



October 2025

# the Messenger

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## Reintroducing the MLS App

Communities, exclusive offers, and more



The legal world never stands still — and neither do we. That's why we're proud to announce the relaunch of the Manchester Law Society (MLS) App, designed to bring our legal community closer together in a fast, secure, and engaging way.

We've listened to your feedback and continued to develop the app with you in mind. Core features like tailored feeds, legal updates, and private messaging remain at the heart, with new tools and exclusive member only benefits now added to make your membership even more valuable.

And it's never been easier to get the app: simply scan the QR code right here on the cover to download and get started in just two clicks!

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# From the President

Fiona Ledden, President

September has certainly arrived with gusto—roaring winds and dramatic rainstorms have ushered in autumn with undeniable flair. The seasonal shift is unmistakable, not least in the comforting aromas wafting from our favourite coffee shops. Pumpkin spice, cinnamon, and nutmeg are back in full force—deliciously so! If you're looking for a new spot to enjoy your seasonal brew, don't miss this month's Talking Heads for some excellent coffee shop recommendations.

This month, I had the honour of representing Manchester Law Society at the Birmingham President's Dinner, held at the elegant Grand Hotel. It was a truly refined evening, and I was particularly struck by the President's theme: voices being heard.

Actress Sam Beckinsale delivered a powerful after-dinner speech, sharing her personal experience as a survivor of domestic abuse. Now a patron of Broxtowe Women's Project—a charity offering vital support to women, children, and young people affected by domestic abuse—Sam spoke movingly about how her lawyer, Richard Port MBE, President of Birmingham Law Society, had listened to her and helped her reclaim her voice. It was a poignant reminder of the profound impact we can have when we truly listen.

Her story took me back to my early days as an articled clerk, when I represented young women in domestic abuse cases. I was very young myself and lacked a strong mentor at the time. Though I did my best, I often wonder whether I could have done more.

“

While the Town Hall restoration is still ongoing, the return of celebratory stalls and rides is lifting spirits across the city.

Domestic abuse remains a devastating issue, and violence against women and girls in any form is a blight on our society. As legal professionals and as human beings, we have a duty to listen, to act, and to advocate for zero tolerance. We must continue to work towards a society where everyone feels safe and heard.

On a lighter note, I'm delighted to share some festive news. For the first time in several years, the Civic Offices are buzzing with excitement as Manchester prepares to welcome back the Christmas Markets and fairground attractions to Albert Square! While the Town Hall restoration is still ongoing, the return of celebratory stalls and rides is lifting spirits across the city. A small Ferris wheel will be among the attractions, and I hope you'll have the chance to enjoy the festivities with your loved ones. The markets open on 7th November and will run until 4th January—I look forward to seeing many of you there.

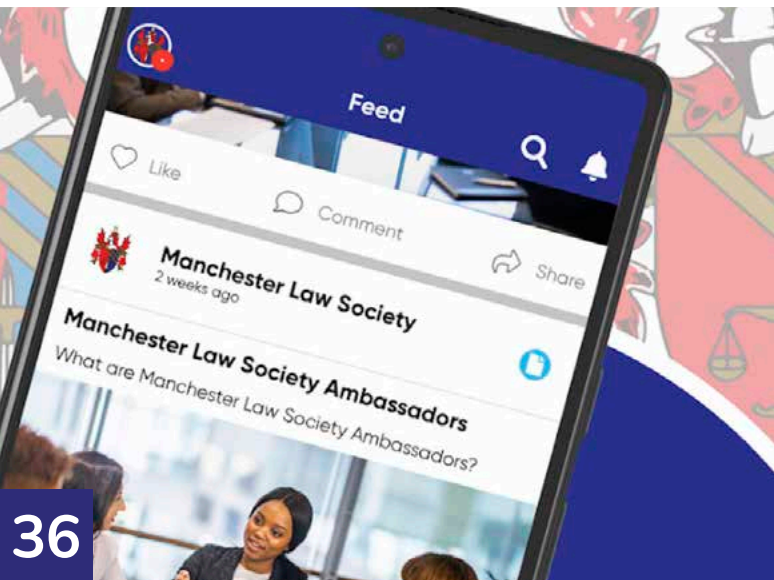
**Warm wishes,  
Fiona Ledden  
President, Manchester Law Society**

# the Messenger



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### Manchester Law Society

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# Past Presidents' Lunch

Former Manchester Law Society President Roger Pannone was among a number of local solicitors who were invited to lunch at the prestigious Law Society Hall in Chancery Lane this month. As part of its 200th anniversary celebrations, the Law Society held a lunch for its Past Presidents. The Society was first established in 1825, when a group of practitioners in London formed "The Society of Attorneys, Solicitors, Proctors and others not being Barristers practising in the Courts of Law and Equity of the United Kingdom.

In 1903, the Society obtained a new Royal Charter and changed its name to a somewhat more manageable "The Law Society" The Society now represents and regulates, via the Solicitors Regulation Authority, over 200,000 solicitors worldwide.

Two solicitors, who are still practicing in Bolton, also attended. Ed Nally, a former senior partner of Fieldings Porter, was President of the Society in 2004-5. When he retired from the Council, in 2006, Joe Egan, another Bolton solicitor was elected to replace him as representative for solicitors in Central Lancashire and Northern Greater Manchester. Joe served as President in 2017-18.

The tube strike not only meant that a number of past presidents were unable to attend but also caused lengthy traffic delays. Joe Egan said "Roger, Ed and I shared a taxi back to Euston with David Ward from Carlisle. It took probably twice as long as usual but meant that Roger was able to entertain us with tales from his long and illustrious career".



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— HALL —

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# Festive Party Nights

*Viva*  
**LAS VEGAS**

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November

*A Gatsby*  
**Christmas**

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December

*A NIGHT ON*  
**BROADWAY**

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December

Arrival Drink | Canapés | 2 Course Dinner



# How PEXA Fits into the UK Conveyancing Ecosystem: **BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN COMPLETIONS**

Every conveyancer knows the pressures of completion day. The phones ring nonstop, clients grow anxious, and conveyancers are left juggling uncertainties around funds and paperwork. For too long, the process has been defined by a lack of transparency, reliance on manual checks, and the constant risk of last-minute fall-throughs.

PEXA - the world's first digital property settlement platform - has set out to help change that.

## **A proven solution, now in the UK**

In Australia, PEXA has revolutionised the way property transactions are managed. Handling more than 90% of all settlements nationwide, it has digitised and standardised the entire settlement and lodgement process, giving conveyancers greater visibility and clients greater confidence.

Now, PEXA has launched in the UK, bringing with it the potential to modernise one of the most critical parts of the conveyancing process. For conveyancers, it offers efficiency, security, and reassurance in equal measure.

## **Streamlining the process**

At its core, PEXA integrates directly with HM Land Registry and the Bank of England. That means digital lodgement and settlement can happen in one place - reducing duplication, delays, and errors. Conveyancers can spend less time chasing paperwork and more time focusing on delivering their expert legal advice to clients, which is why they got into the profession in the first place.

## **Confidence in completions**

Few moments in conveyancing cause as much stress as wondering whether funds will clear or documentation will be lodged on time. PEXA provides real time visibility across that process, reducing uncertainty and helping prevent last-minute fall-throughs. For clients, that means peace of mind. For conveyancers, it means fewer sleepless nights and a greater sense of control.

## **Support from the industry**

PEXA's UK roll-out is already building momentum across a range of institutions. NatWest has confirmed that it will adopt the platform for remortgages from 2026, while Hinckley & Rugby Building Society has been among the first to utilise the technology.

Conveyancing firms are also enthusiastic. David Jabbari, Founder and CEO of Muve, commented: ***"Muve is committed to driving innovation in the legal sector, and our collaboration, with PEXA and Hinckley & Rugby***

*on the first UK transactions, aligns perfectly with our mission to deliver cutting-edge solutions for our clients. We are proud to be one of the first firms to work alongside PEXA and look forward to other opportunities to bring the benefits of digital conveyancing to more consumers across the UK"*

## **Enhancing the client experience**

In a competitive market, reputation matters. Smoother completions lead to happier clients - and happier clients lead to referrals. By enabling more reliable and efficient transactions, PEXA helps conveyancers strengthen their relationships and stand out in a crowded market.

## **Built-in security**

The risk of fraud looms large over every transaction. PEXA is built with robust, cutting-edge security to protect both client data and the movement of funds. This gives conveyancers the assurance that their clients' interests are protected at every stage.

## **Preparing for the future**

The property market is changing, and digitisation is accelerating. NatWest's commitment to using PEXA for remortgages from 2026 is a clear sign of industry confidence and momentum. Conveyancers who adopt early won't just enjoy the immediate benefits of efficiency and certainty; they will also be positioning themselves as leaders in a future-ready profession.

Joe Pepper, CEO of PEXA, commented: ***"PEXA is here to work in partnership with conveyancers, not disrupt them. By digitising the settlement and lodgement process, we reduce admin and last-minute uncertainty, freeing up time for conveyancers to focus on what matters most - delivering a smoother, safer client experience."***

## **Building confidence in completions**

Ultimately, PEXA's purpose is to give conveyancers and their clients greater confidence in completions. By creating a digital infrastructure that is transparent, efficient, and secure, it allows the profession to move forward with less risk and greater certainty.

For conveyancers, the opportunity is clear: adopt early, embrace digital settlement, and lead the way in shaping the next chapter of the UK property market. PEXA is here - and ready to support the profession in delivering more reliable outcomes for clients.

Secure.  
Reliable.  
Trusted.

Digital infrastructure where money is exchanged for home ownership, purpose-built for the UK property market.



Confidence in Completions



Scan QR code to find out more



## MLS five-a-side Charity Football Tournament

While the Premier League, Champions League and Carabao Cup were all well under way, Manchester Law Society could only focus on one football competition last month – the MLS 5-a-Side Charity Football Tournament, kindly sponsored by G2 Legal.

We were pleasantly surprised by the sheer amount of interest and eagerness from potential teams to take part – all teams were filled months before the tournament and we had an extensive waiting list of teams, all ready to be subbed on should an opportunity arise. However, our final line-up consisted of: JMW, Freshfields, Bexley Beaumont, Olliers, BTG Advisory, Tuckers, Canford Law, G2 Legal, Burton Copeland, Wilson & Roe and Russell & Russell.

As our second annual tournament, nerves of whether the tournament would even be able to work were replaced with a genuine excitement to see some cross-firm (friendly!) competition. We were all eager to see who would be taking home the MLS 5-a-Side Winners' Cup and this year's Europe

Cup Sportsman's Trophy. Would JMW, the reigning champions, be able to do the double? Were we in for a classic underdog story, a 2005 Champions League Final tale? Only time would tell...

The tournament was also raising money for a cause close to our hearts – [We Love MCR](#) @ , our President's Charity of the Year. We Love MCR do some incredible work in the city, providing financial support to local communities and young people across Manchester, allowing people from some of the most disadvantaged backgrounds achieve their full potential.

Stuart, our Membership and Social Committee Chair and the brain behind our football tournaments, was adamant that he wouldn't play; the stress of being thrown in to last year's 'All Stars' team following a last-minute drop out did not need repeating. We emailed our captains every month to check they were still willing to take part and, more importantly, to assure Stuart that he would only have to step foot on a pitch as JMW's manager.

The coveted trophies!



Bexley Beaumont - winners of the Europa Cup



Our finalists JMW and Wilson &amp; Roe



Our two-times champions JMW!



When we did get a dropout, we quickly rearranged the fixtures as best as we could to avoid the aforementioned repeat of the infamous 'All Stars' team. Though when we told Stuart, he did kindly let us know that he had brought his emergency boots!

The tournament kicked off with a group stage, with three teams in each group playing each other one by one in fifteen-minute games to decide the fixtures for the quarterfinals. Due to the aforementioned dropout, Group 2, made up of Olliers and BTG Advisory, were invited to play one, half-an-hour match to determine the champions of their group. However, during the match, the two teams mutually agreed that the standard 15-minute game would suffice.

With some very impressive scorelines (one match ended up 11 - 0!), the groups stages finished with JMW, BTG Advisory, Canford Law and Wilson & Roe all at the top of their respective groups. The winners of each group would alternate in playing the runners-up of another, while the bottom

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All teams were filled months before the tournament and we had an extensive waiting list of teams

places were able to get some well-deserved rest (and pints!) while waiting for the Sportsman's Round to begin.

