices, No. 1 Spinningfields from 8.30 (refreshments) with an 8.45am start time til 10am.

**Michelle Garlick, Partner,
Compli @ Weightmans LLP
Chair of COLP, COFA and MLRO Forum**

Continued on page 40



Communications Committee

2024 was another busy year for the Communications Committee. Previously the Committee was only responsible for the editorial content of the Messenger. However, in 2023, we took on responsibility for all forms of communication from Manchester Law Society including the Messenger, the Weekly e-Newsletter, social media channels, the web-site and the Manchester Law Society App.

Key focuses and successes in 2024 included (a) embedding the delivery of the Messenger as an electronic publication through Legal RSS, (b) improving our social media content and engagement and (c) launching the new website.

After some major changes to our communications channels in 2024, our main goal for 2025 is to embed our various new communications channels to ensure that we continue to keep members fully up-to-date with all of the brilliant work and activities undertaken by Manchester Law Society

and its other active committees. A real focus in doing this will be on our bespoke Manchester Law Society App and we are looking forward to offering a range of new discounts and offers with restaurants and business in the city centre in early 2025 – so please do download and get the benefit of those amazing offers!

More generally, we are always looking for new members to join the Committee and to support our activities – as the ways in which we communicate with each other continue to develop it is important that we are representative of all parts and levels of the profession so that we can ensure that we are communicating effectively. That being the case, if you would like to spare a small amount of your time to join the Committee and support our work, we would be delighted to hear from you!

**Matt Taylor, Partner, Eversheds Sutherland
Chair of the MLS Communications
Committee**

Civil Litigation Committee

In 2024 the Committee continued to respond to consultations such as the Law Society Green Paper - Proposals for a 21st Century Justice system.

We enjoyed guest speakers at meetings with Chris Brown of KPMG updating attendees on e-disclosure and effective use of technology in March, Pepin Aslett of St Johns Buildings Chambers discussing AI and commercial litigation in June and Peter Brewer of Clarke

Willmott LLP, discussing how to get the best out of the mediation process and recent developments in the courts approach to ADR in September.

We have also been in discussions to create additional committees focused on different areas of civil litigation such as personal injury and clinical negligence, corporate and commercial, and business and property court.

Crown and Magistrates Court Committee

I had the pleasure of taking on the role of Chair of the Crown and Magistrates Court Committee in January 2024. It was hoped that we could bring together representatives of professional Court Users and I was very grateful to have His Honour Judge Dean, Recorder of Manchester and District Judge Hogarth involve themselves with this committee.

The committee have meet throughout 2024 and I am grateful for continued support from Probation, HMCTS, CPS and Legal Aid Agency. As a group we have looked to how we can improve the efficiency of both the Crown and Magistrates Court, particularly given the outstanding undetermined cases and continued new cases coming before the Court. Much discussion has been had with regards to the efficiency of the Court process, demands placed on all professional Court users and its impact on their ability to discharge their professional duty as well impacting on their wellbeing.

Through discussions with Court staff, we have tried to make life a little easier for our colleagues at Court, with having representatives from Prosecution, Probation, HMCTS, the Judiciary and Defence hopefully there has been a better understanding of the stresses placed upon the individual professional user groups involved in the Criminal Justice System.

We appreciate that there is still much to do in solving issues in the efficiency of the Criminal Justice System.

“

As a group we have looked to how we can improve the efficiency of both the Crown and Magistrates Court”

Recognising that wellbeing in the workplace is key to productivity and efficiency, as part of our [Criminal Law Update](#) this year we have a guest speaker additional to His Honour Judge Potter, who we are grateful for agreeing again to provide an input.

Elizabeth Rimmer, Chief Executive of LawCare will speaking after HHJ Potter. Elizabeth will be dealing with how to manage and deal with the stresses presented to those working in the Criminal Justice System.

The event is on 27th February at 17:00. We are grateful for JMW for hosting the event at their office at 1 Byron Street, Manchester, M3 3HG. The cost of the event is £25 plus VAT for MLS members and £45 plus VAT for non-members.

For anyone interested in attending please contact ChandreMay@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk

Daniel Weed, Compliance Partner, Burton Copeland
Chair of the Crown and Magistrates Court Committee

Continued on page 42



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Can you believe it's 2025 already? As the year starts, I have had an opportunity to reflect upon 2024 and the amazing contributions of the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee to promote inclusivity, educate on and champion equity and celebrate diversity. Thanks to our dedicated and passionate committee members we had an active year to say the least.

By way of re-cap, in January, we reflected upon and highlighted a successful 2023 and looked ahead to what would be a busy 2024. In February we celebrated LGBTQ+ History month by looking at how much progress has been made in respect of LGBTQ+ rights in the UK and contrasted that against progress with the rights of the LGBTQ+ community in Uganda. The article put into sharp focus that despite great strides we have made in the UK, the fight for LGBTQ+ rights equality worldwide remains at large. The struggle for complete inclusivity on a global basis continues and ongoing efforts are crucial to dismantling remaining barriers and fostering a society that truly embraces diversity in all its forms.

April had us celebrating Passover and we featured an educational piece on Passover and its origins and we also gave spotlight to International Wheelchair Day. It still blows my mind that it was the ancient Greeks who first used a wheelchair and that approximately 1 in 35 people in the UK are wheelchair users, that's around 2 million people. May was focused on women in law with Women in the Law UK members gathering to hear from pioneering Supreme Court President Lady Hale, the first female President of the UK Supreme Court.

In June, we brought visibility to social

“

As a group we have looked to how we can improve the efficiency of both the Crown and Magistrates Court”

mobility focusing on recognising that whilst talent is everywhere opportunities are not and why social mobility makes business sense. Social mobility is a phrase which has become more prevalent in recent discussions around equality, diversity and inclusion and this committee will continue to bring focus to this topic. We also raised awareness of spinal cord injury awareness day; a day for us all to think about how a spinal cord injury happens and to remember that most people have been much closer to a spinal cord injury than they would like to think. It was important for us to take a moment to think of those people who have and will sustain spinal cord injuries and the long rehabilitation journey they have and will face, and to think about the nurses, relatives and friends who will be there to support them through it.

In August, we celebrated Manchester Pride in style. We hosted, for the third year running, our very own Manchester Pride Brunch. This partnership event, in aid of Out Together, was made possible thanks to the iconic Midland Hotel Manchester, By Parallel Events and Manchester Law Society. Watch this space for 2025! We also brought focus to why Pride events are important and a reminder that as much as Pride is a celebration, it is a reminder of how far the



community have come and that there is still a way to go.

The momentum continued strongly into September as we reflected on world suicide prevention day. Mental health has been a central and regular feature in the Messenger and we recognise the need for a conscious effort to break the stigma and openly discuss and raise awareness of Mental Health. We need to continue to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and to promote practical and emotional support for ourselves, our colleagues and community, a key theme that will continue to run through 2025. We also looked at the role informal mentoring plays in diversity initiatives and how it has long been seen as one of the most effective ways to level the playing field.

In October we proudly celebrated neurodiversity and heard about ways we can support neurodiverse colleagues in the legal world and we considered the wider benefits of having a dedicated month devoted to Black History month. In November, we considered National Stress Awareness Day and how we can recognise stress and what steps we can take to help reduce stress and the impact of it. We also, with a focus on employment and accessibility, focused on the history of disabled people in the workplace to give visibility to Disability History Month, with

the aim of asking everyone to work together to make the world better and fairer for people with disability and a call to arms asking readers to think about the impact they can have on diversity and disability equality.

To end the year, December was a busy month as we celebrated Chanukah, the Jewish Festival of Light and were educated on 'reclaiming narratives' which encourages those of Black Heritage to shape how their stories are told.

I hope you will agree that great strides were made in 2024 by the E,D&I committee to educate, empower and celebrate our colleagues; to bring focus and visibility to key issues and to recognise the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion for everyone. In 2025, this committee will continue to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is pursued with passion, energy and sheer determination to make a difference and we have an exciting year ahead.

Want to join us and be part of something special? A great opportunity for someone passionate about equity, diversity and inclusion to get involved and help us with our mission. All ideas and contributions welcome and our network is open to anyone who shares the same passion as us. Let me know if you want to join us, or even if you want a chat first about what it would involve.

**Shane Smith, Associate Solicitor,
Slater and Gordon Lawyers
Chair of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
Committee**

Continued on page 44



Employment Law Forum

The Employment Law Forum (ELF) is Manchester Law Society's dedicated employment law group with the sole aim of promoting communication and experience share between all employment lawyers in Manchester and the North West. The Forum is for any MLS member whose practice touches Employment Law, no matter how large or small. We are a friendly bunch (as you would expect from Employment Lawyers!!) who love to have a chat about all things employment law. We welcome all practitioners from across the employment law spectrum from private practice (both Claimant and Respondent) to in-house, regulatory and judiciary. In fact, our diverse mix of members means that we all learn something from each other's perspectives, hitting our aim above.

We saw a successful and busy 2024 and we are excited to replicate this in 2025. Two particular highlights stuck out for us in 2024; first our annual Employment Law Conference which saw a record attendance of employment lawyers from across Manchester and North West gather to hear from keynote speaker Regional Employment

“

Our annual Employment Law Conference which saw a record attendance of employment lawyers from across Manchester and North West



Judge Franey together with fascinating insights from the great and the good of the North West employment law scene. In fact, it was so successful that we will be repeating the conference again this year in May with REJ Franey returning together with another stellar list of employment law practitioners so do keep an eye out for the conference and get your tickets booked early to ensure your attendance.

The second highlight saw a coup for us in getting a senior member of the Equality and Human Rights Commission to come and talk to our Forum meeting on the very same day that the guidance on the new duty to prevent sexual harassment was released. It was a lively and thought-provoking session and whilst we didn't come up with all the answers it was a brilliant session attended by many practitioners who were able to share their own experiences of their (and

their clients) interpretation of the new legislation. More to come on this in 2025.

Speaking of 2025, we have a lot planned!! Like never before employment legislation and its interpretation is going to dominate the legal landscape as we look to advise clients, both internal and external, and navigate our way through the changes coming our way. To do this, we will continue to meet up in our quarterly meetings and share experience (and the odd war-story). As indicated above, we will also be hosting our employment law conference in May of this year which we anticipate will be one of the most hotly-anticipated conferences ever given the changes being made to employment law in 2025 and beyond.

To meet our aim above we are seeking to promote a better understanding of the law, the cases and how they apply. In a safe space where open and frank communication can take place this is a unique opportunity to learn and teach at the same time, like nowhere else in Manchester/North West for employment lawyers. So please do come and join our merry bunch in 2025 where you are most welcome.

Bryn Doyle
Partner, Lewis Silkin

Jo Handler, Senior Associate,
Forbes Solicitors
Co-Chairs of the MLS Employment
Law Forum



Continued on page 46



Family Law Committee

2024 saw the Family Law Committee taking a more ambitious approach to its annual Family Law Conference, building on the knowledge and skills that we learnt from the previous year's conference, which was the first after the pandemic. The committee (with assistance from David Anderson who appears to have many members of the judiciary on speed dial!), put together an exciting program of speakers for the conference which took place in October 2024. The morning dealt with private children law topics and the afternoon the financial aspects of divorce. The quality of speakers was outstanding and included leading barrister Sally Harrison KC, Her Honour Judge Singleton and His Honour Judge Kloss. Having local senior judges tell us about the dos and don'ts of appearing before them was enlightening and essential listening for all family practitioners. As ever the practicalities of the conference were very ably dealt with by Carla and Chandre, which meant that the day was a great success.

The committee has considered other topics that would be of interest to local family law practitioners in the form of short seminars that can be attended remotely or in person. In late 2024 we had our first short seminar after the November committee meeting, which was presented by Adam and Vicki at Cyfor Forensics (digital forensics experts). There will be a short seminar at the February committee meeting, with the barrister Andrew Wastall talking about enforcement of orders.

We are keen to get as many family practitioners involved in the committee and its events as possible, whether you have only recently qualified or have been working in family law nearly as long as I

have(!) and this has become our main focus. Having raised the profile of MLS within the family law arena with the success of the Family Law Conference, we hope to build on this by attracting more people to join the committee and to attend our events going forward.

I have now handed over the role of chair to Iwona Durlak who is approaching this role with great energy and enthusiasm and will no doubt help to build on what the committee has achieved to date.

Fiona Wood

**Partner, McAlister Family Law
 Chair of the MLS Family Law Committee
 2024**

As the newly appointed Chair of the Manchester Society Family Law Committee I look forward to the opportunities it brings to connect with family law professionals from across the region.

I would like to begin by thanking Fiona Wood of McAlister Family Law for her commitment and contribution as a Chair over the past three years. I am delighted that she remains a valued member of the Committee, and I am grateful for her reassurance of ongoing support with the Committee's work.

My primary goal for 2025 is to build on the established foundation and to revitalize the committee by fostering greater engagement among current members while attracting new members to join us. I want the



committee to be a place where family law professionals feel supported, inspired, and connected. This is an exciting opportunity to create an environment where members can share experiences, discuss challenges, and explore innovative ideas together.

One of my key objectives is to ensure that our meetings and initiatives provide tangible value to members. I want to ensure that each meeting agenda includes an expert guest speaker to add value to our meetings. I would also like to encourage open discussions about practical struggles we all face, while also exploring opportunities for collaboration and growth. Beyond our annual Family Law Conference, which has become a highlight of the year, I propose introducing at least one social event and one charitable initiative. These activities

will allow us to strengthen professional networks while also giving back to the community.