The teams battled it out through the quarterfinals, with a few close 2-1 matches during Russell & Russell v. Canford Law and Wilson & Roe v. G2 Legal. However, only four could make it to our semi-finals: JMW, Freshfields, Russell & Russell, and Wilson & Roe.

And there was heartbreak in both of our semi-final matches. In the match between Wilson & Roe and Russell & Russell (we're calling it the battle of the ampersands!),

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From page 13



Freshfields' heartbreak



G2 Legal's team

Russell & Russell were narrowly knocked out by just a one goal deficit, and Wilson & Roe's 2-1 victory brought them to the final.

The JMW v Freshfields semi-final also saw the same heartbreak. While the goal difference was slightly bigger in this match, the latter being sadly knocked out by 5 goals to 1, as you can see from the photos, it was still all too much for some of the Freshfields players.

Simultaneously playing during the finals was the Sportsman's Round, which decided who would be winning the 'Europa Cup', AKA the Sportsman's Trophy. In the running were Tuckers, Bexley Beaumont and Burton Copeland, who were all hungry to take home some silverware.

Following two dramatic matches and despite solid efforts from both Tuckers and Burton Copeland, the two teams realized that Bexley Beaumont, having already won the two previous games, had also won the trophy. However, in good spirits, the firms agreed to fight to the end and have

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Emotions were high as we entered the final, which was battled out between JMW and Wilson & Roe

a 'golden goal' style match to decide the runners-up, which was ultimately won by Burton Copeland.

Emotions were high as we entered the final, which was battled out between JMW and Wilson & Roe. JMW's legs were starting to tire, and they looked over to their colleague and team manager Stuart, who had sworn he would never play in the tournament again, to ask if he would be able to come on as a substitute. The two teams were tied at 2 - 2, which would have resulted in another year of some nail-biting penalties. Unbelievably, Stuart, the newly appointed 'player-manager' scored!



JMW and Olliers with their referee



JMW's player-manager, and goalscorer, Stuart!

The game finished 5 – 2, which meant that JMW were crowned our champions for a second year running. Our commiserations to Wilson & Roe, who played some excellent matches – maybe next year will be your year?

Following the tournament, all teams returned indoors to the bar, with each player given a complimentary drinks token to toast the winners. Lee Traylor, Director at G2 Legal, was given the honour of presenting the trophies to our winners, with Bexley Beaumont receiving the Sportsman's Trophy and JMW, once again, lifting the MLS 5-a-Side Winners' Cup. Many congratulations to you both!

It was such a fun afternoon, and we were so glad to hear our teams enjoyed taking part! We'd like to thank G2 Legal for their invaluable support in making this event happen and helping We Love MCR continue their mission of securing a brighter future for **all** Mancunians.

A huge thank you also goes to the venue, Power League Manchester Central, for providing us with some great referees to make sure the games ran as smoothly as possible (and helped us keep up with the scores!)

Finally, thank you to all those who took part across our twelve teams! We appreciate you all being good sports and allowing for some friendly firm competition. You're all winners in our eyes...

We are most definitely already looking at hosting the tournament next year, so make sure to keep an eye out for that as we imagine that spaces will fill up quickly!

In the meantime, why not get involved with our other football-related activities and join our Fantasy Football League? You can join by clicking [here](#) and using the league code 'pgaxcz'. Please just ignore that Team MLS aren't doing their best this season!

[See all the photos from the day by clicking here](#)



## Launch of the new Level 5 Diploma for Senior Associate Paralegals – the first Ofqual regulated Level 5 paralegal qualification

*The National Association of Licensed Paralegals* (NALP) is launching the very first Level 5 paralegal specific qualification to be accredited by Ofqual.

The Level 5 Diploma for Senior Associate Paralegals joins NALP's suite of Ofqual regulated paralegal qualifications including Level 3 Certificate for Paralegal technicians, Level 4 Certificate for Associate Paralegals, and the Level 7 Diploma in Paralegal Practice. (Level 6 will be launched later.)

The Level 5 Diploma for Senior Associate Paralegals, builds on the key foundational subjects required for a career within the legal profession, allowing Learners to go into greater detail and further develop critical thinking skills.

The Level 5 includes the following units: Land Law and Conveyancing; Matrimonial and Civil Partnership Law; Public and EU Law; and Business Law and Practice.

The Level 5 can be studied at a variety of NALP approved Centres, and is offered as remote, blended, or in-person learning. The qualification can be taken over a period of up to two years, with most students qualifying in 12-18 months.

"The new Level 5 Diploma for Senior Associate Paralegals is an important addition to the NALP suite of Ofqual accredited qualifications. By being externally regulated by Ofqual, Learners can be sure that they are studying for a qualification that will truly help them in their paralegal career. Paralegals play



an important role within the legal sector and they deserve to be confident that the qualifications they are taking are of the highest quality, which is why NALP is proud to be the only organisation offering Ofqual regulated paralegal qualifications." said NALP's CEO Chantal Cooke.

Upon successful completion of this Level 5 Diploma for Senior Associate Paralegals, Learners may apply for Senior Associate membership of NALP.

The National Association of Licensed Paralegals (NALP) is a non-profit membership body and the only paralegal body that is recognised as an awarding organisation by Ofqual (the regulator of qualifications in England). Through its Centres around the country, accredited and recognised professional paralegal qualifications are offered for those looking for a career as a paralegal professional.

**For more information, please visit the NALP's website [here](#)**

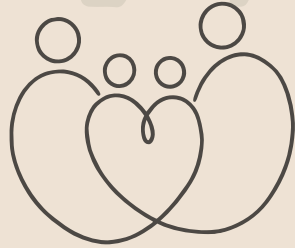
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# FAMILY LAW



*conference*

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## The Solicitors' Charity wins Charity Collaboration of the Year at the ACO Annual Awards 2025

**The Solicitors' Charity** is delighted to announce that it has won Charity Collaboration of the Year at the ACO Annual Awards 2025, for its long-standing partnership with **LawCare**.

The award recognises the two charities' outstanding work in delivering tailored support to the legal community. Since 2012, The Solicitors' Charity has partnered with LawCare, the mental health charity for the UK legal sector, to provide vital emotional wellbeing services including direct support (via phone, email and chat), training, information, research and advocacy.

Through over a decade of collaboration, the two organisations have built a complementary partnership which ensures solicitors can access timely and specialist

support when they need it most. The Solicitors' Charity provides core funding to LawCare, enabling it to deliver frontline services and special projects such as the Life in the Law research.

The ACO Annual Awards celebrate excellence across the charity sector, showcasing the achievements of grant-making and benevolent charities that provide vital financial and wellbeing support. The awards are sponsored by Family Fund Business Services.

Nick Gallagher, CEO of The Solicitors' Charity, said: "We are honoured to receive this prestigious award for our collaboration with LawCare. This recognition highlights the dedication of our team and our valued partner in supporting solicitors



through some of life's most challenging circumstances. Since 2012, we have helped nearly 3,700 solicitors in England and Wales through LawCare.

At The Solicitors' Charity, collaboration is at the heart of what we do, and we are proud to stand alongside LawCare in making a real difference to people's lives."

The judges' feedback was: "This longstanding partnership continues to innovate and modernise the support offered to its beneficiaries, setting the standard for contemporary thinking across the sector."

The Solicitors' Charity's recent [Big Report](#) highlights the scale and impact of its work,

“

This longstanding partnership continues to innovate and modernise the support offered to its beneficiaries

revealing how tailored support is helping solicitors overcome emotional, professional, physical, and financial challenges. This life-changing assistance is only possible thanks to the generosity of donors and the dedication of the charity's case managers.

For more information on how to get involved, please click [here](#).

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## How Marni's and Isabella's Clauses support the Law Society's Climate Change Practice Note

The [Chancery Lane Project](#) (TCLP), launched in 2019, develops climate-conscious legal drafting. Its clauses are now widely adopted, helping to reduce emissions and embed environmental responsibility into legal practice. Among the most impactful are Marni's and Isabella's Clauses, which support property lawyers in addressing climate risk.

### Background on TCLP

TCLP was founded to create legal clauses and documents that positively impact climate protection and environmental standards. As these clauses have become widely used, they are making a tangible difference in reducing carbon emissions and improving environmental practices across the legal sector.

### Marni's Clause: commercial focus

One of TCLP's most recognised clauses is Marni's Clause, originally drafted to help property lawyers reference climate risk searches in their reports on title. As the use of climate risk searches has grown, so too has the adoption of Marni's Clause.

In May 2025, the Law Society issued its [Climate Change and Property Practice Note](#), a major development providing property lawyers with clear guidance on addressing climate risks in residential and commercial transactions. The Practice Note includes a section on climate risk searches, suggesting they are a useful tool for understanding climate risks at a basic level. It also provides sample wording for use in reports on title.

Following this development, TCLP updated Marni's Clause to ensure consistency with the Practice Note. TCLP then consulted Robert Lee, Professor of Environmental Law at the University of Birmingham and Simon Boyle, Environmental Law Director at Landmark Information, who had both contributed to the drafting of the Practice Note.

The two main objectives were:

1. To ensure Marni's Clause aligned fully with the Practice Note.
2. To retain its relevance by offering more than just a repetition of the sample wording.

### Isabella's Clause: residential focus

To complement Marni's Clause, TCLP introduced Isabella's Clause, tailored specifically for residential properties. This clause provides additional detail and helps lawyers draft their reports on title more efficiently, enabling clients to better understand the climate risks identified in searches.

### Alignment with the Law Society Practice Note

The Practice Note marked a significant step forward in guiding property lawyers on how to address climate risks. It recommends climate risk searches as a useful starting point and includes sample wording for reports on title. Marni's and Isabella's Clauses were updated to align with this guidance while offering enhanced detail beyond the sample wording, making them practical tools for legal professionals.

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The Practice Note marked a significant step forward in guiding property lawyers on how to address climate risks

### Conclusion: practical use and future outlook

Landmark hopes that both Marni's Clause and Isabella's Clause will be widely adopted by property lawyers. Their additional detail supports effective drafting and helps clients understand any climate change risks identified in searches. As climate risk becomes a standard consideration in property transactions, these clauses will empower lawyers to advise clients with clarity and confidence.

### Landmark's role in shaping the Law Society's guidance

Members of Landmark's Sustainability Team played a key role in the development of the Practice Note. Robert Lee and Simon Boyle were both contributors to the Practice Note and co-authors of the accompanying Technical Note. Their insights helped ensure the Practice Note guidance is both practical and proportionate. For further guidance, explore Landmarks essential resource on navigating the practice note [here](#) .

Their reports are backed by in-house expertise, and their dedicated sustainability team is always on hand to help interpret findings and support your conversations with clients.

## How Marni's and Isabella's Clauses Support the Law Society's Climate Change Practice Note.



Alternatively, find out more about their market-leading [Climate Change Risk Management Services](#) , [Climate Change Reports](#) and [Sustainability Training Services](#) . Or, if you have any climate change queries, please contact Landmark's customer service team on 0330 036 6619.

### Want to deepen your expertise?

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## Nominations now open for the Greater Manchester Pro Bono Awards

We are pleased to notify you of the Second Annual Greater Manchester Pro Bono Awards, taking place on Thursday 6th November 2025, from 5 PM to 7pm, at the Manchester Civil Justice Centre (1 Bridge Street West, Manchester, M60 9DJ).

This event will celebrate the exceptional contributions of individuals and organisations to pro bono work across Greater Manchester. It offers an opportunity to recognise and honour those who have demonstrated a deep commitment to access to justice and community service.

The [Greater Manchester Pro Bono Committee](#) are now welcoming nominations for individuals, teams, and organisations who have made a significant impact through pro bono work. Submissions should be made via Microsoft Forms using the following link: [Greater Manchester Pro Bono Award Nomination Form](#)

Please submit one form per nomination. **The deadline for submissions is 9:00 AM on Monday 6th October 2025.**



The awards ceremony is supported by the Committee and the Judiciary, with presentations made by senior members of both, and other key stakeholders.

### Award Categories:

- Chambers of the Year
- Chambers Individual of the Year
- Law Firm of the Year
- Law Firm Individual of the Year
- Junior Lawyer of the Year
- Charity/Frontline Agency of the Year
- Educational Institution of the Year
- Student Contribution of the Year
- In-House Contribution of the Year

You can find more information on each award by clicking [here](#)

Best of luck in your application!