I hope that together, we can create a vibrant and inclusive Committee that supports its members, provides inspiration, and serves as a resource for professional and personal growth.

Iwona Durlak
Senior Partner, IMD Solicitors
Chair of the MLS Family Law Committee
2025

Continued on page 48



Future Stars Committee

2024 was a brilliant year for the Future Stars Committee. After several years hard work and preparation, we were delighted to open the Future Stars Programme to applicants and, after a rigorous selection process, to appoint our first cohort of Future Stars! Those people were confirmed in November and attended the AGM in December to have their first taster of life working alongside Manchester Law Society and its members.

The plan for 2025 is very simple and straightforward – to give the first cohort of Future Stars a successful first year within the Programme. Amongst other things, this will involve mentoring, training,

and introductions to various parts of the profession.

We are really excited about the Future Stars Programme and we will be working hard as a committee to deliver a successful experience for our Future Stars. We will be seeking support and input from members during the year, but we are always on the lookout for volunteers and help at any stage. If you would like to offer some time or support to the next generation of lawyers, please get in touch!

**Matt Taylor, Partner, Eversheds Sutherland
Chair of the MLS Future Stars Committee**

Legal Education Committee

I write this as the outgoing Chair of the Education Committee and may I thank the whole team at MLS and all the Committee members, over the years, for their support, ideas and commitment. I wish the new Chair the very best of luck moving forwards in what continues to be a challenging time for Legal Education.

Once again, the Team put together a fantastic programme over the year and fee income and sponsorship of events has enabled the Society to reach its target.

Some of the highlights include the ever-popular Family Law Conference and Employment Conference both of which were very well attended.

The regular lunch time sessions with Mike Ode, continue to be both popular and informative.

The coming year has a well-planned timetable to keep us all on our toes but if anyone has any suggestions – maybe something is happening in your area of expertise, please let the team know and they will try to arrange something appropriate.

The Committee looks forward to welcoming you all, to both in person and online events, over the next twelve months and we thank all the members for their support.

And finally, my thanks to Fran, for her tireless commitment to all the committees, the members and the Society as a whole.

**Louise Straw, Managing Partner, Burton Copeland
Chair of the Legal Education Committee
2024**

Greater Manchester Pro Bono Committee

Last year we did a lot of work in understanding what is being done by all sectors of the profession, universities and agencies involved in Pro Bono work. This has allowed us to create a mapping guide and understand where there is great need.

We are continuing to work within the framework set up by the Solicitor General and have attended a number of meetings at the House of Westminster. The big success this year was our awards night in Pro Bono week supported by MLS, the judiciary, universities and all those involved in Pro Bono.

We have also established a web site and e mail address which allows us to promote our work as well as being a point of contact to all concerned including the public. This can be found at: www.probonocommittee.uk/manchester

At the start of this new year, we have ambitious plans to organise an awards

evening but also to focus on engagement with the profession. We are looking to encourage all firms to appoint a Pro Bono advocate to engage with the committee and its work and more importantly to support front line agencies in providing advice to those in need.

At a time when public funding is under pressure it is important we give the necessary support. We therefore invite you to contact us with the name of an advocate to work with us and to be part of the overall committee at: nickjohnson.manchester@probonocommittee.uk

The Greater Manchester Pro Bono Committee Needs You

**Nick Johnson, Director of Compliance,
Wealth Recovery Solicitors
Vice Chair of The Greater Manchester Pro
Bono Committee**

Private Client Committee

The highlight of the 2024 for the PCC was the annual conference in September. It was a great day and opportunity to bring together the wider Manchester private client community. As always I am grateful to the speakers and to committee members who assisted in the organisation and attended on the day.

The committee continue to meet bimonthly for an educational session and an annual drinks event at Christmas. Meetings are generally mostly now attended in person which is lovely, but we still offer remote attendance which is important for some members.

The October budget brought significant change in the private client sphere particularly with reference to IHT on agriculture and business property and pensions. The committee have submitted a response to the government consultation on the charging of IHT on pensions announced in the Budget and next year's conference is likely to be held on the impact of the Budget changes on practitioners.

**Rebecca Clarke, Senior Associate,
Clarke Willmott
Chair of the Private Client Committee**

Continued on page 50



Membership and Social Committee

Whilst other committees will deal with the more... 'serious stuff', the 'M and S' committee's job is to come up with ideas/arrange events that will promote collaboration and friendships amongst Manchester's lawyers (and also encourage more firms to join MLS!).

MLS is second to none in the number and calibre of events it organises. The challenge for the committee is to come up with events, that are physically deliverable, with what are limited resources!

Events in 2024 included not one, but two, legendary Posh Pub Quizzes at Manchester Hall, the launch of the MLS ambassador scheme, Lunch with the Leader of Manchester City Council, the first ever MLS football tournament, two Menopause cafés and a fantastic 'Pride Brunch' (organised by the EDI committee).

Without doubt the showpiece event of 2024 though (as it is every year) was the Manchester Legal Awards. It was a spectacular event where the great and good from Manchester's legal community received accolades for their achievements. The amount of organisation needed for that event alone is staggering and takes months of meticulous preparation from MLS towers.

Entries are open for this year's [ML Awards](#) [🔗](#) so check out the categories and criteria [here](#) [🔗](#). With four new categories and a new venue the event promises to be bigger and better than ever before.

It's important that the committee has representation from all cohorts of MLS membership so that we can try to organise events for all. The ultimate goal is to make sure that there is something of interest for everyone.

If there's something you think we should be doing, or that we could do better the message is simple - come join us! Our first meeting is on the 11th of February, please email [Chandre May](#) [🔗](#) and the team if you would like to attend.

**Stuart Cartwright, Partner, Lawshare
Chair of the MLS Membership and Social
Committee**



Manchester Law Society Property Committee

On 18 September 2024, chaired by Nouman Bhatti of Clyde & Co, the Manchester Law Society hosted the return of the annual Property Law Conference. The Conference brought together fee earners from across Manchester to hear from speakers and discuss key topics relevant to commercial and residential real estate practitioners.

Participants heard from:

- James Greenhalgh and Paul Hammond of Cowgills who gave an introduction to the effect of VAT and Capital Gains rules when structuring commercial property deals
- Allie Parsons of Landmark and Matthew Davies of Searchflow who explained how data can help fee earners in advising potential clients to consider climate change risks and legislative changes
- Martyn Markland and John Crowley from Tenant Advisory Group discussed the issues of dilapidations, as well as property measurements and the potential costs of getting this wrong


A legal update was kindly given by David Gilchrist and Norman Lamb of 9 St Johns Street Chambers, discussing relevant case law and upcoming legislative changes arising from the Renters Reform Bill and, finally, Steve Padley of Building and Land Guarantees Ltd, closed the conference with commentary on the relevance and importance of structural warranty cover.

The morning ended with lunch and a chance for speakers and participants to network and discuss the mornings topics in more detail.



Following the success of this event, we are now looking forward to arranging the 2025 Conference along with other events and opportunities to shape how we practice property law.

We would really like to know which events property lawyers in member firms would like the Manchester Law Society Property Committee to arrange, what topics we should cover in knowledge sessions and what you think are the best times for events to take place etc.

Please take a moment to complete this brief survey [here](#) .

We would also really welcome property lawyers from member firms to join our committee. With this in mind, please do join us at our next meeting at Clyde & Co's offices at 4.30pm on Thursday, 6th March, where there will be a chance to shape the year ahead and network. Anyone who wants to attend should contact ChandreMay@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk .

Stephen Lintott, Partner, Clyde & Co LLP
Chair of the Property Law Committee



Browne Jacobson appointed to Serco Group plc legal services panel

Browne Jacobson will provide Serco Group plc (Serco) with a full suite of legal services to its UK and European business after being appointed to its legal panel.

The UK and Ireland law firm was selected after demonstrating impressive private and public sector credentials, and a clear understanding of the “**O Shaped**” principles in providing a more holistic approach to client relations.

The panel covers a wide range of legal services including corporate work, data protection, litigation, property, procurement, employment and HR, contract management, health and safety regulation, and tax.

Serco is a leading provider of services to government in the UK and Europe, and also operates in Asia Pacific, North America and the Middle East. It delivers services across a

range of sectors spanning justice, migration, defence, space, customer services, healthcare and mobility.

Craig Elder, who is the Partner leading the relationship with Serco, said: “This is a highly significant contract award for Browne Jacobson and testament to our firm’s ability to support industry-leading clients across the public and private sectors.

“As a major supplier to government which works at the forefront of society’s biggest issues in areas such as prisons, border control and healthcare, Serco is exactly the type of exciting client we want to work with.

“Our knowledge and application of O Shaped principles as a firm, alongside our work for local and central government clients, and for corporates, was also a key factor in our appointment. Given we have common clients, this offers great potential



Anja Beriro



Craig Elder



Gavin Cummings

“

This is a highly significant contract award for Browne Jacobson and testament to our firm's ability to support industry-leading clients”

for synergies and demonstrates confidence in our knowledge, expertise and ability to support Serco on a wide range of work.”

Gavin Cummings [↗](#), Corporate Partner, said: “Our appointment to Serco's panel is also testament to our growing reputation servicing large corporates. Our unique position of advising both public and private sectors gives us a vantage point that provides valuable insight into both worlds, particularly in understanding how businesses and government interact.

“In our corporate work, we bring together deep expertise in complex, multi-jurisdictional transactions. Our presence in Ireland continues to strengthen our ability to advise across borders. What truly sets us apart, however, is our approach. We're not just legal advisers but strategic partners.

“As an O Shaped firm guided by O Shaped principles, which Serco particularly values, we focus on building genuine partnerships. Through initiatives like our Ascensus Leadership Programme for In-house Counsel** and our emphasis on understanding the complete business context, we're increasingly being selected by leading corporates as their trusted advisers.

“The significant growth in our private sector practice reflects this approach, especially

in complex, multi-faceted transactions where technical excellence is combined with commercial understanding.”

In an innovative move, the tender process used the O Shaped mindset and attributes as the framework for the panel selection. Serco invited law firms and legal service providers to collaborative workshops where, using the O Shaped approach, they explored how they would build strong relationships with each other and work together on the panel to help Serco make a real impact.

Anja Beriro [↗](#), Partner who plays a leading role in embedding Browne Jacobson's O Shaped approach, said: “To see a household name like Serco also putting O Shaped into practice as part of such an important procurement exercise was a refreshing and novel approach. This further illustrates the intrinsic link between Browne Jacobson's and Serco's values, and we're excited to develop our relationship over the coming years.”

Heather Key, Chief Legal Counsel for Serco's UK and Europe business, added: “For the past few months, Serco's legal team has been working with the support of O Shaped to refresh our legal panel. Each of the firms invited to participate in the process demonstrated excellent O Shaped credentials and we enjoyed working with them to build a new approach to tendering for legal services.

“We look forward to working with our refreshed panel as strategic partners to our UK and Europe business and further developing O Shaped relationships as enablers for success.”

Serco's legal panel, which runs for an initial three-year term, features four firms – Browne Jacobson, CMS, DWF and Radiant Law.



Clarke Willmott celebrates commitment to real living wage

Clarke Willmott LLP [↗](#) is celebrating its latest accreditation, achieved as part of the firm's commitment to its ESG strategy.

Clarke Willmott is now a Living Wage Employer, meaning everyone working for the firm will receive a minimum hourly wage of £12.60 (UK living wage) or £13.85 (London living wage), higher than the government minimum for over 21s, which currently stands at £11.44 per hour.

The real Living Wage is the only rate calculated according to the costs of living. It provides a voluntary benchmark for employers that wish to ensure their staff earn a wage they can live on, not just the government minimum.

Since it began, the Living Wage movement by the Living Wage Foundation has delivered a pay rise to nearly half a million people and put £3.5 billion extra into the pockets of low paid workers.

Karen Higgins, Clarke Willmott's head of **ESG** [↗](#), said: "Gaining accreditation as a Living Wage Employer was a no-brainer for us. As a responsible business, we want our people to thrive and succeed and a huge part of that is ensuring they are paid fairly and can live comfortably in these challenging economic times.

"Our ongoing ESG strategy aims to address inequalities through positive action. We want to integrate the entire ESG framework into every aspect of our operations – from procurement and supplier selection to the benefits and opportunities we provide to our people.

"Becoming a Living Wage Employer means



Karen Higgins

that all third-party contractors should also be paid the Living Wage, meaning we review our contractors too, widening the impact even further and influencing change for good."

Katherine Chapman, director at Living Wage Foundation, said: "We're delighted that Clarke Willmott has joined the movement of over 15,000 responsible employers across the UK who voluntarily commit to go further than the government minimum to make sure all their staff earn enough to live on.

"They join thousands of small businesses, as well as household names such as Burberry, Barclays, Everton Football Club and many more. These businesses recognise that paying the real Living Wage is the mark of a responsible employer and they, like Clarke Willmott, believe that a hard day's work deserves a fair day's pay."

For more information on the Living Wage Foundation [click here](#) [↗](#).

EZOO



Save Thousands on a **Premium EV** with **Exclusive Perks** via **Salary Sacrifice!**



Save on a premium EV car with **Salary Sacrifice**

Choose from a wide range of new or used cars including Audi, BMW, Mercedes, Porsche and Tesla.

EZOO has the best cars and the most flexible terms, with cars available on short-term salary sacrifice leases and even subscription!

Exclusive offer!