## 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](mailto: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.

November 2025    24/10/2025

January 2026    12/12/2025

December 2025    21/11/2025





x *PotentialUnearthed*  
Personal Development

# PROACTIVELY MANAGING CHANGE TRAINING DAY

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## Private Client Conference 2025

On 18th September, we welcomed back a staple in our legal education calendar – the Private Client Conference. The annual event meets to discuss and advise on the most recent updates in Private Client law, providing peers with practical support and guidance.

This year's conference was perhaps more important than ever, as it was our first event since the 2024 Autumn budget and the subsequent significant changes to the sector. The budget caused major change to Private Client law, with legislative changes to residence and domicile, inheritance tax and more. Our speakers used their years of experience and expertise to explain the impact of these changes, and the best ways to operate considering them.

Following a warm welcome from newly appointed Private Client Committee Chair Nicole Chadwick, Legal Director at Harrison Drury, the conference began with the opening session 'Long Residence and Domicile Changes' from Paul Davies,

Partner at Clarke Willmott. Paul discussed the move from domicile basis to the new 'long term resident' basis, and how this affects inheritance tax. Focusing on the impacts on income and capital gains tax, Paul also examined the abolishment of the remittance basis, now replaced by the foreign income and gains regime (FIG), with examples of how this new system impacts trusts, estates and other assets.

After some refreshments and networking, we were then joined by Steven Appleton, Partner and Head of Private Client at Brabners' Manchester office. Steven's session focused on the budget's impact on business owners and how best to advise their planning following the legislative changes. The focus was on the changes to inheritance tax, how this could affect clients' Will planning, and how to utilise funding on business property. Steven also shared some useful lifetime planning opportunities on offer to clients, such as deed of variation or transferring shares.

Paul Davies session



Taking a break from the Private Client world, we also heard from Peter Abbott from Manchester Mind, who delivered a wellbeing session on stress management. Peter focused on identifying a healthy balance between pressure and stress, recognising the potential benefits of pressurised situations while also acknowledging the detriments of when high-energised pressure turns into overwhelming stress.

After a delicious lunch, we gathered back in the room to hear from Nick Nesbitt, Partner at Forvis Mazars, discuss pension changes following the budget. Nick provided attendees with an overview of the most recent tax changes and the current rules regarding estate administration, before detailing a number of pension planning

strategies, such as annuitisation. To help attendees better understand each strategy, Nick used client case studies, outlining their estate and observing the new planning opportunities available in each example.

Closing the conference was a panel discussion, joined by Rebecca Clarke, Partner, Clarke Willmott as well as by our Chair Nicole Chadwick. During the panel, our speakers and attendees discussed budget predictions, the Standish case's impact on tax planning advice, as well as the use of AI in Manchester firms and how the technology might affect them in the future.

Continued on page 26

[Click for more info](#)

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## From page 25

Speaking on the conference, Nicole Chadwick said: "It was great to see so many people from so many different firms at the event – it was invaluable opportunity to see how everyone else is dealing with the upcoming budget changes and get some really practical advice from our speakers."

It was a really informative day, and we are so pleased with the amount of positive feedback we received in the days following the conference. Now, the Private Client

sector looks to the next budget, scheduled to be announced next month!

Want to keep up to date with the next conference and continue to learn in between? Why not join our [Private Client Committee](#) and take part in regular meetups to discuss, debate, and network! For more information on how to join, please email [enquiries@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk)

Nick Nesbitt session



Manchester Mind session





# How to Stop the Clock: Smart Strategies for Busy Legal Professionals

As the clocks go back at the end of the month, many of us welcome the “extra hour” that daylight savings gifts us. But let’s be honest - how quickly does that extra time disappear? The real challenge isn’t finding more hours, it’s making the most of the ones we already have.

Here are some practical strategies to help legal professionals take control of their time this autumn:

## 1. Prioritise Deep Work

Court bundles, contracts, and advice notes all require focus. Instead of trying to juggle multiple matters at once, block out short periods for concentrated work - even half an hour without interruptions can drive real progress.

## 2. Delegate and Outsource

Typing, formatting, and preparing e-bundles are vital but time-intensive. By outsourcing these tasks to trusted partners, you free up valuable hours for client-facing work and fee-earning activities.

## 3. Protect Your Wellbeing

With shorter days and darker evenings, it’s tempting to keep pushing on. But building in short breaks not only reduces stress, it also improves accuracy - something every lawyer values when deadlines are tight.

## 4. Reset Your Working Habits

Use the clock change as a natural reset point. Ask yourself: which tasks truly need my expertise, and which could be delegated or streamlined? A small change in approach now can give you back far more than an hour each week.

As the legal calendar gears up for a busy season, make sure you’re spending your time where it counts. And if that means letting us handle your document production, typing, or bundle preparation, the **Document Direct** team is here to support you.

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Cheshire &  
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# Common barriers to reaching out for support

At [LawCare](#)®, the mental health charity for people working in the legal sector, we understand that reaching out for support can be very difficult when you are having a hard time. However, it's much better to start a conversation early on rather than waiting; many people who contacted us for support say they wish they had reached out sooner.



“  
It's much better to start a conversation early on rather than waiting

In this article, we've tried to address some common concerns people have about speaking to us, to put your mind at ease. If you need to talk, please do contact us. You might be surprised at the positive impact just talking to someone about what's going on can have.

- **My employer, regulator or professional body will find out**

You don't need to worry; our service is confidential. We won't ask for your roll number or details of your workplace, and you don't have to give your name. You choose how much information you want to give. We are independent of professional bodies and regulators, and nothing beyond statistics is reported to them.

- **The person on the helpline might know me or recognise my voice**

Our volunteers and staff are based all over the UK, so this situation is very unlikely to arise. If, however, it were to happen, you can continue with your call safe in the knowledge that anything you say will be treated with confidence. If you prefer you could leave your details and another member of our team can call you back or you can contact us through our email or online chat service.

- **LawCare won't be able to talk to me because I'm not a solicitor**

We are here to support everyone in the legal sector, from students to people nearing retirement, including solicitors, barristers, advocates, judges, trainees, paralegals, and support staff.



- **My problems aren't bad enough; I know that other people have it much harder**

Your feelings are valid. We are here to listen and offer emotional support. We provide a safe confidential space for you to talk through whatever is on your mind. It is better to contact us when an issue is just starting and to seek support before matters escalate.

- **I don't have a mental illness**

There is no minimum threshold for contacting LawCare. We understand that everyone has physical and mental health, and we firmly believe that both need to be looked after. We want you to know that whether you're having a bad day and just don't feel yourself or if your issue is longer lasting, we're here for you.

- **No one will understand what I'm going through**

All of our volunteers and staff have worked in the law and understand the particular pressures that those working in the profession may experience. We are also able to offer peer support. Our peer supporters have legal practice experience and may have been through difficult times themselves. They can offer ongoing one-to-one support, friendship and mentoring.

- **Talking about it won't help**

People often tell us that they feel better after just one chat with us. Sometimes reaching out and getting a chance to offload to someone who can empathise with what you are going through can be really useful to help get you back on track. Our support staff and volunteers are all trained, they will listen and can help you break down your issues and talk through whatever you want to address, taking it one step at a time.

- **I'm embarrassed. What would others think of me?**

At LawCare we encourage you to practice self-compassion. We suggest thinking about how you would advise friends, family or colleagues if they came to you with a similar problem. Would you judge them? The answer is usually that you would offer support and wouldn't judge. Please don't hesitate to seek the support you'd encourage others to get.

- **I'm so overwhelmed, I might get upset**

Please don't worry, this isn't uncommon and no one will judge you. If you need to take a moment to compose yourself our team will give you that time, there is no rush and there will be no time limit. If you think writing down your feelings would be helpful, you may prefer to contact us through our support email or online chat."

It takes courage to reach out, seek support and share what you are going through. If you feel ready, please contact our helpline on 0800 279 6888, email [support@lawcare.org.uk](mailto:support@lawcare.org.uk) or use our live online chat [here](#) . Our website also offers extensive resources on mental health.

*We're here to listen and provide the support you need to thrive, both professionally and personally.*

## Managing change – don't be like Colin

Colin was quite impulsive – so much so that on some days he would wear his Wednesday socks on a Thursday. It wasn't only his socks that bore the brunt of his impulsiveness, Colin was the same at work too, especially when it came to leading change within his team.

Colin's team were going through lots of change recently – changes in processes, people, and procedures. It was never ending. One evening, over his bedtime Ovaltine, Colin had a great idea.

He legged it into work the next day, bought everyone a frothy coffee and told them about his ground-breaking idea for driving change. He nodded politely at those who expressed concerns, ignored those who were the even slightest bit reluctant and told a few others who had ideas of their own that he would "Look into it pronto". Which of course he never would.

Colin pressed on with his plans (– and only his plans). Five weeks later he was found licking his wounds over a Lion Bar in the canteen. Not surprisingly, Colin's plans had failed miserably. He hadn't listened to his team. He hadn't got their buy-in for the changes he had imposed; he simply hadn't got them all on board.

If you're planning a change, make sure you ask yourself the following questions:

- Have you got buy-in for the change from your entire team? If not, how can you get everyone engaged and passionate enough to share their ideas and concerns.
- Who in your team are most likely to resist the change? Why? What can you do to help them?



Mike Ode

- Do your team feel uncertain about the change? What can you do to ease their uncertainty?
- What challenges might you face in attempting to make the change a success? How do you intend to overcome such challenges?
- Whose help do you need to enlist to ensure that the change is a success? How do you intend to get everyone on board?

Employees have a voice. They want to air their thoughts and opinions. They most probably have some great ideas. In my opinion, the manager must create a culture where people can speak up. A culture where they can challenge the status quo without fear. Only then will employees feel like they have been heard and as a result will most likely buy into change. Shackling employees only leads to a lack of trust and resentment. Basically, don't do a Colin!

Do you want to learn more about Managing Change? Join me on my free webinar on the 3rd October. Find out more [here](#) @



x *PotentialUnearthed*  
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# PROACTIVELY MANAGING CHANGE WEBINAR






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# Regulation Update & News

By **Andrea Cohen**, Compli, Weightmans



Welcome to **Compli's** monthly round-up of developments and updates from the regulatory sector, and an overview of recent disciplinary decisions. After reporting last month on the hive of activity in the world of risk and compliance, this month has been a little quieter, but with the recent Law Society Economic Crime conference (previously the AML conference, indicating the changes in regulation) and the SRA COLP COFA conference on 21 October, we expect a number of announcements over the next few weeks.

## High volume claims...continued

Following the publication of the results of a thematic review into how firms handle high-volume consumer claims on 22 August, and a mandatory declaration sent to around 500 firms which handle such claims, with the information required set out in a long and detailed questionnaire, the SRA has published a discussion paper on 'How can the high-volume consumer claims market work better for consumers?' and is now 'calling for further evidence' on challenges facing consumers as it steps up 'the robust action we are taking to investigate poor practice, and to protect consumers from harm.' The paper refers to a number of areas to consider, including client transparency at sign-up, third-party funding risks and ATE insurance suitability and raised to the possibility of banning the term 'no win, no fee' and enhanced oversight of firms.

Interestingly, the call for evidence comes before the closing date for the declaration submissions on 3 October 2025, and before any analysis of the responses has been undertaken.

If you received the SRA declaration email, which was sent to the COLP but needs to be completed by the managing partner, CEO or equivalent, and have not yet sent/

completed your response, it needs to be submitted by no later than Friday 3 October 2025. The SRA estimates that if you have all the information to hand, it will take up to two hours to complete, but says it may (we anticipate it will) take longer if you have multiple types of consumer claims, referrers, ATE insurers etc. The initial form runs to 121 questions over 16 pages, and the additional forms have between 6 and 25 questions.

Declarations will need to be carefully completed - firms are still being investigated by the SRA for declaring in 2017 that they had a compliant AML firm-wide risk assessment in place at that time.

## Conduct of litigation

The recent High Court decision in *Mazur v Charles Russell Speechlys*, which said that non-authorised employees of law firms can support a solicitor in conducting litigation, but cannot conduct litigation themselves under the supervision of a solicitor, has led to much commentary and speculation in the legal press, LinkedIn etc. Comments have ranged from the decision causing widespread panic and nationwide disruption, particularly in firms dealing with high volume claims who employ a large proportion of non-admitted staff, to firms having to now evidence processes in



the event they are queried at a later date, with the possibility of satellite legislation relating to earlier pleadings. The SRA, who apparently provided advice to the firm that there was not an issue, (the advice being provided by a case worker), and then said it would await the judgment, has come in for criticism for its lack of comment and guidance. The SRA has said it is looking into whether further guidance is needed, but if your firm may be affected, waiting for any such guidance to be produced, rather than considering your processes and taking steps now, may not be the best approach.

### Consultation on holding client funds – SRA’s present position

For those who were concerned that the SRA would remove the ability to have client accounts you can relax... for now. The SRA have written to respondents to its consultation that ran until February 2025 to confirm that, for now, while there is ‘a strong case to properly explore the long-term transformation of the model of holding client money and how the compensation fund is funded’ its immediate focus is on making changes under the current system. A progress report will be published later this year with proposals for further consultation in a number of areas.

### LSB consultation Upholding Professional Ethical Duties – emerging themes and next steps

You may remember that earlier this year the LSB consulted on professional ethics. It is putting its response together and finalising the policy statement, but in the meantime has shared some emerging themes and next steps, including taking an outcomes-

based approach rather than prescribing what regulators must do, to avoid a one size fits all approach; creating a clear definition of ‘professional ethics duties’; recognition of the complexity for legal professionals to balance different professional ethical duties e.g., duties to the client, to act with independence and integrity, and duties to the court to act in the interests of justice, and the importance of continuing education and training on ethics, the current approaches being inadequate. The LSB will set out its response ‘soon’ and how it plans to take this forward.

### Sanctions

The government has published a useful ‘[Starter guide to UK sanctions](#)’<sup>1</sup>. With all law firms coming within scope of the regulations, the guide may be useful to share with employees to raise awareness of what the regulations involve, types of sanctions, how they work, the importance of due diligence and the consequences of breaching/circumventing sanctions. In addition, it has issued a guide on reporting a suspected breach, which you can find [here](#)<sup>2</sup>, and 2 new guides relating to Russia sanctions.

### NCA Suspicious activity reports

The National Crime Agency’s (NCA’s) UK Financial Intelligence Unit has produced six videos to demonstrate best practice, which include:

- Understanding what a SAR is, why to submit one and the glossary codes to use.

Continued on page 34



- Best practice for completing the reason for suspicion, criminal/ terrorist property and prohibited act sections.
- What happens after submitting a defence against money laundering or defence against terrorist.

## New practice notes and guidance

### SRA guidance/news

[Complying with Principle 6 - encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion](#)

### Law Society practice notes

[Residual client balances](#)

[Price and service transparency](#)

[Professional undertakings](#)

[Compliance officers](#)

## Disciplinary and regulatory decisions

A number of decisions and judgments have been reported since our last publication, including:

### AML fines

So far this month, fines totalling over £125,000 have been reported as being imposed on 10 firms for breaches including failure to have documented FWRA between June 2017 and May 2023, having submitted a declaration to the SRA that it had a FWRA in place, and then failed to have an appropriate FWRA from May 2023 to November 2024, failing to have compliant PCPs between June 2017 and May 2025, failing to conduct ongoing monitoring,

including scrutiny of SoF checks. The fines ranged from £3000 to £31,000. In none of the cases was there actual harm or direct loss to clients, or financial gain or any other benefit.

### Struck off for lying to client

A solicitor who told a client an expert's report, which undermined the case, had not been received, to buy herself more time, has been struck off the roll.

### Suspended for editing email

A solicitor who edited an email address to a client to make it look as though it had been sent to the correct address originally has been suspended for a year.

### Struck off for overstating time spent

A solicitor who over-recorded time spent on matters, including 23 hours in one day, saying she struggled to meet time recording targets, has been struck off.

### Struck off after stealing £85,000 from clients

A solicitor who was acting under a lasting power of attorney stole £85,000 from two clients through ATM withdrawals and direct bank transfers to her own account, some of which was used to pay for a holiday, was struck off. She pleaded guilty to fraud by abuse of position and was sentenced to 2 years in prison.

### Suspended for amending email

A 2-year qualified solicitor was suspended for a year after amending an email address in an email with a client. He had used an incorrect email address and when he forwarded her the email to the correct address the following day, he altered the

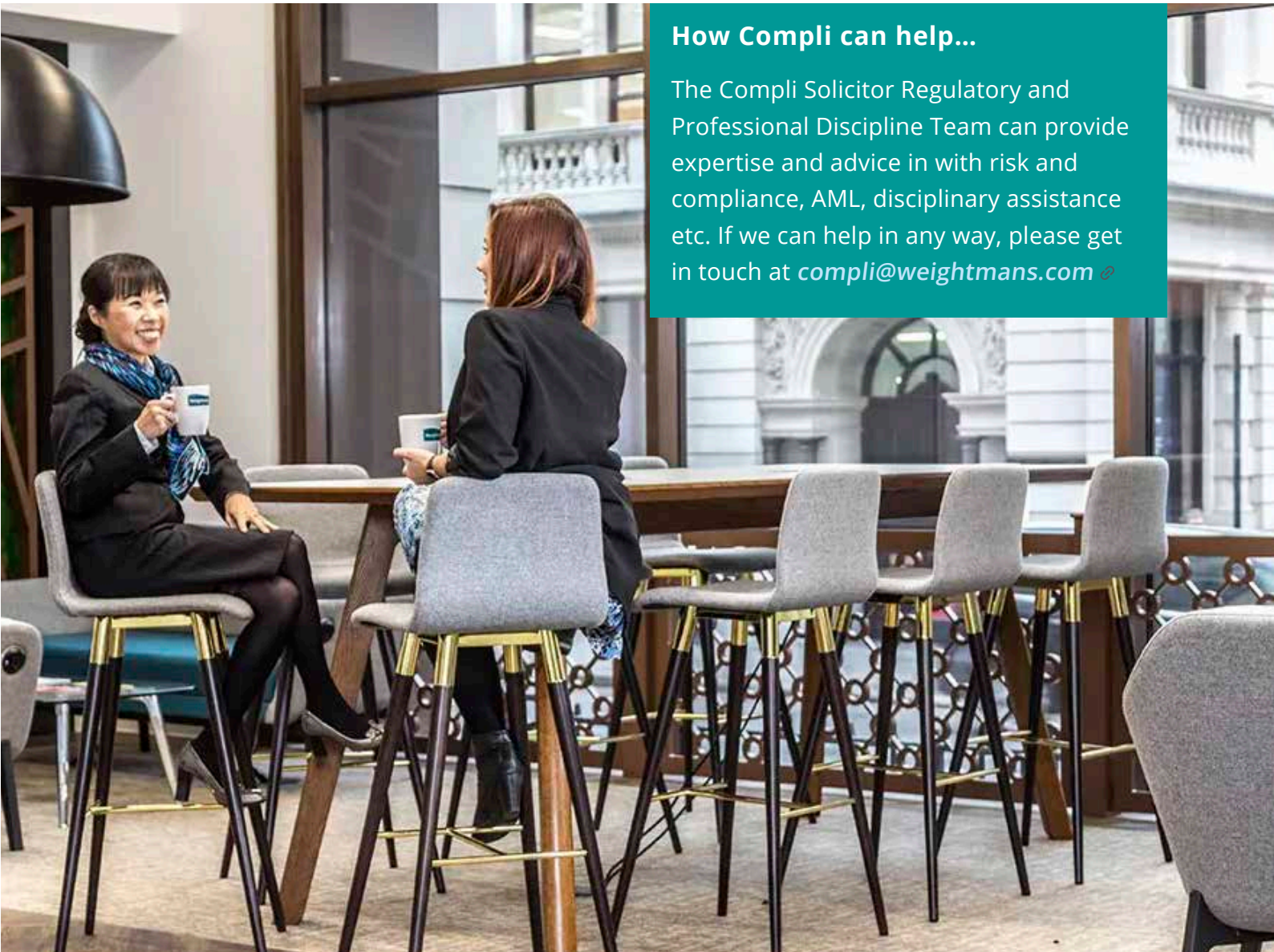
original to make it look as if it had been sent to the correct address, stating 'I understand you've not received the attached'. The SRA accepted that he had acted deliberately but in panic, it was not planned but was a spontaneous reaction to an error and no harm was caused to the client. The SDT accepted it was a 'brief, isolated incident'. He agreed to contribute to the SRA's £12,500 costs.

### Senior partner suspended for backdating letter

A managing partner has been suspended from practice for a year after he admitted backdating a client care letter written in 2023, to 2020. He admitted misconduct, which he said was the result of 'being stressed, overworked and dealing with personal issues'. The SDT did not agree with the initial proposed suspension of 3 months. The SRA and solicitor agreed to 12 months, which was accepted by the SDT. He was also ordered to pay almost £25,000 costs.

### How Compli can help...

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





From p.1

# Reintroducing the MLS App

While professional social networking platforms are no stranger to our members (we see you LinkedIn influencers!) the MLS App provides a space to start conversations, ask questions, and share advice unique to our own local legal community. Whether you're celebrating a new promotion, seeking guidance, or just want to connect with peers, the MLS App makes it easy.

Our mission with the app is to underline our commitment to connecting and engaging with our already vibrant community. The Manchester Law Society is nothing without our members, and we want to ensure

that you are receiving the most out your membership, whether that be continuing your legal education, networking with other legal professionals, or receiving the best deals at venues across the city, both inside and outside your professional life.

## Here's what you can expect when you download it:

### Real-Time Updates

Stay ahead with instant notifications about the latest news, events, and important developments in the legal sector.

### Keeping a Finger on the Pulse of the Manchester Legal Community

Share your news on a streamlined professional platform, focused solely on our regional legal community, to an audience who understands our unique professional world

### Tailored Feeds and Group Chats

From family law to corporate, trainee to partner, you'll see the updates and discussions most relevant to you.

### Private Messaging

Keep the conversations flowing with secure private messaging within your firm, specialism, or wider community

### Exclusive Member Only Benefits

Members can unlock offers directly in the app using their unique digital member card – discover places for business lunches, client meetings, after-work socialising, shopping and more.

While these features have been available since the app's initial launch last year,



“

Our mission with the app is to underline our commitment to connecting and engaging with our already vibrant community.

we have been working hard to add new features, improve existing ones, and, most importantly, listen to the feedback we have received from our membership.

So, what are some of the new features that we've been working on for the relaunch?

### Expanding Exclusive Member Offers

Manchester is currently one of the most exciting cities in the UK with its set of established, well-loved venues being joined by new bars, restaurants, cafes and more opening their doors seemingly almost every week. Team MLS have been busy these past few months, visiting venues and securing the best offers for our members across the city.

Some exclusive member **offers** include:

- **15% off food at [Peter Street Kitchen](#)** ☞ : The stunning in-house restaurant of The Edwardian Manchester, A Radisson Collection Hotel, where members can also get up to 30% off when booking a stay at the grand, four-star hotel
- **10% off ALL personal training programmes at [Absolute Body Solutions](#)** ☞ Their private gym on Peter Street has brought life-changing results to hundreds of clients across Manchester
- **Special room and corporate rates at [Mercure Manchester Piccadilly Hotel](#):** With its central location and variety of spaces/rooms on offer, the Mercure Manchester is perfect for both corporate and personal use

- **Bottomless tea and coffee and discounted lunch deals at [53two](#)** ☞ : An inclusive, brand-new arts bar and theatre dedicated to fostering Manchester's creative spirit through weekly comedy shows, plays and more!

There are also plenty of other deals currently in the works, so please stay tuned and download the app today to be the first to hear about any new offers. Some offers will be time-sensitive, so the earlier you are, the better!

If you have any queries or would like to work with us in any capacity, please contact Fran at [FranEccles-Bech@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:FranEccles-Bech@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk) ☞

### Communities

We are also pleased to announce the new 'Communities' feature – bringing you connection and discussion, both within the legal boundaries and beyond.

While Communities allow you to stay connected to your peers in a professional capacity through dedicated groups based on role or specialism, the feature also serves for the activities and interests found outside the office. Need something new to watch on Netflix? Ask the 'Movies & TV Show Buffs' Community what they've been bingeing recently. Going out for dinner and stuck on where to go? Check in with the 'Restaurant Recs' Community to see what Manchester

Continued on page 38



hidden gem deserves a try. There is truly something for everyone on offer

While some Communities will already be set up for you, such as firm and specialism-specific groups, there will be the opportunity to create your own Communities and connect with peers based on your shared interests.