FREE Anderson Charger worth £2500!*

Quote EVMLS



PORSCHE



T: 0203 9500 270 | E: hello@ezoo.uk | Web: ezoo.uk

*Offer available to those signing up for a new Salary Sacrifice Lease for 3 years or more before 31/03/2025. The value of the charge point is dependent on the car and model selected. Subject to availability.

EZOO is a trading style of Evolution Auto Limited, registered in England.
Company registered number 11142739. Copyright © 2025 EZOO



DWF's UK corporate team advised on more than 200 deals in 2024, with deal values totalling more than £5bn

DWF has advised on 200 deals in 2024, with a combined deal value of more than £5 billion.

In 2024, the [DWF](#) Corporate Team had another very successful year by continuing to focus on its core sector strengths and bringing that knowledge to its clients' deals.

In deal value terms TMT transactions stood out as the highest value area for the team, with notable highlights such as advising Calibre Scientific on a number of European deals, including five acquisitions of UK life sciences tools and diagnostics companies, NorthEdge on the sale of CMAP software and the management shareholders on the investment by ECI Partners and acting for Daisy in its merger with Wavenet, creating the UK's largest independent IT managed services provider.

Within its market leading Venture Capital Group the team advised Pastest, the provider of technologically driven test

“

The breadth and scale of transactions we advised on in 2024 reflect the strength and adaptability of our UK & Ireland corporate team”

preparation solutions, on its minority equity investment in The Medic Life and Scottish National Investment Bank on a number of different investments in the technology sector including in Utopi Ltd, Cyacomb, Travelnest and Pneumowave and social impact venture capital investor, Nesta, on its investment in Gaia Learning Limited.

The financial services sector accounted for a substantial portion of DWF's corporate transactions, with the team advising on 43 deals in this sector. Many of these deals were completed by the Private Equity Group including advising Inflexion on the sale of Southport-based broker David Roberts & Partners to BMS Group, Sovereign Capital Partners investment in LB Group (subsequently rebranded Affinia) as a buy and build accountancy practice platform acquisition and AssuredPartners on its acquisition of leading independent Lloyd's broker, the Harman Kemp group.

The team also advised on a number of high-profile real estate deals throughout the UK & Ireland in 2024, including acting for Dandara Group in the sale of its newly developed build to rent (BTR) scheme to



Frank Shephard

Europa and advising LXI REIT on the £210m corporate and asset sale of a portfolio of 66 Travelodge-branded hotels to Travelodge Hotels Ltd.

Frank Shephard, Global Head of Corporate at DWF, said: "The breadth and scale of transactions we advised on in 2024 reflect the strength and adaptability of our UK & Ireland corporate team. Despite a challenging year in many ways, where markets have suffered from subdued liquidity and a slowdown in activity, our corporate team has remained exceptionally busy and continued to deliver strong results. That has been achieved by our one team approach where the whole team works as one, and bringing technology and

process efficiency to everything we do for our clients.

Looking ahead, we anticipate continued private equity and venture capital activity, with funds and corporate acquirers poised to deploy unused capital and take advantage of new international business momentum in 2025. As market conditions continue to shift, our commitment to excellence and client service ensures we are well-positioned to drive further success in the year ahead."

For a deep dive into key trends and insights from the past 12 months of transactional activity within the UK/I Corporate team, please download our report [here](#) .

DWF reappointed to Serco legal panel

DWF [↗](#) has been reappointed by Serco to provide legal services to its UK and European business for another three years.

Serco is a global service provider to Governments that operates in various sectors including justice, defence, space, health, transport and migration.

The reappointment secures DWF's place as one of four law firms on Serco's UK and Europe legal panel for a minimum of three years, with the potential for a one-year extension.

Commenting on the reappointment, Rachel Jones, partner at DWF, said: "We are delighted to have been reappointed to Serco's legal panel and truly value the trust Serco has placed in us once again. We look forward to continuing this partnership, working closely with Serco over the coming years and supporting their initiatives across the UK and Europe."



Rachel Jones

Heather Key, Chief Legal Counsel for Serco's UK & Europe business, said: "We are pleased to continue working with DWF and value their expertise and ongoing commitment to supporting our legal needs. Their collaborative approach and understanding of our business make them a trusted partner, and we look forward to the continued success of our relationship over the coming years."



Forbes launches first “Trailblazers” awards to celebrate inspirational UK change-makers

A new initiative has been launched to highlight and celebrate extraordinary people and organisations who inspire positive change.

[Forbes Solicitors](#) has announced its search for “The Trailblazers”, the businesses, organisations, and individuals who go above and beyond to make an impact and redefine the way people feel about their communities, industries, or sectors.

The firm is inviting nominations under three categories: Individual/Community Champion, Business Pioneer, and Public Sector Hero.

Pauline Wild, Managing Partner at Forbes Solicitors, said: “The Trailblazers is our way of celebrating the remarkable individuals and organisations who are redefining things for the better. We strive to be “more than” in everything we do, and we know there are

hundreds of stories out there of people who are compassionate, achieving more, and challenging the status quo.

“If you know a trailblazer who deserves recognition, please do nominate them. We want to find them and shine a spotlight on their amazing contributions. By sharing their stories, we hope to create a ripple effect of more positive action across the UK.”

Nominations will be open from 21st January 2025. The Trailblazers awards are free to enter, and the initiative is open across the UK.

A panel of expert judges will examine the inspirational stories before the final winners are announced in Autumn 2025.

[Make your nominations here](#).

Are you a **trailblazer** or do you know a community champion, public sector hero or business pioneer?



British Irish Commercial Bar Association Bursary Competition 2025

The BICBA bursary competition is open to barristers, advocates and solicitors of less than 7 years' standing practising in England & Wales, Scotland, Ireland or Northern Ireland, and those undergoing training for qualification in those jurisdictions.

The recipient of the bursary will receive the following:

- A payment of up to €3,000 /£2,750 to defray educational expenses to advance their practice in commercial law;
- Support from BICBA throughout the year of the bursary and onward mentorship; and
- An opportunity to speak at the 2026 BICBA Forum in Manchester

Applications should include the following:

- Personal details of the applicant, including educational history;
- Any protected characteristic or other factor which the applicant would wish to be considered as part of the application;
- Details of the educational course/ programme in commercial law toward which the monies would be allocated;
- Details of how the applicant's completion of the course would enhance and/or promote diversity in commercial legal practice;
- Details of how, in the absence of the bursary, the applicant may not be able to pursue a career in commercial law.



Fletchers to acquire Scott Rees in first deal of 2025

Fletchers Group [↗](#) (Fletchers) has announced that it is to acquire Northwest law firm Scott Rees & Co Solicitors.

The deal will see 97 fee earners and support staff from the firm's personal injury and clinical negligence teams transfer to Fletchers once the deal completes at the end of February 2025.

Based in Newton-le-Willows, Cheshire, Scott Rees was founded in 1992 and specialises in employers' liability, public liability, fatal accident claims and clinical negligence.

Scott Rees's Managing Partner, Royston Smith, will stay with the firm post announcement to support the business through the transition to Fletchers next month. Fletchers' Charlene Mann will then take over the reins and lead the Scott Rees business through the integration period, which is expected to last until summer 2025.

The team will continue to operate from the office near Haydock Park Racecourse, and the brand will remain in place for the time being.

Peter Haden, Fletchers Group CEO, said the acquisition was the latest step in a strategy to scale up by acquiring great companies with high-quality people and equally high-quality case work.

He said: "Scott Rees is a successful Northwest law firm built on high standards of client service and professionalism, making it a great fit with Fletchers."

"We are wholly committed to long-term



Peter Haden

growth in the personal injury sector, where Scott Rees is already well-established, and we warmly welcome our new colleagues into the Group to strengthen our legal practice and build on their success."

The acquisition is the second in a year for Fletchers, following the deal to buy Serious Injury Law in February 2024. Haden made it clear that Fletchers plans to continue its buy and build strategy, having agreed acquisition financing with Pemberton Asset Management in June, as well as the continued backing of owner Sun European Partners, which creates further headroom for M&A.

"Our team is keen to talk to owners of personal injury and clinical negligence law firms who are attracted by the opportunity to join a successful growth-oriented law practice with a great working culture and the right core values, to further our mission to rebuild people's lives after they've suffered serious, life changing injuries."

"Just as Fletchers will provide Scott Rees colleagues with more opportunities for personal and professional growth and

development, so we are keen to welcome other individuals and firms to experience the same."

Commenting on the deal, Royston Smith, Managing Partner at Scott Rees said: "I echo Peter in saying this is a fantastic opportunity for our people and the clients we serve."

"It is the right move at the right time. Fletchers has the capability, access to cases, and investment support to ensure long-term growth and provide colleagues with more opportunities for career progression."


He added: "It's clear that consolidation in the personal injury sector is accelerating,



and I am convinced that Fletchers will be one of the winners in this rapidly changing market."

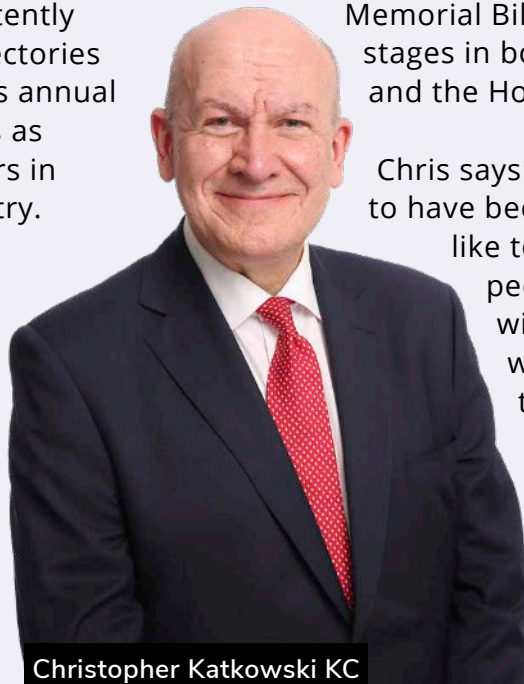
The consideration is undisclosed.

Christopher Katkowski KC awarded CBE in New Year Honours List 2025

Christopher Katkowski KC from [Kings Chambers](#)  has been made a CBE for his services to Planning in the New Year Honours List 2025.

Chris, universally known in the Planning world as 'Kit Kat', is consistently recognised in UK legal directories and in Planning magazine's annual survey of planning lawyers as one of the foremost leaders in planning work in the country.

He has topped Planning magazine's annual survey as the No. 1 planning KC a record 12 times which is more than anyone else in the history of the survey. The 2024 survey lists him as the highest rated practitioner for commercial work.



Christopher Katkowski KC

Chris has appeared at hundreds of planning inquiries and court cases over the last 40 years. Career highlights include The Shard and most recently Places for Everyone, the joint development plan for nine Greater Manchester authorities, and the Holocaust Memorial Bill in its select committee stages in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

Chris says: "I am, literally, honoured to have been made a CBE and would like to say to all the wonderful people who I have worked with over these many years who have helped me to reach this stage of my career that everything you have done is hugely appreciated by me. "Commander Kit Kat" who would have thought?!"



Myerson Solicitors announced as headline sponsor of the first edition of “A Taste of Altrincham”

Myerson Solicitors is delighted to be the headline sponsor of “A Taste of Altrincham,” a brand-new food festival celebrating the town’s exceptional culinary scene. Organised by Altrincham’s Business Improvement District (BID), the festival will take place from Friday 28th February to Sunday 9th March 2025 and promises to be a highlight of the year for food lovers and the local community.

Inspired by Altrincham’s thriving food and drink culture, the festival aims to showcase the town’s diversity and excellence in gastronomy. With Altrincham Market and Market House at its heart, the town has become a haven for food enthusiasts, offering a remarkable variety of international cuisines and culinary talent.

Visitors to “A Taste of Altrincham” can expect an exciting programme of events, including exclusive supper clubs, cookery demonstrations, and hands-on workshops



Mandy White, Director of Altrincham BID

teaching everything from sushi rolling to bread making. Participating venues will also offer special discounts and promotions, encouraging attendees to explore the town’s vibrant food scene.

Carl Newton, CEO of Myerson Solicitors, commented: “A Taste of Altrincham’ is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate everything that makes our town special. As a firm that’s been deeply embedded in the Altrincham community for 42 years, supporting this event is a natural extension of our commitment to local innovation. Altrincham’s food and drink scene is thriving, and this festival will provide a platform to highlight the incredible talent and creativity of our local businesses. We’re proud to sponsor the inaugural edition and are excited to see it grow into a cornerstone event that will drive even more visitors, business and opportunity in Altrincham.”

Mandy White, Director of Altrincham BID, added: “This festival is inspired by Altrincham’s incredible food culture and its reputation as a foodie’s paradise. With support from Myerson Solicitors and funding from the UK Government through the Shared Prosperity Fund, we are excited to launch this new initiative. The festival will be a chance for locals and visitors to discover the very best of Altrincham’s culinary offerings and enjoy the welcoming atmosphere of our town.”

Further details, including the full schedule and participating venues, will be announced in the coming weeks. For the latest updates, visit visitaltrincham.com/taste-of-altrincham.



Myerson's CEO Carl Newton recognised in The Lawyer's Hot 100 list

Carl Newton, CEO of [Myerson Solicitors](#), has been named in The Lawyer's prestigious Hot 100 list for 2025. The annual list begins with nominations, from which The Lawyer selects the most innovative and influential individuals shaping the legal profession today.

Carl has been particularly recognised for his visionary leadership in guiding Myerson Solicitors through a transformative year. Founded in 1982, the firm achieved a groundbreaking milestone in September 2024 by becoming the first law firm in Manchester, and one of the largest in the country, to transition to employee ownership through an Employee Ownership Trust (EOT). This bold move not only reinforces Myerson's commitment to its people but also aligns with the firm's long-standing strategy of maintaining independence and fostering a unique culture prioritising work-life balance.

Under Carl's leadership, Myerson has achieved double-digit revenue growth for four consecutive years, increasing by 84% from £9.5 million in 2019/20 to £17.5 million in 2023/24. The firm, with 150 employees and 26 partners, is now focused on breaking the £20 million barrier in the year ahead, driven by an expanded corporate offering, development of its people, strategic hires, and a continued commitment to delivering excellent client service.

Beyond his leadership role at Myerson, Carl's influence extends to the wider professional services community. As chair of the UK200 Group, he has played a pivotal role in steering a network of leading law and accountancy firms, welcoming new members such as Paris Smith, and



Carl Newton, CEO of Myerson Solicitors

guiding the organisation through its 40th anniversary celebrations.

Commenting on the achievement, Carl said: "It's an honour to be recognised in The Lawyer's Hot 100. This accolade reflects the incredible team at Myerson and our shared commitment to excellence and innovation. Our transition to employee ownership has been a defining moment for the firm, and I am deeply grateful to the former Equity Partners whose vision and dedication laid the foundation for this success. I am proud of what we've accomplished together and excited for Myerson's future as we continue to grow and evolve".

The Lawyer's Hot 100 celebrates excellence and relevance in the legal profession, showcasing lawyers and leaders who are making a significant impact. The full list of The Lawyer's Hot 100 2025 can be accessed [here](#).



More funding needed to fuel ambitions in the North West – new report finds

Demand for funding is set to rise in the next 12 months, as North West businesses set out their growth ambitions for 2025 – a new report has found.

An overwhelming 80% of regional businesses surveyed as part of Ambition 2025 are actively seeking funding to facilitate growth, with angel investment and growth capital the most favoured types of investment for North West decision-makers (21% each).

Unsurprisingly, attracting external investment is the number one priority for regional businesses aiming to achieve their ambitions. This focus is especially strong among younger decision-makers (16-34-year-olds), with 56% of respondents identifying external investment as key to executing their growth strategy.

The findings are part of a [new report](#) commissioned by [Pannone Corporate](#). Through a combination of research and in-depth interviews, Ambition 2025 aims to understand the key drivers of growth, as well as the motivations, priorities and challenges for regional companies that make up the North West business community.

A survey of 200 regional businesses with a turnover of between £20 million and £300 million – carried out in conjunction with the report – also found that M&A activity is set to increase, with mergers and acquisitions high on the agenda. Over three-quarters of businesses in the North West plan to explore M&A opportunities within the next year. This trend is particularly prevalent in education (93%) and leisure (88%), with tech following closely behind (84%).



Paul Jonson

Paul Jonson, senior partner at Pannone Corporate, commented: “The North West has a strong heritage of ambitious, entrepreneurial companies that are intent on growth. Despite the economic, social and geo-political challenges that exist in the market, there is clearly an appetite to seize opportunities and navigate the obstacles and barriers that lie ahead.

“Our aim with Ambition 2025 is to tell those stories, listen to the voices of the people behind some of the region’s most successful companies, and understand what their growth ambitions are for the next 12 months. It’s given us an interesting insight into their growth journeys to date and what the entrepreneurial landscape will look like in 2025.”

As part of the report, Pannone interviewed 15 businesses based in the North West about what aspirations they have for the future. Participants included: The Lowry, Direct Access Group, Serotonin, Duo UK, LOFT UK and One + All. The research and interviews focused on five core areas: finance, impact, innovation, ambition and people.

According to the research, more than 90% of businesses surveyed are planning to invest or improve their people offering over the next 12 months. The top people priority for business decision-makers over the next 12 months, is offering more flexible work options for employees. The focus on flexibility tops other people-related factors such as improving pay and recruitment – arguably reflecting a broader trend toward workplace cultural transformation.

Chris Davis, CEO of Manchester-based Moneyplus Group, who was part of the report, commented: “A huge investment is in our people. We want to attract and retain the best talent. Therefore we have an obligation, not only to our customers and our shareholders, but to our colleagues,

to look after them and to demonstrate to them that they're not just a line on a spreadsheet.”

Steven Mifsud MBE, CEO of Direct Access Group, believes growth comes from having a strong and diverse team to deliver ambitious projects – staff who really understand what the business is trying to achieve.

He commented: “That is more important than any qualifications or work experience, because that is really hard to teach. We hire predominantly disabled people, or those who have first-hand experience of barriers. That way, we have the right people in our team, and we can then train them up and help to smooth those diamonds.”

Peach Law – celebrating 10 years in business

On the 10th October 2024 [Peach Law](#) celebrated its 10th year in business. Reaching this anniversary is a testament to hard work, resilience, adaptability and most importantly the trust of our loyal clients and partners. As we celebrate this amazing milestone, we're also looking to the future with excitement and continue to improve, innovate, and explore new possibilities to ensure we can meet and exceed our client's needs.

To everyone who has been part of our first decade – thank you and here's to the next 10 years.

Part of our celebrations we've raised money for our nominated charity – The British Heart Foundation, the latest being a hair-raising zip wire on the fastest zip line in the world!! With that and some other activity this year we've raised a phenomenal £1414.55.

For a more leisurely celebration, we held a drinks reception with clients, friends, and family at the Crown & Conspirator in Bramhall.





Manchester Young Lawyers Group – A Busy February Ahead!

At MYL, we have a few really exciting events in the pipeline making for a busy month ahead.

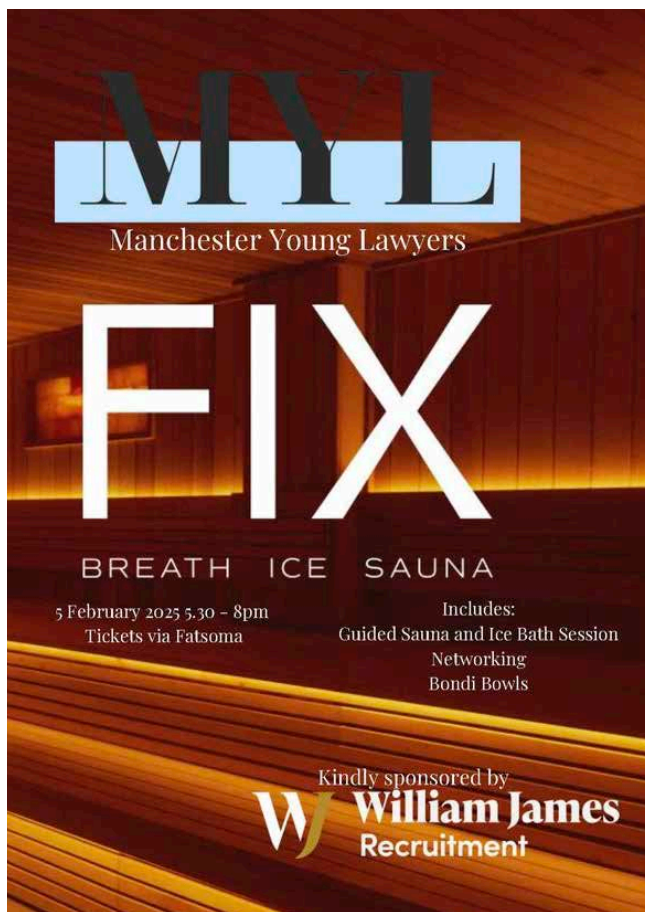
Firstly, we are hosting a guided R&R session at FIX MCR, which will include sauna, ice bath, gua sha, facial reflexology, scalp massage and aromatherapy. This event is being kindly sponsored by William James Recruitment.

We will also have the chance to enjoy networking and a Bondi Bowl each after the session – what better way to re-set after those January blues!

The aim of this soothing and relaxing event will be to focus on wellbeing, boost circulation, ease muscle tension and restore balance, leaving us feeling rested and refreshed.

This event will run from 5.30pm-8.00pm on Wednesday 5 February 2025 at Fix MCR, 45 Newton Street, Manchester, M1 1FT, and the R&R session will be followed by networking with a choice of food options.

Less than a week after, we are hosting our annual Charity Quiz Night on 11th February 2025, sponsored by BCL Legal! It's set to be a fun and competitive evening, and we'd



“

This is a fantastic opportunity to enjoy a night out with friends or colleagues while supporting a great cause!”

love for you to join us to raise funds for some amazing causes, Manchester People First and Manchester & Cheshire Dogs Home!

This event is due to take place on Thursday 11 February 2025 at 6.30pm and will be located at Revolution Oxford Road. It will include a lively quiz, drinks token and delicious buffet.

There will also be a charity raffle on the night with all proceeds going directly to support our nominated charities.

This is a fantastic opportunity to enjoy a night out with friends or colleagues while supporting a great cause! Tickets are limited, so don't miss out – secure your spot today.

Tickets to both events are available [here](#) .

Click for more info



Junior School Taster Morning

(Years 2-5)

Saturday 1 March 2025 9.30am-12 noon

Primary Division Open Evening

Thursday 24 April 2025 4.30pm-6.30pm

To register for either event please scan the QR code or contact us via the details below.



01204 840201

www.boltonschool.org

info@boltonschool.org

Ward Hadaway announces record financial results

[Ward Hadaway](#) has reported a record financial performance in its latest filed accounts for 2023-24, with revenue rising by 7% to £48m.

This achievement marks a significant milestone in the firm's history. Driven by strong growth across its Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle offices in a wide cross section of service areas, it demonstrates the firm's robust financial health and commitment to sustainable growth.

Managing Partner Steven Petrie said: "These financial results from 2023-24 represent a really strong foundation on which to build, as we strive to realise our ambitious long-term growth plans, remaining independent and increasing our turnover by over 50% in the next five years and achieving £100m by 2034. It's really encouraging to see the positive impact our strategic investments are already having on our business, including our ability to attract, recruit, retain and engage excellent people to the firm."

Key hires in core practice areas and the firm's focus on developing emerging talent remain a consistent theme. In May last year, the firm expanded its leadership team with the appointment of Nick Gholkar as Executive Partner of the Newcastle office to work alongside Emma Digby and Liz Bottrill who hold the equivalent role in the Leeds and Manchester offices. During 2024, the firm has also added eight new partners spanning a range of service sectors, part of more than 100 new colleagues who joined across the course of the year. This marks a critical step in Ward Hadaway's vision to strengthen its expertise and deliver exceptional client service.



A key focus of Ward Hadaway's strategy is its commitment to nurturing talent and fostering a culture where people thrive. In this last year, the firm appointed 14 new trainee solicitors and one solicitor apprentice across its offices bringing the total headcount to over 500.

These initiatives reflect the firm's ongoing investment in the next generation of legal professionals, providing structured training and support to ensure their development and career success.

Petrie continued: "We provide an environment where individuals can excel at every level, offering guidance, growth opportunities and the tools to fulfil their full potential. Our people are fundamental to our success. We are well-positioned to build on what we have already achieved and to deliver on our ambitious growth objectives."

To adapt to the challenges of a rapidly changing legal landscape, the firm has made significant investments in technology and established a firm wide Innovation team to explore the role of AI in delivering legal services. Ward Hadaway also remains a leader in responsible business practices, working on initiatives to reduce its carbon impact, making contributions to over 50 charities and maintaining a strong focus on diversity, inclusion and wellbeing. It is also in the process of investing significantly in the refurbishment of its Newcastle Quayside offices.

With a record year behind it and a clear strategy for the future already achieving demonstrable results, the firm will continue to focus on delivering tailored, high-quality commercial legal advice, while fostering innovation and supporting the development of its people and services to meet the needs of clients.

Actionstep

Reimagine your law firm's tech

Transform your law firm with Actionstep's "Blueprint for Building Your Law Firm's Ideal Technology Ecosystem."

This guide is packed with insights for law firm professionals to build a well-integrated tech ecosystem that eliminates bottlenecks, streamlines workflows, and positions your firm for sustainable growth.



Take the first step toward a smarter, more efficient practice.
Scan the QR to download your free copy.

MLS Advantage



More **added value** for members of the Manchester Law Society

SEARCHFLOW

SearchFlow is one of the UK's largest providers of legal due diligence data for residential and commercial property transactions, having supported over 5,000,000 instructions with more than 26,000,000 searches.

SearchFlow provides confidence and certainty, to any law firm that wants to embrace and benefit from this transformation journey. This is achieved, each day, by delivering concrete due diligence, advanced technology, intelligent data, unparalleled market experience, serious financial investment, and access to exceptional people.

By partnering with SearchFlow, the UK's property law professionals are able to deliver smarter, safer, and faster property transactions to their customers.

SearchFlow is a Landmark Information Group business, which is headquartered in the UK and is part of Daily Mail and General Trust plc (DMGT).

www.searchflow.co.uk 

Follow on Twitter @SearchFlow

LEGALRSS

LEGAL NEWS – up-to-date legal news and court judgments for your website and smartphone.

Legal RSS provides uniquely created, timely, well-written news on the latest court judgments. This can be used on your website and will ensure that your news section is up to date, current, and topical. In engaging with existing and prospective clients this will help your firm maintain and enhance its reputation as being expert in its field, plain-talking, on the ball and client-centred – key attributes for driving practice growth and profitability. This will also help you keep your website up to date with articles designed to drive in instructions and client acquisition. We cover over 60 different areas of the law, and our service can be seamlessly fed onto your website, or you can personalise each article with your own comment and key fee earner contacts. Legal RSS also provides a smartphone app which you can download for free to keep up to date whilst on the move, and we can also provide a bespoke firm version of our app.

martyn.best@legalrss.co.uk

www.legalrss.co.uk 



Manchester Law Society

Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

What is MLS Advantage?