This feature is currently in the process of being slowly rolled out to selected users, with the intention of making the feature app-wide in the next few weeks. In the meantime, should you have any suggestions on a Community you'd like to see available on the app, please do let us know! Fran is hoping for 'Dog Lovers tips and tricks'!

We are also on the hunt for Community Champions who will ensure that groups remain engaged through consistent conversation, please get in touch for more details.

We're thrilled about the potential of the MLS App and how it can evolve into a key part of your membership experience. With your input, we aim to make it as engaging, useful, and tailored to your needs as possible.

**This is your app — shaped by you, for you.**

Download it today by scanning the QR code opposite, or **clicking here** [@](#) and become part of our fabulous forward-thinking legal community.





Manchester Law Society

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# Scan to access the MLS App and our exclusive member offers

Scan Me



## Instructions:

- 1 Open your phone's camera app.
- 2 Point it at the QR code
- 3 Download the MLS App from the Apple or Play Store
- 4 Log in using your last name and email address

## Where's the best place for coffee in Manchester? What's your coffee order?

### Jillian Josephson Partner Asserson

"Great questions – no day can start without a shot of the best caffeine!

We recently moved to Arkwright House and, although I have to confess to being a diehard Starbucks fan, I have been introduced to the concept of 'iPad coffee'.

I had never ordered coffee on an iPad before, but now have the joy, when in the office, of setting the espresso strength and milk content of my preferred coffee for the day.

This has become a new guilty pleasure! I never realised that creating the constitution of my coffee could be so much fun.



It doesn't have the extra hot or skinny options like Starbucks, but upping the caffeine or lowering the milk is a sure way to make for a fun and energetic day!

You are warmly invited to our office to try this new concept. Once you've tried the experience, there is no going back!"

### Craig Johnson Solicitor Venus Legal

"My fave spot has to be The Bake House in Hazel Grove...It's friendly, warm, always welcoming and most importantly makes great coffee! It's the kind

of spot where a tasty bake pairs perfectly with a much-needed coffee (my excuse anyway!) Whether you're tucked in a corner working away, leafing through a book, or squeezing in a moment before the school run, there's comfort here and a great way to start the

day. For this caffeine-fuelled solicitor (who sometimes cycles to work before all this), my go-to is a giant caramel latte with an extra shot – sweet enough to feel like a treat, strong enough to keep the day rolling!"



CRAIG JOHNSON, SOLICITOR

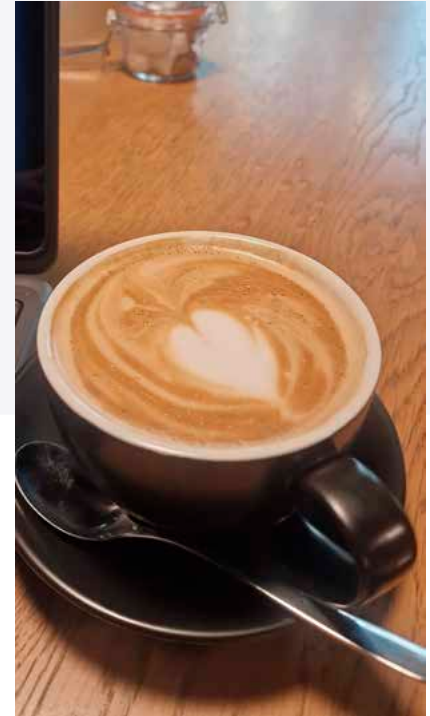




**Nawal Nadeem**  
**Solicitor**  
**Burton Copeland**

"If you're searching for the best coffee in Manchester, Foley's stands out as a true gem. An independent coffee chain exclusive to the city. My go-to order is always a vanilla latte, and it never disappoints. You get the perfect hit of caffeine with just the right amount of sweetness from the vanilla, setting you up perfectly for the busy day ahead. Each cup is carefully crafted, topped with latte

art that makes it feel special every single time. It's not just about the coffee itself, but also the moment it creates, calm, indulgent, and satisfying before the rush of the day begins. For me, a Foley's vanilla latte is the little piece of peace I look forward to each morning in the heart of Manchester. Unfortunately, I do not have a better image that captures some of the beautiful art they create, but here is a fairly old one."



**Helen Hama**  
**Trainee Solicitor**  
**Johnson Law Group**


"The best place to grab coffee has to be Bold Street Coffee. Their cortado is my go-to and has become a lunchtime staple for me. I often bring a colleague along when we want to sit, chat, and unwind. It's just a couple of minutes from the office, which is ideal – especially with Manchester's constant rain."



Check out these recommendations on our map [here](#) and find out which one is nearest to you!"



## Anthony Collins' office move signals a commitment to expansion in the North West

**Anthony Collins**  has reinforced its commitment to the North West by investing in a move to the iconic Ship Canal House on King Street.

Having opened its Manchester office in 2019, this move to the prestigious Grade II-listed, city centre building will provide space for further expansion. The new office will provide a prestigious base for the firm's expanding local team whilst facilitating hybrid working and face-to-face meetings with clients.


As a firm driven by a sense of purpose and a focus on people development, the office move follows in the footsteps of the Birmingham office refurbishment, which brought improvements to both the working environment and technology. In line with its B-Corp status and commitment to sustainability, Ship Canal House provides staff with a high-quality, energy-efficient working environment. The building's EPC "B" rating is supported with upgraded air-



“  
Ship Canal House is an iconic office building with a rich heritage in the city

conditioning facilities that not only reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions but also help to create a healthier indoor climate for staff.

The move to the new office has been instigated by the recently appointed head of the Manchester office, Suzanne Gregson. Suzanne believes that the move will support the local team's goal to expand its service offering in Manchester and the North West. She also believes that the new offices will support the firm's people development by creating a collaborative and supportive environment that will bring out the best in the team, both socially and professionally.

Speaking about the move, **Suzanne Gregson**  (*inset*), Anthony Collins partner and head of the Manchester office, said: “Manchester offers us such a strong geographical advantage, and we are keen to build on our presence here by growing our team and expanding our service offering locally.”

“The move to Ship Canal House is popular move with staff too as it's an iconic office building with a rich heritage in the city. We now have the floorspace and meeting rooms needed to expand our activities in an environment that is inspiring and supports the development of our people.”



## Clarke Willmott appointed to £45m LUPC national universities legal framework

Clarke Willmott LLP <sup>®</sup> has been appointed to the £45 million London Universities Purchasing Consortium (LUPC) 2025 Legal Services Framework.



Stephen Green

The appointment enables Clarke Willmott to provide a full-service legal offering to LUPC members, which include universities, colleges, and other not-for-profit organisations in the education, arts, science, charity, and wider public sectors. Members will benefit from streamlined access to expert legal support designed to meet both strategic and operational needs in a cost-effective way.

While many LUPC members are London-based, the framework also extends to affiliated regional consortia across the UK. That includes the North Western Universities Purchasing Consortium (NWUPC), whose university members include Manchester Metropolitan University, the University of Salford, the University of Greater Manchester and the University of Manchester, among others.

“

Our inclusion reflects the strength of our local expertise as well as our national reach

Stephen Green, partner, based at Clarke Willmott's Manchester office, said: "Being appointed to this national framework is a fantastic opportunity for us to further support the higher education and not-for-profit sectors here in the North West. Manchester is home to some of the UK's most innovative and ambitious universities, and we are proud to stand alongside them as trusted advisers. Our inclusion reflects the strength of our local expertise as well as our national reach – ensuring institutions across Greater Manchester and beyond can access pragmatic, solutions-focused legal advice."

Clarke Willmott has been selected to Lot 1B of the framework, a category recognising full-service law firms with expertise serving higher education and not-for-profit bodies. The firm's services cover corporate and commercial law, litigation, real estate, procurement and competition, employment, regulatory and public law.

The LUPC contract runs from 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2028, with a possible extension to 30 September 2030. Other regional purchasing consortia affiliated to LUPC include the North Eastern Universities Purchasing Consortium (NEUPC), Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium (SUPC), and the Higher Education Purchasing Consortium Wales (HEPCW).



## Lawyers on Demand: firm launches UK's first legal subscription service for startups

A Manchester law firm is bringing legal into the streaming era by offering its services as a monthly subscription, providing unlimited access to legal advice for a fixed fee.

**Blackmont Legal** <sup>Ⓞ</sup> says its Legal-as-a-Service (LaaS) plan is the first of its kind in the UK.

Available to clients of any size, the unique model is primarily aimed at startups and microbusinesses, which often find law firms' hourly billing structures a challenge.

Zohaib Hashim, CEO of Blackmont Legal, said: "In the age of everything on demand, small businesses should be able to access quality legal advice as easily as streaming a film.

"Startups often need to make rapid legal decisions, particularly when they are scaling. The problem is that a lot of the options for legal advice are slow and costly.

"Small businesses are key drivers of innovation, and they deserve legal services that work in the same way."

The launch of LaaS comes after [an industry report found the UK was the world's second-largest startup ecosystem](#) <sup>Ⓞ</sup> in 2025 – only outranked by China in the support given to budding businesses.

Fully accredited by the Solicitors Regulation Authority, Blackmont Legal is the only such firm to offer subscription legal services specifically tailored for the startup and microbusiness sector, making LaaS a UK first.

## MSB moves growing Manchester team from Spinningfields to Blackfriars House

**MSB Solicitors** <sup>Ⓞ</sup> has underscored its commitment to the firm's future in Manchester by moving the office of their expanding team in the city from Spinningfields to the historic Blackfriars House.

The Mancunian branch of the Liverpool-founded firm opened in March 2022, bringing with it the same core belief in justice for all members of society, regardless of their status, that was the guiding principle in the firm's formation in 1988.

And as one of Manchester's most distinctive workspaces in the heart of the city's central business district, Blackfriars House marks a new chapter for the firm as they continue to expand their presence across the North West.

It will act as home to the branch's practitioners who fulfil the entire range of services for clients including individual cases and those involving families, children and businesses. MSB's specialists are also available to advise on matters related to property, private client matters, dispute resolutions and employment law.

For a fixed monthly fee, clients receive regular access to a dedicated legal advisor, with support for areas such as contract review, due diligence, investor documentation, and early dispute resolution.

Pricing starts at £350 per month, which is significantly cheaper than instructing a solicitor or hiring an in-house counsel.

“We already have a number of businesses signed up to LaaS,” Zohaib continued. “It speaks volumes about the demand among the startup sector for this type of innovation.

“One of our clients, an electronics startup, was presented with a contract by a partner which needed urgent scrutiny. Because of their LaaS subscription, they had immediate access to our team – no hunting for a lawyer, no delays, and no surprises.



Zohaib Hashim, CEO of Blackmont Legal

“They ended up signing their largest contract to date, without any of the stress or expense of the traditional legal process.”

Founded in 2024, Blackmont Legal operates as a fully virtual firm and specialises in emerging sectors including artificial intelligence, film, and digital technology. With LaaS, it aims to redefine how startups access legal services in a fast-moving digital economy.

“

Its close proximity to Manchester’s legal and financial heartland makes it the perfect setting for our Manchester team

“Blackfriars House combines tradition with innovation, as we look back on our history and reimagine our future with a modern, collaborative space,” said MSB Solicitors’ managing partner, Emma Carey.

“Its close proximity to Manchester’s legal and financial heartland makes it the perfect setting for our Manchester team as it continually grows,” she added.

The move comes after the recent relaunch of [www.msbsolicitors.co.uk](http://www.msbsolicitors.co.uk) @





## Mills & Reeve announces record turnover as Manchester office sees 24% growth

**Mills & Reeve** has announced turnover growth of £13 million in its 2024/25 financial year, resulting in record revenues of £181 million.

The firm's North West business has seen a turnover increase of 24% in its 2024/25 financial year, with a total 70% uplift over the last four years.

As in previous years, staff have shared in the firm's growth through the annual all-staff bonus. This year's national bonus pool, which is directly linked to the firm's profits and varies each year, was £1.4 million, meaning the majority of people received a bonus of at least £1,000.

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

- Legal 500 recognition with Tier 1 and 2 rankings for corporate and commercial, real estate, family, insurance and private client amongst others, as well as being ranked most active dealmaker by Experian in 2024.
- Increased Fearless Feedback scores with 90% of clients saying they would recommend the firm, getting closer to the 2030 target of 95% client recommendation.
- Strengthening the firm's international offering to clients and re-branding to M&R Global, with the aim for 40% of all work to have an international element by 2030.
- Seeking to drive success through technology by rolling out CoPilot, Kira



Chris Ross

and other AI solutions across the firm, while continuing to look at additional GenAI tools to support lawyers and business services. Nine new AI solutions have recently been piloted across the business as part of an ambitious programme of driving technology-enabled client service improvements.