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

We know that our members recognise the value that technology, outsourcing and

business services can deliver to the client experience as well as business processes and operational efficiency.

Our MLS Advantage partners all offer special packages to Manchester Law Society members.

Why not contact one of them today?

Compli

Compli provides regulatory and compliance advice and assistance to law firms and others in the legal sector. Whether you are a partnership, limited company, ABS or sole practitioner, our flexible, tailor-made service is designed to support you in meeting the evolving regulatory, compliance and risk challenges you face. This is underpinned by incisive commercial advice on business management and structure, all delivered by specialist teams with outstanding experience in their disciplines. Confidentiality, legal professional privilege and peace of mind is assured.

Michelle Garlick: 0161 233 7330
michelle.garlick@weightmans.com
www.weightmans.com

Choose... DOCUTECH OFFICE SOLUTIONS

Docutech Office Solutions is the Manchester Law Society's preferred supplier for MFPs, Copiers, Printers, managed print services, secure electronic data storage and electronic signatures. We pride ourselves in great prices, focusing on cost and emission reduction, improving your efficiency whilst maintaining a second to none service.

Before recommending any of our products we make it our business to understand your business allowing us to supply the right solution to your specific needs, whether it be from our vast range of hardware, software, technical services, or a combination of everything.

0844 259 6155
info@docutechsolutions.co.uk
www.docutechsolutions.co.uk

Continued on page 72



We know you want to be the best law firm you can be, and we can help you.

Here's a few ways we do that:

- Improving your client service by enabling you to send your letters, contract and response out much quicker.
- Reducing your overheads so that you can become more profitable.
- Helping you achieve the greater flexibility by hybrid working has been giving us in recent times.
- Helping optimise your head count, and your HR and infrastructure.

What do we offer you:

- A very deep understanding of your typing, transcription, document production and e-bundle needs.
- Free digital dictation software to reduce your hardware and software costs.
- A 24/7 typing service that matches your needs and your peaks and troughs in your own work levels.
- Outstanding customer service and responsiveness.
- The comfort of cyber and data security supported by our accreditations to ISO27001, ISO9001, AND ISO22310, and the endorsements of the Manchester Law Society, LawNet, Lawshare and the Cheshire & North Wales Law Society.

Martyn Best: 0345 340 3031

Martyn.Best@documentdirect.co.uk [✉](mailto:Martyn.Best@documentdirect.co.uk)

www.documentdirect.co.uk [✉](http://www.documentdirect.co.uk)



Mitigo provides cybersecurity and cyber risk management services to members. Mitigo will give you visibility of your cyber risks, and secure you against attacks and business disruption. Cybersecurity is not the job of IT support: it requires independent advice from cyber risk management specialists.

Without adequate protection in place, victims face ransomware attacks, serious disruption, email account takeover, theft of confidential information, financial loss, as well as reputational damage, and potential for regulator actions and fines.

Mitigo's support has been designed for law firms to offer proportionate and affordable security. After assessing your risks, Mitigo will take care of the three areas needed to keep your business safe. Services include:

- Technology
- People competence
- Governance framework

Mitigo also provides an emergency cyber breach response, which includes:

- Emergency incident response and containment
- Forensics and investigation
- Assistance with reporting obligations

0161 883 3083

mls@mitigogroup.com [✉](mailto:mls@mitigogroup.com)

www.mitigogroup.com [✉](http://www.mitigogroup.com)



How we help law firms

Trusted by a growing number of law firms across all practice areas and sizes, Shieldpay is the UK’s leading ThirdParty-Managed Account and Digital Corporate Escrow provider. Shieldpay’s multi-award winning platform streamlines KYC/AML, client money processes and gives you full transparency on the status of funds at all times. Shieldpay is authorised and regulated by the FCA, funds held by Shieldpay are safeguarded and held with tier 1 banks. Shieldpay is able to process transactions of any size and hold funds in escrow for whatever period of time required.

Benefits delivered to law firms include: TPMA’s will not be appropriate for every firm, but TPMA’s can be a great option for firms looking to reduce their risk exposure to handling client money and in the case of specific transactions or arrangements, including:

- Full client money services
- Card and merchant services
- Corporate escrow arrangements
- Commercial rent deposits
- Trust and guardianship accounts
- Retention amounts

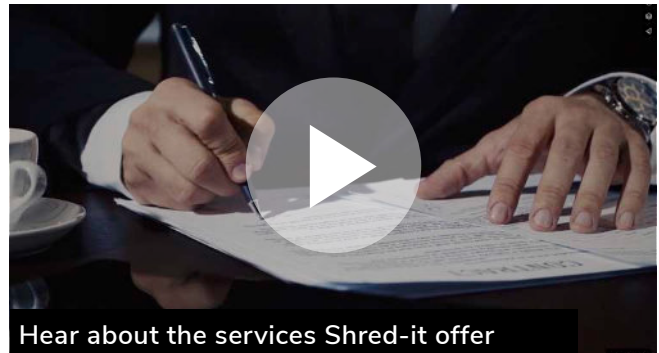
John Donigan: 07966 213957

jdonigan@shieldpay.com

www.shieldpay.com



Shred-it is a Stericycle solution that helps organisations maintain the security and integrity of private and confidential information.



Shred-it, a strategic partner of the Law Society, offers services that include:

- [document shredding and recycling](#)
- [hard drive destruction](#)
- [workplace privacy policies](#)

Shred-it is one of the largest document destruction providers in the world with more than 500,000 customers, 5,000 team members and a fleet of over 2,000 trucks globally.

Following the passing of GDPR legislation, there’s never been a more important time to protect the wealth of information that is processed and stored daily.

Awareness of the security risks and the impact that a data breach can have on a business’ reputation and bottom line highlights the needs for secure document and media destruction as part of a business’ critical infrastructure

Protect your clients. Protect your practice.

Get Shred-it

Phone – 0800 197 1164

shredit.co.uk/en-gb

Continued on page 74



First AML offers law firms a single source of truth for KYB & KYC, from onboarding through to ongoing risk management and re-verification.

Law firms benefit from an intuitive platform, end-to-end automations and unrivalled customisation options.

Key features include:

- **Source of Funds/Source of Wealth:** We have partnered with Armalytix to embed their best-in-market tool to take efficiency and client experience to the next level
- **Biometric ID verification:** Collected via secure webform so no need for app download), allowing client to send through information on-the-go, at home or in their office
- **PEPs, sanctions, and adverse media:** In-platform review automatically reduces false positives and removes from ongoing screening reports, with access to 1,100+ real-time PEPs and sanctions lists across the globe.
- **Entity unwrapping / structure mapping:** Registry access to 100+ countries corporate registries with 'ancestry tree' visualisation allows for smoothest onboarding of any client
- **AI document reader:** Platform detects trusts within structures and analyse documents to extract relevant information in under a minute
- **Easy client and matter risk assessments:** Include your risk assessment within the onboarding workflow and ensure consistent completion, and create a risk score that can be used to guide what documents to collect
- **Office and department configuration:** Compliance rules can differ across departments to ensure clients are offered a tailored onboarding experience and ensures best-practice adoption, firm-wide.
- **Seamless integration:** Easily integrate First AML with existing practice management software including Actionstep, Elite 3E, Armalytix and more.

For more information

partnerships@firstaml.com 
www.firstaml.com 

Landmark. Information

As part of the UK's largest property and land data business, Landmark Information supports the entire value chain of the property industry. With more than 25 years' experience, we provide real estate lawyers and property conveyancing professionals with accurate and relevant land and property data. We work

closely with property lawyers to provide a dedicated personal approach, supporting the transaction risk and due diligence process. Our data, reports, software and services are in line with the Law Society and SRA requirements. They include environmental reports for both residential and commercial transactions such as, RiskView Residential, Argyll's SiteSolutions Combined, Landmark Flood, Landmark Planning, Landmark Coal and RiskHorizon for ESG due diligence.

www.landmark.co.uk  or follow Landmark on Twitter: twitter.com/LandmarkUK 



Criminal Law Update with HHJ Potter

**27 February 2025****17:00 - 19:15****JMW Solicitors LLP, 1 Byrom St,
Manchester M3 3HG.****MLS Members £25.00 + VAT (£30.00)****Non Members £45.00 + VAT (£54.00)**

We are delighted that His Honour Judge Potter will return to give an update on the latest developments in the practice of criminal law in the Crown Courts.

In addition we are pleased to also bring attendees a session on stress management from LawCare CEO Elizabeth Rimmer. Stress is a major issue in the legal sector and no where more than in the criminal law community. This session will provide advice and tips on how to manage your stress and sign post you where to go when you need additional support.

Programme:**17:00 Registration****17:30 Welcome and
introduction**

Daniel Weed, Director at
Burton Copeland and Chair
of the MLS Crown &
Magistrates Court Committee

**17:35 Address by His
Honour Judge Potter****18:30 Stress Management
for Criminal Law
Practitioners**

Elizabeth Rimmer, Chief
Executive, LawCare

**19:00 Q&A with the
speakers****19:15 Close****Book Now**

Clarke Willmott bolsters North West Planning Team

[Clarke Willmott LLP](#) has added to its planning team with a new partner specialising in energy and infrastructure.

[Michelle Spark](#) joins the firm's Manchester planning and environmental team. Michelle has extensive experience in all aspects of planning, highways and compulsory purchase law and has held senior positions in both the private and public sectors.

Having worked on all types of developments including large complex mixed-use schemes, housing developments, retail, renewable energy, minerals and waste (including nuclear waste) and large infrastructure projects, Michelle provides strategic and pragmatic advice to get major projects delivered.

Michelle has a particular specialism in working on nationally significant infrastructure projects and is currently advising on a number of development consent orders across the North West for the delivery of much needed infrastructure



Michelle Spark

“

Michelle has a particular specialism in working on nationally significant infrastructure projects”

and energy. These include the A66 Northern TransPennine Project, the HyNet Carbon Dioxide Pipeline DCO and the HyNet North West Hydrogen Pipeline DCO.

Also joining Michelle in the Manchester planning team is new associate Louise Clifton, who along with existing planning solicitor Anisha Bakhat, will be covering planning matters across the North.

Ed Foulkes, Clarke Willmott partner and head of the Manchester office, said: “Michelle's addition to the Clarke Willmott team is an exciting one. Her unmatched knowledge in the areas of highway, planning, compulsory purchase law and renewable energy will be invaluable in providing tailored solutions to our clients.

Michelle's appointment, as well as Louise's, reflects our ongoing commitment to recruiting top-tier talent to enhance our services. Their appointments add to our planning offering in the North West and further augment the existing planning team.”

Michelle Spark said: “I'm delighted to be joining Clarke Willmott and bringing some new elements to the already highly-regarded team. Although based in the Manchester office I will be working across the North West and beyond on a range of infrastructure and energy projects.”

Glaisyers ETL announces latest round of promotions

Glaisyers ETL has announced its latest round of promotions, strengthening its Legal 500-listed litigation, insolvency, corporate and employment practices.

In all, six fee-earners have been promoted at the beginning of the year.

Hannah Vachre, a longstanding member of the firm's commercial litigation practice has been promoted from senior associate to partner.

Within the litigation team, disputes and insolvency specialist Steve Sutton, who joined the firm as a solicitor in April 2024, has also been promoted to the position of senior associate. Meanwhile, Nermin Suleman, who joined the litigation team at Glaisyers ETL in 2022, has been promoted from solicitor to associate.

Commenting on her promotion to partnership, Ms Vachre said, "I am incredibly honoured and excited to be promoted to partner at Glaisyers ETL. This milestone is a reflection of the hard work, dedication, and collaboration I've experienced working with an incredible team, and I'm eager to continue contributing to the firm's success in my new role."

The firm's employment practice has also seen two promotions this month. Associate Jennifer Johnson has been promoted to senior associate, while solicitor Natalie Howitt has become an associate.

In the corporate team, meanwhile, associate Niki Polymeridou has become a senior associate.

The six newly promoted lawyers are all based at the firm's Manchester head office.

Russell Brown, managing partner and head of employment at Glaisyers ETL, said, "All six of the promotions announced this month are very well deserved and reflect both their contributions to-date and the potential that I have no doubt they will all fulfil in the future.

"I am proud to work with such capable, motivated colleagues and I look forward to continuing to do so and seeing the results they deliver for clients, and for our firm, over the course of 2025 and the years ahead."

In addition to its latest round of promotions, the firm is continuing to recruit actively. In particular, it has a vacancy for a senior associate in its private client team.

L-R Natalie Howitt, Niki Polymeridou, Nermin Suleman, Hannah Vachre



Myerson Solicitors welcomes Victoria Davies as Legal Director in its award-winning Employment Team

Myerson Solicitors [↗](#) is delighted to announce the appointment of Victoria Davies as Legal Director in its Employment Team. With 20 years' experience in the field, Victoria joins from international law firm Addleshaw Goddard, bringing a wealth of expertise to the highly regarded team.

Throughout her career, Victoria has advised a diverse range of businesses, from major corporates to SMEs. Her experience spans day-to-day employment advice, such as handling workforce changes and resolving workplace disputes, to supporting businesses through organisational restructures and managing complex tribunal claims. She has represented clients in high-stakes employment disputes, including litigation involving post-termination restrictions, confidentiality breaches, and sensitive claims such as whistleblowing and discrimination cases.

Victoria's career also includes significant in-house legal experience, gained during secondments with a leading commercial airline and a global energy company. This hands-on experience has provided her with valuable insight into the practical challenges faced by businesses and HR teams, enabling her to deliver pragmatic and commercially focused solutions tailored to client needs.

Victoria's appointment further strengthens Myerson's Employment Team, which was crowned Employment Team of the Year at the 2024 Manchester Legal Awards and is now the largest in the North West outside Manchester City Centre. The team of 12 advises both employers and employees and has seen growing demand for its services, including its highly popular Myerson HR retainer, which provides comprehensive



Victoria Davies

employment law and HR support to businesses.

Joanne Evans, Head of the Employment Team at Myerson, comments: "We are thrilled to welcome Victoria to the firm. She and I worked together previously at Addleshaw Goddard before I joined Myerson, so I know what a strong and client-focused lawyer she is. Her depth of experience, particularly in navigating complex disputes and working in-house, adds even more strength to the support we offer our clients. Victoria's arrival comes at an exciting time for our busy team, and we are delighted to have her on board."

2024 was an outstanding year for Myerson, marked by 15% organic growth and its transition to employee ownership. The substantial and growing team of talented employment lawyers is well-positioned to support clients through the significant changes in employment legislation introduced by the Labour government, and challenges such as restructures to counter increasing employment costs, a competitive job market and the growing focus on employment disputes.



Join 1000's of law firms

already outsourcing their typing and document production



[Try a free trial](#)

Reduced costs



Time saving



24/7 Service



High quality documents



Specialist legal typists



24/7 Support



Secure, compliant



CMS integration



If you are curious to see the benefit that dictation and our typing service can bring to your firm...

Why not try a complimentary trial?

[Try a free trial](#)

[+44 \(0\) 1926 821900](tel:+44201926821900)

info@documentdirect.co.uk

www.documentdirect.co.uk



IMD Solicitors made six key appointments to strengthen the team

Year 2024 was an incredible year of growth for [IMD Solicitors LLP](#) and IMD Corporate with six key appointments to strengthen their leadership teams and support the firm's continued growth. The appointments reflect the firm's focus on enhancing its expertise across family law, wills and probate, personal injury, commercial dispute resolution, commercial & corporate and corporate immigration services.

The firm has promoted James Legg to Partner in Family Law. With over a decade of experience, James specialises in financial remedies, private children cases, and protective orders. His practice includes matters with international elements, cohabitation disputes, and cases involving digital and crypto-assets. He will work closely with the Family Law team under the leadership of Senior Partner Iwona Durlak, supporting clients across complex family matters.

Nicholas Paszek has been appointed Partner within Commercial Dispute Resolution Department at IMD Corporate. Nicholas has experience handling commercial disputes, including breach of contract, shareholder disagreements, construction adjudications, and negligence claims. He has represented individuals and businesses, including multinational companies, and will now lead the dispute resolution team in addressing complex and high-value matters for clients.

Jarmila Entezari has joined IMD Corporate as a Senior Associate specialising in corporate immigration law. She brings 18 years of experience advising on work-based visas, sponsor licences, and compliance audits. Jarmila's work focuses on supporting



Marcin Durlak

businesses in managing overseas workforce requirements while meeting immigration compliance obligations. Her experience also includes handling complex nationality and citizenship matters, ensuring businesses and individuals navigate legal processes efficiently.

Rezwana Dithy has joined the firm to support its private client services in wills and probate. Rezwana's work includes drafting wills, preparing powers of attorney, inheritance tax planning, and managing estate administration. Her practice also includes cases with cross-border assets, ensuring clients can organise their legal and financial affairs during their lifetime and after death.

Roy Parmar has joined IMD Solicitors to enhance its personal injury services. Roy has experience representing clients who have suffered injuries, including serious and life-changing cases such as brain trauma. He has acted for claimants and insurers,

handling matters relating to employers' liability, public liability, and road traffic accidents. Roy will continue to focus on supporting clients through injury claims to secure practical outcomes.

Paula joined IMD Solicitors in December 2024, bringing expertise in international family law as a qualified Solicitor and Spanish Abogado. She focuses on Spanish clients across England and Wales on cross-border family matters, including international nuptial and cohabitation agreements, jurisdictional disputes, financial claims involving multi-jurisdictional assets, and children matters such as international arrangements, relocation, and child abduction under the Hague Convention.

The appointments form part of IMD Solicitors LLP and IMD Corporate's strategy to expand their senior team and develop services to meet growing client demand. The firm continues to build teams across its key practice areas to address complex legal challenges for individuals and businesses.

Marcin Durlak, Managing Partner commented: "The promotion and appointments of James, Nicholas, Jarmila, Rezwana, Roy and Paula reflect our focus on strengthening the firm's core practice areas. Each brings experience to their role, allowing us to provide effective legal services to our clients in the UK and internationally. These appointments support the firm's long-term goals and commitment to delivering practical solutions across all areas of law."

IMD Solicitors LLP and IMD Corporate remain committed to supporting clients with high-quality legal advice. The new appointments are expected to enhance the firm's ability to handle complex matters while strengthening their position across family, wills and probate, personal injury, commercial dispute resolution, commercial & corporate and corporate immigration law.

These promotions mark the next stage of growth for the firm as it continues to expand its teams and leadership structure to meet increasing demand for its services.

Messenger Deadlines for 2025



Don't miss your chance to promote your news to the Manchester legal community. You can submit your news any time to Messenger@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk but if you have something time sensitive you want to get in a particular issue here are the deadline dates for 2025.

March 2025	21/02/2025	September 2025	22/08/2025
April 2025	21/03/2025	October 2025	19/09/2025
May 2025	17/04/2025	November 2025	24/10/2025
June 2025	23/05/2025	December 2025	21/11/2025
July 2025	20/06/2025	January 2026	12/12/2025
August 2025	18/07/2025		





New roles assigned in senior leadership team at Leonard Curtis

Leonard Curtis [↗](#) has unveiled new roles for two key members of its leadership team as the firm starts an ambitious programme of growth for the next three years.

David Brown, who joined the business in July 2023 as Chief Operations and Financial Officer, becomes Chief Operating Officer (COO), while Paul Birks, who has been Group Financial Director since September 2022, will be promoted to Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

Leonard Curtis is the largest independent restructuring and turnaround specialist in the UK, combining funding, legal and other business services to provide bespoke distress and non-distress solutions for SMEs, larger corporates and their advisers.

The Group employs over 300 people across 29 sites in the UK and offshore and has seen rapid growth in the last 18 months, increasing revenue by 33% to £38m since 2022.

David takes the role of COO with previous experience in audit, M & A and industry. He holds an MBA from Manchester Business School and is a former professional cricketer, having played county cricket for Gloucestershire and Glamorgan.

Paul has held financial roles since 1998 across a range of businesses, including audit services at Baker Tilly and UHY, as well as ten years as a FD in the health and social care sector.

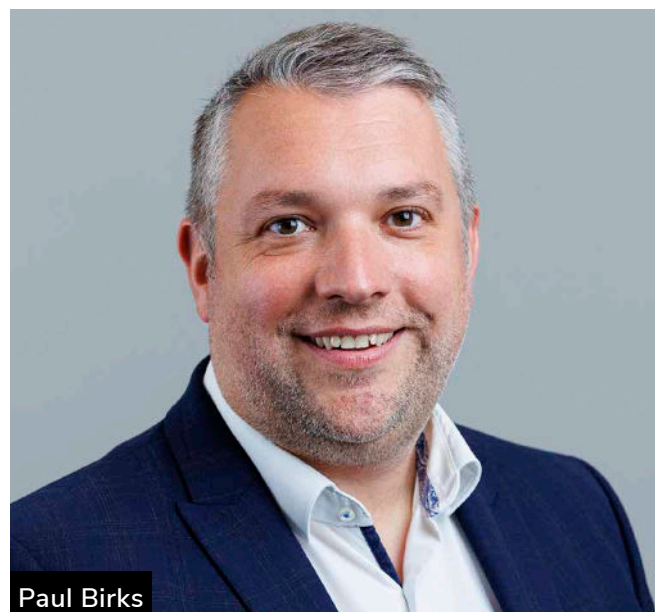
Both will work in close collaboration on several key areas of responsibility, operating alongside CEO Dan Booth.

Dan commented: "David and Paul will coordinate our extensive office network and profit centres to maximise profitability, as well as identifying future cost savings across the Group.

"They will be looking at improving the use of data to set better strategic and short-term department performance and growth



David Brown



Paul Birks

goals and providing ultimate oversight and management of the collaboration and operational leadership teams.”

He continued: “Both will also be responsible for leading the firm’s M&A strategy for the next three years and integrating new acquisitions into the Group.”

In recent months the firm has added [Newsource Commercial Finance](#) to boost its funding brokerage arm, with special focus on the property sector – and [Virtualnonexecs.com](#), which adds a 23,500-strong international talent pool and other services to the firms existing skillset.

David said: “The growth of the Group over the recent past together with exciting opportunities ahead means we needed to evolve our structure. It’s a compelling proposition to take on the COO role and I

am delighted to have been asked to lead the next stage of growth, alongside Dan, Paul and many talented colleagues.”

Paul commented: “We have made great progress in the last two years, streamlining our reporting and financial policies and now we go again to strengthen that infrastructure to allow us to meet next level expectations. I am looking forward to it.”

Dan Booth added: “As the group continues to grow and we focus on future mergers and acquisitions activity, development of our new and existing services and integration, together with the efficiencies that naturally leads to, we need to ensure we have the appropriate skillsets to deliver the best results. We would like to congratulate Paul on his well-deserved promotion and wish him and David all the best in their new roles.”

Stephensons welcomes new clinical negligence solicitor

[Stephensons](#) has expanded its team with the appointment of a new senior solicitor.

Colette Crowley joins Stephensons from Liverpool based firm, Bond Turner. She brings with her almost 20 years of experience assisting claimants in clinical negligence matters.

Judith Thomas-Whittingham, partner and head of clinical negligence at Stephensons said:

“Colette is a wonderful addition to our team and has vast experience in supporting clients through the often complex legal process of making a clinical negligence claim. Colette’s commitment to her clients and determination to secure the best

possible outcome are all qualities we look for at Stephensons and I very much look forward to working with Colette in the months and years to come.”



Pearson Solicitors expand Care Team with new appointments

Pearson Solicitors and Financial Advisers Ltd [↗](#) are delighted to announce the appointment of *Alex Swindells* [↗](#) as a vital addition to their renowned Care team. Alex joins as an experienced care solicitor and an esteemed member of The Children's Panel, bringing over a decade of expertise from her time at prominent city centre firms.

Alex's extensive experience includes representing parents in care proceedings and navigating private law cases concerning child arrangements. In her new role, Alex will expand her focus to include guardian work, further broadening the team's scope.

Reflecting on her role, Alex commented: "I enjoy working in a role where I can help people. It's such an important area as people's children mean so much to them and they want a solicitor who they can trust and feel like they are being listened to which I think that I do. I think I am compassionate and approachable. I like that every day is different, and no case is the same. The best part is seeing children go home and also ensuring children are safeguarded and get better outcomes for their future."

Rachel Early [↗](#), Solicitor and Head of the *Care Department* [↗](#) at Pearson, commented:

"It's been a busy few months for the Care team since I took on the role of Head of the department in July 2024. The addition of Alex significantly enhances our capabilities, and I am thrilled to have her join us."

Joining Alex is her assistant, *Caroline Steel* [↗](#), who has worked alongside her previously, strengthening the team's collective expertise. Additionally, the team welcomes *Grace Healy* [↗](#), a Legal Assistant who graduated from Manchester Metropolitan University with a 2:1



Alex Swindells

in law. Grace is now embarking on her journey to qualify as a solicitor, inspired by her upbringing in a foster care environment.

Grace shared her aspirations: "I have always aspired to become a solicitor within a care department. Growing up my parents were foster carers, and as such, I was inspired by the work my parents undertook as foster carers."

Over the past six months, Pearson's Care team has experienced remarkable growth, adding five new members. The department now consists of nine team members, including five fee earners and four legal assistants, all dedicated to delivering compassionate and expert legal support in sensitive childcare matters.

Pearson's Care team is highly regarded for their expertise in handling complex childcare proceedings, often involving serious allegations of abuse, neglect, and substance misuse. The team also represents children in private law cases, collaborating closely with guardians to ensure optimal outcomes. Solicitors Rachel Early, Alex Swindells, and *Rebecca Wolfenden* [↗](#) are all distinguished members of The Law Society's Children's Panel which recognises a quality standard for practitioners representing children in children law proceedings.

WHAT DO YOU *LOVE* ABOUT DOCUMENT DIRECT?

"They've helped our fee earners and the firm become more efficient."

"The quality and accuracy exceeds our expectations."

"Their attention to detail, accuracy and delivery times are excellent."

"Quick turnaround with exceptional quality."

"Efficient and effective communication and support."

"Their seamless service has significantly improved our workflow."

Outsourcing typing and document requirements to Document Direct allows lawyers to focus on more strategic and fee earning tasks. This reduces workload pressure and stress, leading to improved productivity and less overtime.

With fewer routine tasks to manage, fee earners, business managers and employees can all enjoy more flexibility in their schedules, ultimately supporting a healthier balance between work and personal life.

Make every day a Valentine's Day



Make every day a Document Direct Day





All Change (again) – Say Hello to the Procurement Act 2023

Background

It is looking increasingly likely that the regulation of public procurement (essentially, the purchase of goods, services or works by public bodies in general terms) will reach the culmination of just over 4 years of consultation on 24 February 2025.