- Having been ranked for 20 consecutive years in Best Companies to Work For, the firm has now been ranked in The Sunday Times' Best Places to Work Awards Best Big Organisations for the last two years.
- Official validation of the firm's science-based targets by the SBTi, confirming the firm's near-term and net-zero ambitions align with the 1.5°C pathway. This marks a major milestone in Mills & Reeve's commitment to climate action.

Chris Ross, partner and head of the Manchester office at Mills & Reeve, said: "This is a strong performance in a somewhat challenging market. The growth

for our Manchester team is testament to the strength and ambition of the businesses and organisations in the North West. We've continued to invest in our people, technology and offices to push forward with our ambitious 2030 firm-wide strategy.

"We're only a year into our national strategy and have already seen strong progress towards our priorities of putting clients at the heart of our business, being a leader in our sector and markets, driving success

through technology and being a leader in experience for our people.

"These priorities resonate in the region and mean that in a fast-changing business environment, we're well positioned for future growth as a strong firm with exciting opportunities across the key sectors and markets we operate in. We remain confident in our strategy, strong culture and passion in delivering for clients."

## Clarke Willmott achieves Carbon Literacy Accreditation

**Clarke Willmott** has been awarded **Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation** status by the **Carbon Literacy Project**.

The accreditation highlights the firm's dedication to tackling climate change, reducing its organisational carbon emissions and working towards a zero-carbon future.

Participants completed a day of expert training, gaining the knowledge and skills to reduce their personal and organisational carbon footprint through interactive exercises.

Carbon literacy is defined as an awareness of the carbon impacts of everyday activities, with the knowledge and motivation to reduce emissions at individual, community and organisational levels.

"Bronze Carbon Literate status reflects our commitment to carbon reduction and the tangible steps we've taken across the firm –

from energy-efficient offices to renewable electricity and digital-first ways of working," says Karen Higgins, head of ESG at Clarke Willmott.

Earlier this year, Clarke Willmott published its **Carbon Reduction Plan**, setting a verified Net Zero target for 2040 covering energy, travel, waste and commuting emissions.



Karen Higgins

"Our journey to Net Zero by 2040 is underpinned by clear science-based targets, innovative office redesigns, and active engagement from our employees," adds Karen Higgins.

"The Carbon Literacy programme is a key part of embedding this culture throughout the firm. Sustainability is central to how we operate. From reducing office emissions and adopting renewable energy to encouraging sustainable travel and digital practices, we are proud to integrate environmental considerations into every part of our business."



## gunnercooke furthers global ambitions with five office moves and launches

**gunnercooke** <sup>®</sup> has developed five new global offices to meet demand after continued success of its entrepreneurial model.

The firm now has 16 offices across England, Scotland, Germany, Austria and the US, with three new offices in London, Frankfurt and Chicago, and two upsized offices in Manchester and Leeds.

With a consistent annual revenue increase of over 15%, gunnercooke is one of the fastest growing firms in the UK, growing by

21% to £82m in 2024. 77 appointments have been made to date in 2025, bringing the firm's global headcount to 842 (607 advisors including 409 partners).

Having quickly established itself as one of the 'big four' fee shares, gunnercooke has set itself apart with an ambition to be the leading entrepreneurial firm, helping advisors set up and scale up their practices, whilst keeping culture and purpose at its core.

Its second London location will launch



Our growth has been exponential, particularly over the past five years. One of the benefits of our model is that our people can work from wherever in the world they choose

next month at 1 Great Cumberland Place in the city's West End. The refurbished Art Deco building next to Marble Arch offers premium meeting and collaboration spaces and access to The Orchard, a private members' bar and restaurant with panoramic views of Hyde Park. The office joins gunnercooke's long-established base at 1 Cornhill.

The firm is also due to relocate its Manchester headquarters to a new 16,000 sq ft space at [Pall Mall](#) , Bruntwood SciTech's transformational redevelopment in the heart of King Street. The city-centre base can accommodate 130 people and will be equipped with a dedicated client suite, flexible collaboration space and a production studio. The project is transforming a Grade II-listed landmark into a 120,000 sq ft, net zero carbon innovation hub, targeting an EPC A rating, meeting gunnercooke's sustainability targets.

Manchester is the birthplace of gunnercooke and the home of its support team, gcTrust, which now comprises 90 employees, in addition to the 158 fee earners based in the region. The city is also the location of the firm's first purpose-led bookshop, [House of Books & Friends](#) , which works closely with the gunnercooke foundation to tackle social isolation and loneliness in the local community.

Leeds recently saw the launch of an 18-desk office at the newly transformed West Village in the city's business district, aimed at servicing the 45 partners now based in the Yorkshire region.

In February, a [Chicago office](#) became the firm's second US location following its New York launch in 2022. Established by five corporate partners, the team serve clients across Illinois and beyond.

Frankfurt became gunnercooke DE's fifth German office, joining Berlin, Düsseldorf, Hamburg and Munich. The Frankfurt launch builds on strong demand from German and international clients for cross-border expertise, with 47 lawyers now based in the territory.

Founder [Darryl Cooke](#) commented: "The entrepreneurial model is now widely recognised for providing a better way to service clients, people and communities. Our growth has been exponential, particularly over the past five years. One of the benefits of our model is that our people can work from wherever in the world they choose. However, having these dedicated spaces in some of the most important cities for global business means we can offer more places to collaborate. People thrive off connection and with an increased demand following a recruitment drive, we've prioritised securing more space to take forward our global ambitions."



## Bromleys kicks off new round of community sport sponsorships

**Bromleys Solicitors** has got the ball rolling with a hat-trick of football sponsorships for the new season, as well as renewing its support of the East Cheshire Harriers & Tameside Athletics Club.

The law firm, which is based in Ashton-under-Lyne, is sponsoring Curzon Ashton FC for the ninth campaign in a row.

The agreement, which runs for this season and next, sees the Bromleys 'B' logo feature on the shirt sleeves of the men's and women's first team squads.

Curzon Ashton's men's team competes in the Enterprise National League North and the women's team plays in the North West Women's Regional League. Both sides stage home games at the Tameside Stadium in Ashton.

Bromleys retains its role as the club's official legal and media partner and is continuing to sponsor its 3G community pitch, which is used by thousands of people each week and is home to the East Manchester Junior Football League.

The pitch hosts a range of activities, including women's football, walking football for older players, and games for service veterans and disabled participants.

Bromleys' branding is on display across

the Tameside Stadium and around the community pitch.

The firm has also agreed a two-year deal to provide community-focused sponsorship for Stalybridge Celtic, which competes in the Northern Premier League Division One West and plays home games at Bower Fold.

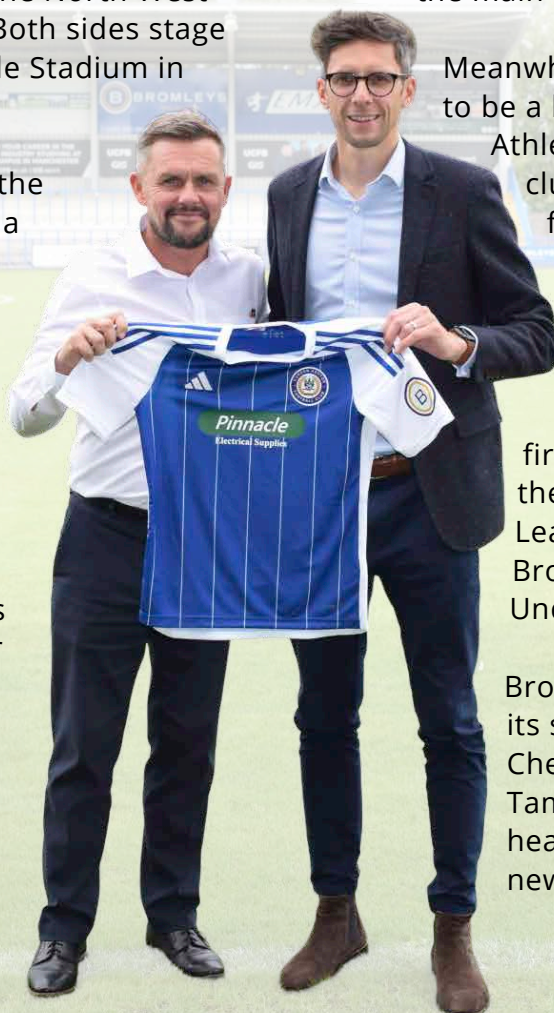
Large flags bearing the Bromleys and club logos are being used to form a guard of honour before kick-off at selected home matches. Children from local schools and community groups are invited to serve as flag wavers.

Bromleys also features on pitch-side signage near the players' tunnel in front of the main stand.

Meanwhile, the firm has agreed to be a kit sponsor of Tintwistle Athletic FC, a community club catering for players from four years old to veteran age.

The club has 39 teams playing in seven leagues, with the first team competing in the Manchester Football League Division One. Bromleys is sponsoring the Under-8 Blacks team.

Bromleys is also continuing its support for East Cheshire Harriers & Tameside Athletics Club as headline sponsor under a new two-year arrangement.





Paul Westwell, managing partner of Bromleys, said: "We're proud to continue our support for Curzon Ashton, a club we've stood behind for many years, alongside more recent partnerships with Stalybridge Celtic, East Cheshire Harriers & Tameside Athletics Club and Tintwistle Athletic.

"Our support is a source of pride for our staff, as these clubs play a vital role in the communities that we serve. We wish all of them a successful season ahead."

Curzon Ashton director Paul McHugh said: "We are delighted to be renewing and continuing our partnership with Bromleys Solicitors.

"The firm has supported the club in a variety of capacities over the years since its initial sponsorship in the 2017/18 season, and we are thrilled to announce that for the next two seasons Bromleys will once again be our official club media partner and community pitch sponsor.

"Everyone at the club would like to thank Paul and the rest of the team at Bromleys for their continued support."



Mark Ormston, club secretary at East Cheshire Harriers & Tameside Athletics Club, said: "Having a loyal partner like Bromleys means a great deal to our club.

"The firm's continued belief in what we do – from athletics coaching and training to promoting fitness and wellbeing across Tameside and the surrounding area – helps us stay focused on serving the community.

"By renewing its support for another two years, Bromleys has provided us with a guaranteed income and vital financial stability, allowing us to plan ahead with confidence and continue delivering opportunities for people of all ages to get active and involved."

Jake Connor, joint coach of Tintwistle Athletic under-8 Blacks team, said: "We're extremely grateful to Bromleys Solicitors for its generous sponsorship of the team this season, and for providing us with fantastic new kits and training tops. The firm's support is truly invaluable and will make such a positive difference to the kids, helping them feel proud, confident and part of something special."



## Leonard Curtis Group celebrates 30 years

**Leonard Curtis** is celebrating 30 years in business.



The firm, which started life in Bury as the insolvency division of a regional accountancy practice, now employs over 330 people across 30 offices UK and offshore.

It specialises in restructuring, funding, legal, M & A advisory and a wide range of related business services, meeting the needs of SMEs, corporates and their advisers to manage challenges facing business owners and support opportunities for growth.

It was one of the first professional services firms to add a legal pillar to its service portfolio in 2016 – now employing 19 fee earners - and continues to invest in funding and other services to provide a full multi-disciplinary experience for clients and referring communities.

Its successful accountancy referral network – Lifecycle – has over 3,000 accountancy firms getting access to experts from the Group and wider leading lights on tax and other key areas of practice, championing excellence in problem solving.

The 30-year milestone comes as private equity investors Pollen Street Capital take a majority stake in the business to accelerate growth through product expansion, technology and M & A.

Since the firm set out its ambitions as part its 25th anniversary celebrations the firm has added offices in Chester, Gateshead, Taunton, Loughborough, Jersey, Huddersfield, Isle of Man, Beverley and acquired businesses on the South Coast and Sheffield to boost breadth and depth of UK presence. It also attracted an initial round of private capital investment in 2021 which exited in August 2025 with a healthy return.

The firm is five years into The Leonard Curtis Foundation which manages a donation programme to causes nominated by its team and introduced Giving Back Days to acknowledge that success is also about the difference you can make to others. To mark 30 years, this giving back initiative will be enhanced.