While the process to update and replace the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the Concession Contracts Regulations 2016, the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 and the Defence and Security Contracts Regulations 2011 post the vote of the referendum to leave the EU started back in December 2020, it has taken some considerable time to bring those proposed changes into force.

Essentially the Procurement Act 2023, which we anticipate will now come into force on 24 February 2025, aimed to update the existing regimes while also streamlining the levels of bureaucracy involved in the public sector making its purchasing decisions as a means to promote wider competition and squeeze more value from each pound (£) spent. At the same time it was seen as an opportunity to move away from many concepts that ultimately emanated from the UK's longstanding relationship with the EU – procurement law generally has always been a cornerstone of open and transparent commerce where public sector monies are concerned across all Member States of the EU. The UK's decision to withdraw from the EU opened the opportunity here to move away from tried and tested practices and to forge its own path in this respect.

There was a slightly false start last year when the Procurement Act 2023 was intended to come into force fully on 28 October 2024. This

was postponed at the time and the effective date moved to 24 February 2025 instead. We understand that this was to allow additional time to build the central digital platform through which all notices and disclosures will be centralised and also to perfect the national procurement policy statement which will be a driving force behind policy direction shifts from year to year.

Key points to be mindful of

The Procurement Act 2023 is not quite as radical in its thinking as perhaps the designers behind it originally envisaged – a good deal of language and process which practitioners have grown familiar with under the current regime (one might say grown fond of?) has largely been retained so it is not as frighteningly different to what we currently use.

There are however many subtle alterations in focus which need to be understood and appreciated before undertaking any procurements from and after 24 October 2025. We have set out a few important general considerations below as a sample of the new regime:

Bear in mind that the Procurement Act 2025 does not entirely replace the existing Regulations – for example, the transitional provisions (and supporting guidance) make it clear that the on-going management of any contract (including any framework agreement) procured and awarded under the existing regime will continue to be managed under the originally applicable Regulations moving forward until that contract expires or is otherwise terminated. The upshot of this being that we will be running the existing Regulations and the new Procurement Act 2023 for some time, at least until



every contract awarded under the existing Regulations have expired or otherwise been terminated. (which could be some time given that some contracts are being awarded for 10-15 years still)



- As mentioned above, procurements by contracting authorities and utilities (for contracts and concessions) will be handled under the Procurement Act 2023; all rolled into a single piece of legislation.
- A key principle the architects behind the Procurement Act 2023 were keen to have run through the new regime was one of greater transparency as a means, in part, to reduce the time and money spent in bringing and defending legal challenges to award decisions. While clearly sensible, the result is a requirement to fill out and publish a raft of additional notices at various stages in award procedures. Note also, for example that while the familiar “standstill letter” is being replaced with a new “assessment summary”, this new requirement includes much more information than was previously required. It is vital practitioners are fully aware of these added transparency / publication requirements immediately so that they are compliant from day one.
- While this may not affect all practitioners, note that if you are dealing with any contract requirement which includes any relevant health care services (by way, perhaps of a mixed services contract), then care must be taken to determine which set of Regulations should be being applied. Note that the NHS Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023 (PSR) may come into view in such circumstances and could, depending upon the makeup of the required services, be applicable instead of the Procurement Act 2023. Bear in mind that the PSR apply not only to health commissioning bodies (your

traditional NHS Trusts, ICBs, NHS England etc) but they also apply to Local Authorities for these purposes.

- The Procurement Act 2023 introduces arguably tougher provisions around excluding providers from being able to be considered in any active procurement. The introduction of what is referred to as the Debarment List is wholly novel and permits public bodies to refer troublesome providers to the relevant Minister assigned responsibility for managing this list; the provider market should be mindful of this approach in order not to fall foul of exclusion criteria and, in doing so, find themselves barred from taking part in future procurements.

Bear in mind that there is an awful lot of information available in order for practitioners to be able to become familiar with the new regime, including a number of helpful training modules being provided free of charge by the Cabinet Office – including:

- [Procurement Act 2023 - Guidance documents](#) 
- [The Official Procurement Act 2023 learning modules](#) 

Get clued up if you haven't already, but if you need any further support and / or information please feel free to contact Mark Fitzgibbon mark.fitzgibbon@hilldickinson.com  or Lucy Probert lucy.probert@hilldickinson.com 



Mark Fitzgibbon
*Partner, Head of the
Commercial, TMT & IP Team*



Lucy Probert
*Senior Associate, Commercial,
TMT & IP Team*

Management Matters

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



This month

- **Business issues that have to be handled by the management team**
- **Opportunities for survival and commercial enhancement**

Over the last few months there have been some amazing issues affecting the survival and success of law firms. The impact on image, fines, client performance and relationships, regulation achievement and positive potential with assets are extensive

All firms – irrespective of size need to ensure that they have policies and procedures at all levels in these key areas. How it is resourced is also part of the new debate – internally, outsourcing, consultancy can all be considered and used effectively

SRA/AML/Regulations/Process and Procedures/ Not getting fined and destroying image

Again, there is too much evidence of firms not taking this seriously and they are damaging their image, being fined and potentially losing PII. Lawyers and law firms need to take full personal responsibility for checking regulation and compliance.

The role of management, COLPs, COFAs need to be much clearer and legal staff need to be aware that they cannot do things like tick a box when they get an AML report. They need to be read, authorised as part of the procedure. This sort of workflow is available from some PMS/CMS suppliers and some of the newer PMS/CMS. There are also some added value aids. Getting fined by the SRA does not help.

Failure to do fully verified ID and AML checks by some fee earners – not checking the response and getting authorised by management has generated a number of SRA fines. Profitability and credibility/image challenge.

There are also failures that will be very challenged soon for example in the handling of client accounts

Accounts Skills, (Rules, regulations, bank relationships) Financial Management & Planning/Forecasting/ MI & BI/ Resources/M&A/, Strategy/ Working Capital

We are increasingly seeing a movement towards outsourcing of many financial activities at all levels as it doesn't matter how big the firm is but there are the same consequences of failure.

This is increasingly being seen as very important and recent interface with a number of lead consultants in the sector has identified that more analytics needs to be available enabling safer management of business and finance performance around cashflow, working capital, and even financial risk with clients. There is more requirement from inhouse finance, accountants, the IT system and in many cases added value solutions. Many of the systems in use at the moment fall short in this provision.

More accountancy firms are offering additional services to just doing the audit – working capital management, outsourcing, M&A advice, board meeting attendance. Many more firms – and just not small ones – are outsourcing their accountancy



“

Without the right resourcing – people and skills we are seeing a growth in demands for outsourced activity

and bookkeeping activity because of their resource and skill challenges – client account and banking standards and regulations.

Too many firms are struggling at the moment over their financial security and availability of finance. Not always the best responses from banks even when clients who are under pressure themselves. It is hard to demand the right relationships without the right data available but it can be made to work. A more open relationship needs to be put in place with Banks or changes made. Quite a few banks are complaining about accounts performance in some firms.

A process for Proactive Monthly Management is needed. The right personnel in the Operations Board that meets monthly with the boss, legal department heads, finance head, marketing head, HR head and IT head. Even smaller firms have the legal department leaders but may be short of advice in the staff functions. This is increasingly available with the changing environment. Just one or two days a month could be useful.

This should cover Billing, Gross Profit,

chargeable time, lock up, headcount, matter starts, complaints, business development and needs from other departments.

This needs to be accompanied monthly by fee earners giving confirmation of existing files and likely billing in time – this makes the forecast that much more acceptable and focuses minds on getting the job done.

Without the right resourcing – people and skills we are seeing a growth in demands for outsourced activity.

Resourcing

Accounting covered above,

Legal expertise and resource are a need and many smaller firms need to be able to access additional skills to meet client needs. This is becoming more available with the large number of lawyers wanting to remain independent. There are half a dozen businesses offering this sort of access now. This can also be an activity peaks and troughs resolution as client demands fluctuate but generally get stronger.

More firms are getting their document production done through outsourcing – all types including case files but also, transcription – there is no excuse for delays in document production (backlogs) and a 24 x7 service is needed to meet client and file demands.

Telephone answering and web interface management also a challenge for the right level of service.

Continued on page 90



Staff retention and development is also key

Whether we like it or not the management and staff at law firms have to step up to meet challenges plus seek and win opportunities to successfully operate their business – image, client satisfaction, personal satisfaction and financial survival and returns. There are lots of personal and personnel development actions to take place along with managing the right sources of aid.

It is essential that firms retain and develop key personnel and that needs a programme from the time applicant – communication skills, intellectual skills, management skills, motivation – the right ones needed for the job role and the expectations going forward. Early awareness of shortcomings can be handled through positive development, regular communication with team leaders and personnel development programmes. The internal appraisal system needs to be up to this – an HR requirement or the right sort of advisory.

It is also important that the firm can demonstrate a positive policy for diversity and equality – not just for recruitment but also client attraction and provide regular and effective communication with certainly the younger generation to cut the current desire of 65% of them to leave their current firms as soon as they can.

For recruitment there needs to be a very clear job specification but also a candidate profile covering required communication skills, intellectual skill, management skills (people and/or projects), motivation, and emotional factors. Applies to current staff in roles too. This can also be used for identifying coaching, training and development of existing staff

Outsourcing needs to be considered – skill levels and sensible costing, delivery and saved space in offices.

Business Strategy/Role and commitment of Partners

It is very important that there is clarity about the potential and futures of the key personnel. An open disclosure is very important from everyone in terms of their drive, likes and dislikes in terms of the job role and performance plus their ambitions and future plans including retirement. Whether they want to maintain functional performance or enhance management commitment, client relationships, business development. It makes succession planning, the right resource planning so much easier.

For the firm's strategy a review methodology is needed to establish the current status of performance. Current dimensions and scope – staffing levels by type, office locations, fee income, gross profit, major clients then a vision of where this is desired to be in three years' time – demonstrating growth objectives, locations, work types, GP, client expectations (new or current developed), risk and support needs – BD, HR, IT, Finance

Year one will likely become the budget but that needs regular assessment with monthly trends and performance and perpetual forecasting. The right personnel on the strategic board need to meet at least once per quarter

Private Client Activity

A major opportunity to enhance client relationship and use the database for added value revenue and profitability whilst enhancing client relationships and image.

“

Many firms over the last few years – lockdown plus – have not marketed or even put considerations on their web sites

It is estimated that 50% of the adult population has not got a Will – and that's without LPA considerations – plus really serious advice needed on IHT, finance availability and family protection in an efficient way. Production of a Will and LPA is not just a document production exercise – those other skills need to be considered or clients will be claiming poor performance.

Many firms have a Will Bank in various states of credibility and accurate data that could be effectively used. So many law firm clients on their databases could now be dead but there will be many that need to update their Wills – changing beneficiaries but also unaware because of lack of communication as where some changes are essential.

Where law firms bother to contact their Will base clients there is about a 20% requirement to do an update which is cost effective generation of business – revenue and GP for the law firm plus a potential referrer.

This means that a law firms Will Bank is a valuable asset in terms of potential revenue and profit but also as an asset that is valuable so saleable and with asset value if the firm wants to be involved in a M&A.

Law firms should have it on their activity

lists to regularly contact their client base with information of legislation changes and the ability to have the right beneficiaries. It is a minimum expectation from a client and potential referrer to friends, family and neighbours. Many firms over the last few years – lockdown plus – have not marketed or even put considerations on their web sites. Many clients have walked because of this.

Brand and Image/ Client relationships/ Communication and Information

Further research and experience from the sector tells me that every firm should have a strategy in place for finding and converting the right prospects, to developing existing clients for broader and repeat business. Every legal department needs a plan and utter commitment by all staff to achieving this and demonstrating the right profile as well as the highest performance doing the job. All clients are demanding much easier and effective communication with their lawyers (42% not at all impressed at the moment). Dissatisfied clients do pass on their feelings about firms to their friends and networks. They can also pass on positive news.

All staff from every department need to enhance their client communication and empathy whether it is answering the phone, walking past them in the corridor, seeing them in reception, getting the business development communication right, the firm's brand and image from a client benefit perspective to social conscience and community contribution – not only are clients impacted by this but also 65% of younger skilled people within the firm looking to leave.

Continued on page 92



It is really useful for any business to make people aware of a potential client life cycle. Moving people from being a Suspect to a Prospect to a First Time Client, to a Repeat Client to a Loyal Client, to a Referrer and Advocate – needs to be in everyone’s minds

The firm needs to be aware by work-type which clients fall into each category and to have a plan to move them forward to the next stage and the right people in the firm allocated the challenge.

Product Marketing Plan

There should be a product marketing plan in place for every legal department as well as the overall firm. Without one of these before business development plans and commitments – things can be more costly and less effective. Low hanging fruit for the greatest return is essential – short, medium and long term.

Is there clarity of products and services offered, benefits for potential clients, the targeted population and the best route to it. A simple process but it cuts the cost of marketing and enhances conversions.

Firm Brand and Image

This needs to be covered in detail. Potential clients are looking for skills, performance, communication and empathy. So, what is our planned branding and how are we going about it – web sites, networking and what makes us different to our competitors. It is not just about a pretty website or ego.

Security/IT/PMS/CMS – immediate and strategic

After the multiple acquisitions of UK PMS/CMS suppliers there has been a major stand off and lack of clarity on the way

forward with these products. There are new suppliers – mainly from overseas.

All firms need open conversations with their existing PMS/CMS suppliers and make a decision to wait or move. With many of the current systems there is limited availability form delivery of essential added values – such as client communication, workflow to ensure compliance and forecasting of working capital.

There has been a number of failings in IT infrastructure that has had a serious impact on technology availability and security. Firms need a realistic IT infrastructure for now and going forward.

Law firms need to get an audit undertaken of their IT infrastructure. Whether in house and/or managed services/hosted. Not all suppliers are being as open as they could be. There are many firms now being contacted about getting an audit done of their hosted environment - Health check expectations – IT in line with business strategy, paying too much? Potential changes to infrastructure to save money and underwriting security, compliance, fraud protection and vulnerability. Needs to be on the management list.

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

CLICK FOR MORE INFO

ARE YOUR SONS
& DAUGHTERS...

...READY FOR
NEW YORK?

CAMP
NEW
YORK



APPLY NOW FOR SUMMER 2025

Let **CAMP NEW YORK** help them prepare for New York in 2025, and have:

- A summer camp placement in the New York State area
- Minimum \$2,000 salary
- A life enhancing experience – and great for their CV
- Preferred age range 18–28 years
- Full guidance and support from some of the best professionals in the business



WATCH THE VIDEO!

CLICK HERE TO APPLY NOW
CAMPNEWYORK.ORG

Legal Costs Update



By **Nick McDonnell** (left) and **Colin Campbell** (right)

Here, in **Kain Knight Costs Lawyers'** regular monthly legal costs update, we focus on those cases which we believe are likely to have a practical relevance for its members. We welcome feedback and if there is an area, topic or case you would like us to address, please let us know.

We start the new year with another Supreme Court judgment involving costs which was delivered just before Christmas. In *Hirachand v Hirachand* [2024] UKSC 43, Lord Richards held that the Court of Appeal (see [2021] Costs LR 1243) had been wrong to include in a substantive award of £138,918 for reasonable financial provision under the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependents) Act 1975, an allowance of £16,750 for a success fee payable under a party's conditional fee agreement (CFA) with her solicitors. Claims under the 1975 Act were civil proceedings subject to the Civil Procedure Rules, even if brought in the Family Division of the High Court (see CPR r 57.15). That meant that in a usual case, the losing party paid the successful party's costs. If the court ordered the claimant's costs to be paid by an unsuccessful defendant, it would make a nonsense of the rules about costs if the successful party could recover by way of the substantive award, the amount by which the assessed costs fell short of the costs payable on a solicitor and client basis by including the success fee. In addition, the provisions of Part 36 would be virtually unworkable in accordance with their purpose of achieving settlements, if success fees were recoverable as part of the judgment sum. Accordingly, the Supreme Court held that the Court of Appeal had erred in including the success fee in the substantive award, so its decision was reversed.

Next a lesson in indemnity basis costs involving the founder of EasyJet, Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou. In *Easygroup Ltd v Easyfundraising Ltd* [2024] EWHC 3210 (Ch), Fancourt J was required to decide whether the costs of the claim and counterclaim ordered to be paid by the claimant to the defendants, should be assessed in detail on the standard basis or on the indemnity basis. What he was concerned with was whether or not the claimant had conducted its claim in an unreasonable way, which was not the ordinary way of conducting proceedings of the type in question: in doing so, he recognised that in such proceedings, there was often a degree of strength of feeling on one side or the other, or both sides, which meant that the litigation was very hard fought in commercial terms. In support of the application for indemnity basis costs, the defendants advanced eight examples of "conduct out of the norm". Not all succeeded, but overall Fancourt J was satisfied that the claimant's conduct of the litigation (that of Sir Stelios included) had been unreasonable, including pursuing weak arguments, bullying and intimidatory behaviour, and putting the defendants to significant expense. An indemnity basis costs order was appropriate.

Next summary assessment versus detailed assessment. In *Ferko v Ealing Magistrates Court* [2024] EWHC 3297 (Admin), the appellant had succeeded on all issues in a

contested appeal against a decision of the Magistrates that there was no case for the landlord respondents to answer under s.82 Environment Protection Act 1982. Sweeting J, had to decide whether there should be a summary or detailed assessment of the appellant's costs. He held that a summary assessment was appropriate as the hearing had not exceeded one day and in doing so, the proportionality of those costs was not simply about reducing the amount claimed to the lowest possible figure. The court needed to strike a balance to ensure that the receiving party was properly compensated for reasonable costs, but also that the paying party be protected from excessive and disproportionate costs. Sweeting J reduced the overall sum claimed in respect of an application to amend pleadings by 20% (to £13,521.6), and the overall sum claimed for the substantive hearing by one third (to £24,893.22).

Next, albeit not at High Court Judge level, a useful resume of the principles to apply when the court is dealing with an application to disapply the usual principles which apply when a party discontinues an action under CPR 38. In *Trappit SA v GBT Travel Services UK Ltd* [2024] EWHC 3285 (Ch), Chief Master Shuman upheld the default position under CPR 38.6(1) that claimants were liable for the defendant's costs incurred up to the date of discontinuance of proceedings. The allegation that the defendants had delayed disclosure of a source code did not justify disapplying the presumption. The Master found that the claimants could have sought earlier disclosure. Costs were ordered on the standard basis, with the litigation not being sufficiently "out of the norm" to warrant indemnity costs.

Finally, the New Year would not be complete without a judgment given by the circuit judge (sitting as a High Court Judge) who would surely win a prize for sending more judgments to National Archives than anyone else. In *Packer v Packer* [2025] EWHC 27 (Ch), HHJ Matthews had to decide who should pay the costs consequential upon the claimant's decision to amend the Reply in order to withdraw an allegation of fraud in contested probate proceedings. The offending pleading had said "It is the claimant's position that the Alleged Wills have been fraudulently created by the Defendant". It was the defendant's case that there should be an order for costs, not only the immediate costs of dealing with the application, but also at least a proportion of the costs already expended in meeting the allegation of fraud which had now been withdrawn. That submission failed. There was no good reason not to apply the general rule for the costs of and occasioned by the application to be paid by the party amending (to be summarily assessed), but excluding any proportion of the costs already incurred in the litigation by the defendant in responding to the now abandoned allegation of fraud. That was a question to be dealt with, if at all, at the end of the trial.

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

Supporting solicitors at every step:

How our partners are here for you



Supporting solicitors at every step: How our partners are here for you

As a solicitor, you're always helping others, but when you need support, The Solicitors' Charity is here for you.

We understand the challenges solicitors face, whether they be emotional, physical, professional, or financial. That's why we've partnered with trusted organisations to offer wellbeing support when you need it most.

Compassionate support when you need it



Emotional wellbeing

Mental health struggles affect many solicitors each year, and we're here to help. Through our partners [LawSight](#) and [Onebright](#), we offer fast access to clinical assessments, therapy sessions, and tailored support to help you through difficult times. Partner, [LawCare](#), offers confidential support specifically designed for legal

“

Mental health struggles affect many solicitors each year, and we're here to help

professionals. Their trained staff provide a safe space to discuss your feelings without judgement.

Support for health and mobility

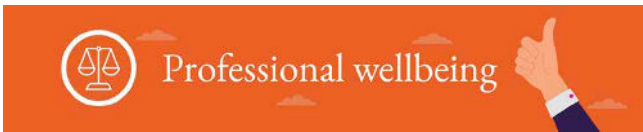


Physical wellbeing

Managing physical illness or disability can impact your work and home life. Our partners, [The OT Practice](#) and selected physiotherapy services, provide occupational health assessments, mobility aids, and therapy to support you in your daily life and career.



Navigating career ups and downs



If you're facing career challenges or considering a transition, The Solicitors' Charity is here to guide you. Our partnership with [Renovo – The Outplacement Specialists](#), means that we fund personalised coaching for career changes and returning to work after a break.

Assistance in times of need



Financial challenges can affect anyone – whether it's job loss, bereavement, or

urgent expenses, our partners: [PennySmart](#) and [Citizens Advice Manchester](#) provide personalised financial guidance, advice on money management and benefits eligibility. Subject to financial eligibility, grants may also be available to qualifying clients.

Take the first step towards getting help

The Solicitors' Charity and our partners are dedicated to supporting you in every aspect of your wellbeing. Whether it's emotional, physical, professional, or financial, we're here to help. It's okay to ask for help, and we're here to support you in getting back on track.

Get Help Now: thesolicitorscharity.org/supporting-you

Click for more info

MANDERSTAM INTERNATIONAL GROUP

CONSULTING ENGINEERS IN PROCESS & INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING



Founded in 1941

EXPERT WITNESSES FOR:

- Mechanical & Process Engineering
- Manufacturing Industries
- Oil & Gas Industries
- Petrochemicals & Chemicals
- Fertilizers & Pesticides
- Metallurgical Industries
- Safety & Environmental



www.mandertsam.com



PLumley@Manderstam.com



020 7730 9224



020 7823 3056

10 Greycoat Place, Westminster, London, SW1P 1SB



Pet of the Month

Name: Rachel Bird

Firm: Aequitas Legal

Pet Name: Lola

Pet Nickname: Foodles – Cross between a Fox and a Doodle

What kind of pet do you have? Dog - Labradoodle

Is your pet: Female

How old is your pet: 3

Favourite Toy: Mummy's Ugg Slippers

Favourite Activity: Long forest walks, starring in mummy's Tik Tok videos and playing ball

Favourite Treat: Bacon Whirlers

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

My perfect day would be... a long walk in Prestwich Clough, where I can go in all the streams and rivers; mummy says I'm water-mad and should have been a duck. Even my mum comes in if she has her wellies. Then on into the village to visit my favourite pet stores, where they always greet me and give me treats. Next, home to see my brother, Alfie, the cat. He's a bit aloof, but I'm always up to annoy him. Finishing with curling up on the big couch in the evening and watching a movie with Dad while Mum half watches and trawls Vinted looking for bargains.

My favourite thing my parents do is... give me absolute, unconditional love and provide me with loads of yummy snacks. Mummy gets a little crazy sometimes and gets me all hyped up until I do zoomies, much to Dad's dismay. I think he loves it really though.



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!

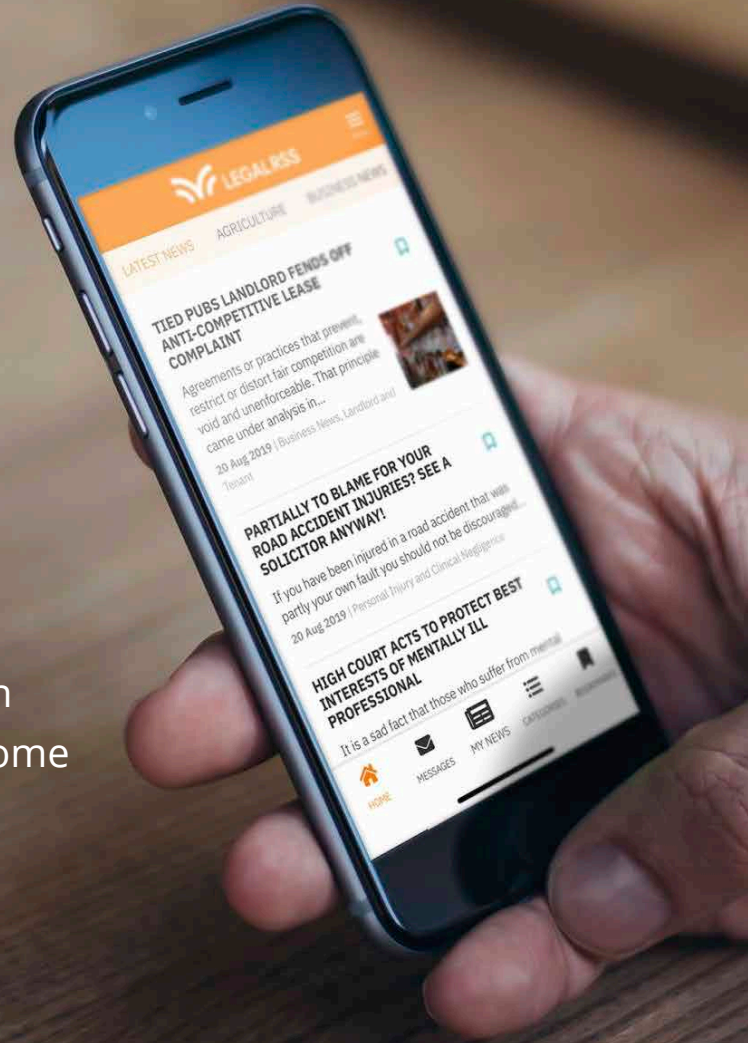
Each month we'll pick a couple of 'Pets of the Month' for the next edition so keep a look out to see if your pet has made it, modelling in *The Messenger* magazine!

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



Legal news content for your website, social media, and your smartphone

LegalRSS supports your client acquisition and retention efforts and helps you become a better and more profitable practice.



Keep up to date with the latest developments in the legal sector by downloading our **free** smartphone app today.



If you have any questions about LegalRSS, we'd love to hear from you.

[CONTACT US](#)

Are **you** missing out?

Networking and referrals with over 4,600 members

An industry sounding board

Lobbying – have your voice heard

Support your local profession and join a committee

Individual and corporate memberships available

Training, development and social events throughout the year

News and insightful updates delivered directly to your inbox and MLS App

Valuable discounts from legal suppliers

Help, advice and support

Out of city members welcomed

Manchester Legal Awards

Promote your successes in our monthly magazine

Together we can make a difference!

Be part of the most vibrant local Law Society in the UK.

For more information on membership visit:

www.manchesterlawsociety.org.uk



Manchester Law Society
Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871