Leonard Curtis remains on the acquisition trail, after the successful most recent additions of Newsource Commercial Finance, bringing in specialist brokerage for the construction sector, and Virtualnonexecs.com, with access to 20,000+ non-execs worldwide to help achieve positive solutions for clients.

Commenting on the milestone CEO Dan Booth said: “Thirty years on from our first office in Bury we are the same people, committed to delivering exceptional service with heart and integrity. The recent investment from Pollen Street is a validation of that vision and will support all of us to deliver on ambitious plans for the immediate future and the decades to come.”

# Your Monthly High Five from [TheBusinessDesk.com](https://www.thebusinessdesk.com)

By **Michael Taylor**, Editor of [TheBusinessDesk.com](https://www.thebusinessdesk.com)



Like most businesses at [TheBusinessDesk.com](https://www.thebusinessdesk.com) @ we're having internal discussions about AI and how it will impact our work as journalists.

I thought it might be useful to share a few insights into how journalism works.

The last month has been a very powerful example of a few essential truths in how we have always worked.

Firstly, our best read stories are usually what we refer to as "off diary", that's to say we got them because we talked to people who told us things, we checked out whether it was true and we pressed publish when it was safe and legal to do so.

These include our Monday interviews, where I am constantly looking for people with things to say, experiences to reveal, and insights to share. Over the last month I've included ones with hospitality legend Lucy Noone-Blake, Jon Berry from environmental consultancy Tyler Grange, which pioneered the four day week, and Amer Gaffar aka Mr Hydrogen, from Man Met University. Get in touch if you have a suggestion that matches their stories.

By the way, a few years ago I self-published a collection of my favourite interviews from a past life, and I've built up enough now to do volume two.

Secondly, sometimes we have to acknowledge that some stories move fast and other journalists have also had stuff leaked to them, have gained the trust of someone, and have had the courage to

go with something that we would like to have known. I would always acknowledge someone I respect like John Hyde from the Law Society Gazette, or Joshi Herrmann from The Mill. I just wish some more people would do the same to us, because I am always grateful when they do.

Thirdly, we've had requests to take stories down in the last week where any "errors" weren't by us, but by someone in their own communications chain. We will always correct mistakes, however they occurred, but we won't take a story down because it had a quote in it from someone who changed their mind, or an American company thought we'd confuse their customers by not saying who was who.

As for AI, I use some powerful transcription tools which blissfully save me time, but I am massively vigilant about false claims and fake news. I wonder if this is what lay behind the confusions I've just referred to. When you ask AI to do something, it often reads like the work of a smug and slightly charmless intern.

My favourite headline over the last month was from the story where Andy Burnham welcomed Zopa Bank to Manchester. In the midst of feverish speculation about his own political future I couldn't resist using his comments about professional jobs in Manchester - "you don't have to go to London to advance your career, says Burnham."

If I could have inserted a wink at the end I would have done. And I tell you what, AI couldn't have come up with that.

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## Kimpton Clocktower Hotel – Member Benefits!

Manchester Law Society members can now enjoy exclusive offers from the [Kimpton Clocktower Hotel](#) and their in-house restaurant [The Refuge](#) .

### Benefits include:

- 10% off all F&B when dining with 4 or less at The Refuge
- A complimentary bottle of champagne when booking a private dining room at The Refuge for 7 or more guests
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The Kimpton Clocktower Hotel, which also served as the venue for our highly

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**The Refuge enquiries:**

[info@refugemcr.com](mailto:info@refugemcr.com)

**Event enquiries:**

[Sharon.Cameron@ihg.com](mailto:Sharon.Cameron@ihg.com)

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Manchester Law Society

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# PROPERTY LAW CONFERENCE



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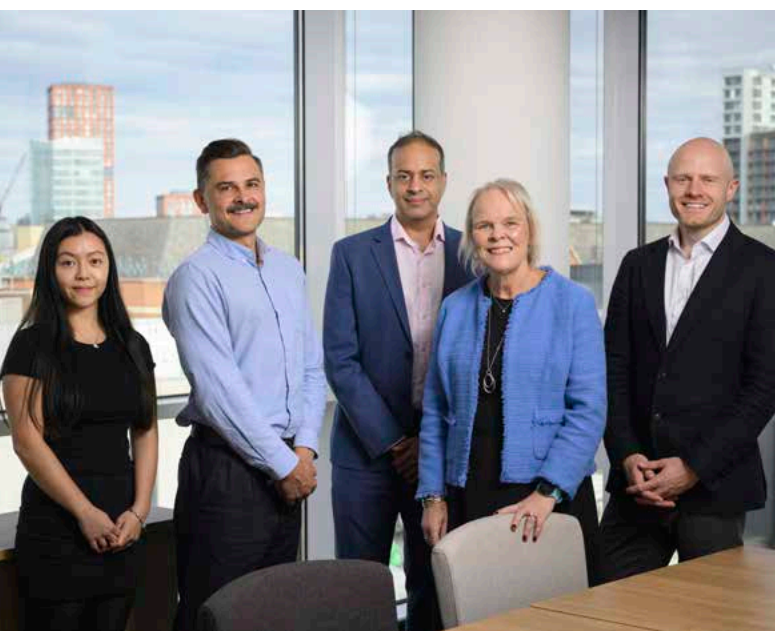


## Manchester law firm welcomes six new legal specialists

**Ward Hadaway** <sup>®</sup> has appointed six legal specialists across its Manchester office, strengthening its position as one of the North West's leading independent full-service firms as it continues to grow strongly.

The new hires join departments including commercial litigation, real estate and construction. They include a partner, managing associate, associate, solicitor, conveyancer and paralegal, reflecting the firm's commitment to building teams with a balance of senior expertise and emerging talent.

The appointments include Richard Bradbury (partner, real estate), Daniel Adcock-Kirsh (managing associate, commercial litigation), Amy Platt (solicitor, commercial litigation), Faraz Naqvi (associate, construction), Arshad Jokhia (conveyancer, plot sales) and Lauryn Chan (paralegal, residential conveyancing).



This latest round of recruitment follows the opening of Ward Hadaway's Birmingham office earlier this year and the recent merger with Teesside-based The Endeavour Partnership, expanding the firm's reach and capability across the North and Midlands. Together with targeted growth in key practice areas, these moves are part of a long-term strategy to increase the firm's market share and extend its client base.

Liz Bottrill, executive partner in Ward Hadaway's Manchester office, said: "Manchester is a vibrant hub for business and legal services and we're committed to investing in talent to reflect the opportunities here. These appointments strengthen our office across key practice areas ensuring we can continue to meet client demand and support the region's fast-growing economy."

New joiners are supported through tailored induction programmes, mentoring and regular opportunities to work alongside colleagues from different offices and disciplines. This collaborative approach is designed to help people settle quickly, build strong professional networks and contribute to client work from the outset.

Daniel Adcock-Kirsh, managing associate in the Commercial Litigation team, said: "Joining Ward Hadaway has been a fantastic opportunity to become part of a firm that is ambitious for growth while also deeply rooted in the regions it serves. The Manchester office has an excellent reputation and it's exciting to contribute to a team that works closely with colleagues across the firm to deliver outstanding results for clients."

## Kuits welcomes Susan Honeyands as Head of Commercial Law

**Kuits Solicitors** @, has announced the appointment of Susan Honeyands as Head of Commercial Law. With an impressive career spanning more than 25 years, Susan brings to the role a wealth of expertise across a diverse range of sectors, including leisure, hospitality, retail, and FMCG.

Susan is widely recognised for her pragmatic and commercial approach, delivering strategic legal and business advice at board level for businesses seeking to navigate today's complex commercial landscape. Her reputation as an astute and trusted advisor is underpinned by a track record of supporting growth and innovation, both within established businesses and emerging ventures.

At Kuits, Susan will lead the Commercial Law team, drawing upon her considerable senior management experience. She has consistently been at the forefront of driving business growth and securing new commercial opportunities, demonstrating a sharp understanding of operational challenges and client needs.

Her expertise encompasses the drafting and negotiation of complex commercial agreements for a wide array of projects, from new visitor attractions, concerts and plays, to major social and corporate events. Susan is also highly experienced in preparing agreements for sponsorships and promotions, as well as the full suite of supply, logistics, distribution and procurement contracts essential to keeping modern businesses competitive and agile.



Commenting on her appointment, Susan said: "I am thrilled to be joining Kuits and look forward to leading the Commercial Law team at such an exciting time of growth for the firm. My focus will be on supporting clients with clear, strategic advice that delivers genuine value to their organisations."

Kuits' Executive Partner, Robert Levy, added: "Susan's arrival marks a significant step in the ongoing expansion of our commercial offering. Her breadth of experience and reputation for excellence will be invaluable in supporting our clients' ambitions and strengthening our position as a leader in commercial law."

Susan's appointment demonstrates Kuits' commitment to providing expert, client-focused legal solutions in an ever-evolving business environment.



## Asserson accelerates growth in Manchester with three hires

**Asserson** is accelerating the growth of its Manchester office with three hires to strengthen its real estate and dispute resolution teams.

Adele Merifield and Sangiwe Mbele have joined the real estate team as a senior associate and paralegal respectively, while associate Moishe Noe is the latest addition to the dispute resolution team.

Moishe, who trained and qualified at Fieldfisher, specialises in advising on commercial disputes such as breaches of contract, as well as professional negligence, shareholder disputes and restrictive covenants.

Adele trained and qualified at DLA Piper and later moved to Norton Rose Fulbright in Dubai. She later worked as an in-house legal counsel at billboard company Wildstone.

She advises a diverse client base, including landlords, tenants and businesses, on a range of topics from acquisitions and disposals to the management of commercial and residential properties.

Sangiwe has a degree in criminology and is undertaking the Legal Practice Course at the University of Law.

Before joining Asserson, she worked as a commercial property assistant at PM Property Lawyers in Sheffield, supporting solicitors involved in complex transactions.

Asserson's Manchester team is based in Arkwright Buildings in the city centre and supports a local and national client base.

Michael Clavell-Bate, partner and head of the Manchester office, said: "We're building something really exciting here and each of our three new team members brings valuable experience and a strong reputation in their respective fields.

"This expansion further reinforces our position in the region and reflects the firm's commitment to growing a leading presence in the heart of Manchester.

"We've assembled a stellar team with genuine strength and depth, energy and ambition, and we're continuing to attract top talent across key specialisms.

"Our growth is driven by client demand and a clear vision for what we want to achieve here. We're proud of what we've built so far, and there's much more to come, with further hires in the coming months."

Howard Rubenstein, managing partner at Asserson, said: "Manchester is central to our national growth strategy. The city's talent and energy make it the perfect place to expand, and our progress here underlines our commitment to building a firm with real strength across the UK."



(L-R) Sangiwe Mbele, Moishe Noe and Adele Merifield

## Cartwright King welcomes leading children law specialist Emma Cordock as director

**Cartwright King Solicitors** is delighted to announce that Emma Cordock joined the firm on 1st October 2025 as Director of the North Region, based in our Manchester office.

Emma is widely recognised as a leading specialist in children law, with almost two decades of dedicated experience in this field. She joined AFG Law in 2007 and qualified as a solicitor in 2011 after completing the CILEX route. She became a Director in 2017 and, under her leadership as Head of the Family Department, the team won Manchester Law Society's Family Law Firm of the Year (2020) and the Talk of Manchester Award (2023).

As a Law Society Children Law Accredited solicitor since 2012, Emma exclusively represents children in both complex public and private law proceedings. She is regularly instructed through children's guardians and also represents children directly, ensuring that their voices are heard in the most challenging circumstances. Emma's expertise covers cases involving allegations of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, and safeguarding concerns.

Her reputation in children law is further underlined by her work in the National Deprivation of Liberty Court, where she frequently acts in High Court matters within the Inherent Jurisdiction. As a High Court Advocate with Higher Rights of Audience, she has built a strong national profile for representing vulnerable young people, including teenagers facing the most difficult circumstances.



Emma Cordock

Emma is also deeply involved in the wider development of family and children law. She is an active member of Resolution, where she co-chairs the organisation's Legal Aid Committee, advocating for access to justice for children and families.

Emma's appointment reflects Cartwright King's commitment to strengthening its children law practice across the North of England. Based in Manchester, her expertise, vision, and passion for representing children will be invaluable as the firm continues to grow its reputation for excellence in child care and family law.

Emma has also been recognised nationally, having been shortlisted for Partner of the Year at the Family Law Awards 2025. This nomination highlights her influence, dedication, and lasting impact on children law and legal aid.

We are thrilled to welcome Emma to Cartwright King and look forward to the expertise, energy, and leadership she will bring to our clients, our teams, and most importantly, the children whose voices she represents.



## Myerson strengthens team with partner promotions and new talent

**Myerson** <sup>®</sup> has announced a new round of promotions and the arrival of its latest cohort of trainees and apprentices, reinforcing its reputation as one of the most attractive employers in the North West.

Reflecting the firm's continued growth from its single-site office in Altrincham, two senior lawyers have been promoted to Partner: Eleanor Clarke in **Contentious Probate** <sup>®</sup> and Richard Meehan in **Commercial** <sup>®</sup>.

Eleanor, who joined Myerson in 2018, specialises in high-value and complex probate disputes, including will challenges, trust disputes and Inheritance Act claims. This year, she earned recognition in the prestigious Chambers High Net Worth Guide for the first time.

Richard, who joined the firm in 2022, advises on a broad range of commercial contracts and heads Myerson's Technology



Richard Meehan

sector. He advises on supply and distribution agreements, licensing, and IT services for clients from SaaS providers to national retailers.

Another senior appointment is Sarah Whitelegge, who has been promoted to Legal Director in the **Family team** <sup>®</sup>. Sarah advises on children matters, financial settlements and domestic violence cases, and is a Resolution Accredited Specialist and trained Collaborative Lawyer.

## Leigh Day expands Manchester office with new partner

**Leigh Day** <sup>®</sup> has expanded its Manchester office with the appointment of a new partner with significant expertise in serious injury cases, as the firm continues to grow its presence across the North West.

**Gerard (Ged) Horton** <sup>®</sup> joins as a partner in Leigh Day's personal injury department. He has built a national reputation in the catastrophic injury sector and will be working across Leigh Day's Liverpool and Manchester offices.

Ged qualified as a solicitor in 2011 and is

ranked in both the Legal 500 and Chambers and Partners. He is an APIL accredited senior litigator, specialising in representing claimants who have suffered life-changing injuries.

Across his career, Ged has recovered tens of millions of pounds in compensation for his clients. He has recently secured a £6 million settlement for a motorcyclist who suffered chronic pain and irreparable nerve damage to his arm, and a £4.5 million settlement for a woman who suffered a life-changing spinal cord injury.



Eleanor Clarke

Beyond these senior promotions, Myerson is continuing to invest in nurturing home-grown talent. Four team members have stepped up to Senior Associate or Senior Executive roles, with a further ten promoted to Associate positions.

At the entry level, the firm is welcoming its fourth cohort of legal apprentices, bringing the total to eight, and four new trainees, following a 75% retention rate of its qualifying trainees this year.

James Birch, Talent Acquisition Manager at Myerson, said: "The move to employee



Sarah Whitelegge

ownership has made Myerson an even more attractive place to work. This year, we achieved a 95% offer acceptance rate and received a record number of high-quality applications for both the trainee and apprenticeship programmes. It's a real testament to our reputation for offering challenging, high-calibre work within a supportive and collaborative environment."

Myerson, a 100% employee-owned firm, now employs 160 people across a range of departments, reflecting its ongoing organic growth as it serves both businesses and individuals across the region.

Ged lives in Southport and is the current President of the Southport & Ormskirk Law Society. He will strengthen the support available across the North West to individuals and families who have been affected by serious injury.

Partner and joint head of Leigh Day's personal injury department, [Sally Moore](#) @ said: "Ged will be an incredible asset to our personal injury team in the North West and, with him on board, we will be in an even stronger position to provide

support and representation to families when they need it the most."

Ged Horton said: "I'm thrilled to be joining Leigh Day, a firm with a strong reputation for putting vulnerable individuals first and delivering exceptional results in complex serious injury cases. With my years of experience in the serious injury sector, I look forward to contributing to the firm's continued success and advocating tirelessly for those who need it most."



Ged Horton



## Squire Patton Boggs bolsters restructuring and insolvency offering with partner hire in Manchester

**Squire Patton Boggs** <sup>®</sup> has appointed Chris Roberts as a partner in its Restructuring & Insolvency Practice in Manchester. Mr. Roberts joins from DLA Piper, where he led the restructuring and insolvency team across the North West and contributed significantly to the development of the firm's national practice.

"Chris is a high-calibre addition to our team and his arrival reflects our continued investment in expanding our cross-border restructuring capabilities," commented Stephen Lerner, global chair of the firm's Restructuring & Insolvency Practice Group. "He brings deep technical experience, commercial acumen and a proven track record of advising on complex and high-value mandates across a range of sectors. His experience will significantly benefit our clients across the UK and internationally."

With a career spanning more than two decades, Mr. Roberts focuses on non-contentious restructuring and turnaround matters, advising lenders, corporates, sponsors and officeholders. He has extensive experience leading multi-stakeholder restructurings and distressed M&A transactions across a range of sectors.

James Fitzgibbon, managing partner of the Manchester office, added: "We are delighted to welcome Chris to the firm. He is a highly respected practitioner with strong relationships across the North West and wider UK markets. Chris will help to lead the charge as we continue to grow the office, working alongside our market-leading corporate and financial services teams to develop opportunities for restructuring and insolvency work."



(L-R) John Alderton, Chris Roberts and James Fitzgibbon

Mr. Roberts said: "The opportunity at Squire Patton Boggs is an exciting one for me and my clients. I've been impressed by the ambition of the global Restructuring & Insolvency Practice, the growth trajectory of the Manchester office, and the energy and calibre of the partners I've met. It feels like the right environment – and the right time – to continue doing what I love: helping clients navigate change and building and mentoring high-performing teams. I'm delighted to be joining and look forward to contributing to the firm's continued success."

Squire Patton Boggs' global Restructuring & Insolvency Practice comprises more than 130 lawyers across 36 offices in 15 countries. Recent hires include **Vanessa Stuart** <sup>®</sup> in Manchester, **Charlotte Møller** <sup>®</sup> and **Monika Lorenzo-Perez** <sup>®</sup> in London, and **Arnaud Moussatoff** <sup>®</sup> in Paris.

Founded over 30 years ago, the firm's Manchester office advises clients across the North West, the UK and globally. The office has seen significant growth in the past year, including the arrival of Corporate partner **Victoria Jew** <sup>®</sup> and a team of construction lawyers led by partners **Paul O'Kane** <sup>®</sup> and **Charlotte Higham** <sup>®</sup>.

## MSB set to welcome seven new partners as nurturing of future leaders continues

**MSB Solicitors** is pleased to announce the upcoming promotion of seven members to the MSB partnership.

The landmark moment reflects MSB's continued growth and the strength of its internal talent alongside the practice's commitment to nurturing future legal leaders. The promotions stand as a testament to the firm's culture of development, collaboration and long-term investment in people as well as a recognition of the personal achievement of those involved.

Whether they have progressed through MSB's ranks from junior roles or joined the firm bringing their valuable experience, each of MSB's new partners has made a lasting impact through their work, leadership and dedication to clients and colleagues alike.

Part of these promotions is **Tom Mealand** who is based in the firm's Manchester office and is strengthening and building the team there. Tom specialises in secured lending and commercial property, having joined MSB in 2023. He is renowned for his

responsive, client-centred service.

The other new partners at MSB will be:

**Katie Camozzi** (Children's Law), **Daniel Pierce** (Children's Law, Family Legal Aid team), **Steven Davies** (Head of Employment Law), **Amy Tagoe** (Housing Litigation), **Thomas Stockton** (Social Housing Disrepair), **John McCreaney** (Civil & Commercial Litigation)

Additional information on each upcoming partner can be seen on the recently relaunched [MSB Solicitors website](#).

"I am filled with pride by the promotion of our new partners, some of whom have spent their entire careers at MSB and were once my own trainees," said Emma Carey, Managing Partner at MSB Solicitors.

"To watch their growth from early career professionals into inspiring leaders has been a privilege. These promotions are a celebration of talent, resilience and our shared values. I cannot wait to see what they accomplish next as they step into this new chapter," she added.





## Trowers announces new co-Heads in Manchester

**Trowers & Hamblins** <sup>®</sup>, has appointed Partners Steve Dunseath and Katie Saunders as new co-Heads of the firm's Manchester office.

The duo take over the role from Suzanne Benson, who was Manchester office Head for seven years and is now the firm's national Head of Real Estate. Steve and Katie will continue to drive the office's growth and guide the Manchester teams in line with the firm's 2030 strategy.

Commenting on his new role, Steve said: "I am thrilled to be taking on this new position and collaborating with our exceptional Manchester team alongside Katie.

We step into these roles with a focus on the firm's growth areas and 2030 strategy. I am looking forward to working with our teams across the many sectors in which we operate to identify new opportunities, strengthen client relationships, and elevate the overall practice in the Northwest."

Katie added: "I am equally excited to be taking on this new role. I would like to share a huge thank you to Suzanne for leading

the team for the past seven years. There has been an outstanding amount of success under her leadership, with clients, awards, and very substantial growth across all of our teams.

It is an exciting time to be working in Manchester as the city sees an increase in investment and opportunities for growth and development."

Steve brings a wealth of experience to the role as a Partner in the Dispute Resolution and Litigation team. He has extensive experience of all forms of dispute resolution and has led very high performing teams for many years. He is a recognised leader in both Chambers and Partners and Legal 500.

Katie leads the Manchester Projects and Construction team. Also consistently ranked in the Legal Directories, she is a long-term supporter of best practice in the construction sector through her work with Constructing Excellence and the Save Construction Initiative. Katie is also deputy chair of The Housing Forum and is well known for her expertise in advising on major regeneration projects.

(L-R) Steve Dunseath and Katie Saunders



## Olliers Solicitors relaunches specialist motoring department with key hire

**Olliers Solicitors** <sup>®</sup> has announced a key hire to support the relaunch of its specialist motoring department. The move comes in response to a growing demand for expert legal advice on road traffic offences.

Motoring expert Austin Anderson-Brettell joins the firm as an associate solicitor, bringing over eight years of experience in this specialised sector. Originally from Canada, Austin completed his undergraduate degree at Laurentian University before relocating to Manchester. Austin has since undertaken and passed the Solicitors Qualifying Examination, qualifying in 2023.

Throughout his career in criminal defence, Austin has gained an impressive reputation for expertly handling the complexities of motoring offences. His ability to build a strong defence strategy tailored to each client's unique circumstances has led to



“

I am thrilled to join a firm with the reputation and history of Olliers. The opportunity to spearhead the relaunch of the motoring department is incredibly exciting

hundreds of successful outcomes for clients in both the Magistrates' Court and the Crown Court.

Speaking of his new role, Austin commented: "I am thrilled to join a firm with the reputation and history of Olliers. The opportunity to spearhead the relaunch of the motoring department is incredibly exciting. I look forward to contributing to the firm's success and providing clients with the highest level of service and expertise during what can be a very stressful time."

Austin is also currently working towards his Police Station Accreditation with Olliers and will be supporting the team across a range of matters during this period.

Business Development Director, Ruth Peters, added: "We are delighted to welcome Austin to the team. His considerable expertise in motoring law is a significant asset to the firm. The relaunch of our motoring department underscores our commitment to responding to client needs and ensuring we provide specialist advice across all aspects of criminal defence. Austin's appointment is a key part of that strategy."



## Fletchers Group announces another wave of promotions with 14 new Associates across key practice areas

**Fletchers** is proud to announce the appointment of 14 new Associates, reinforcing its continued investment in talent and client service excellence. These promotions include 4 Manchester-based appointments.

The new promotions will strengthen the firm's capabilities across its core personal injury and clinical negligence teams, supporting continued growth and demand for legal expertise nationwide.

Based across Fletchers' office nationwide, the newly promoted Associates bring a wealth of expertise across serious injury, personal injury, clinical negligence, and court of protection matters.

"We're delighted to welcome this talented group of lawyers to the firm," said Adrian Denson, Chief Legal Officer at Fletchers. "Each of them brings not only strong

technical ability but also the empathy and dedication that defines our approach to client care. Their promotions marks an exciting step forward as we continue to expand and evolve."

The new Manchester-based Associates are:

- Mary Lomas, Motorcycle Serious Injury Solicitor
- Jerard Knott, Clinical Negligence Solicitor
- Natalie Richardson, Clinical Negligence Solicitor
- Sarah Ouko, Solicitor in Serious Injury Law

The promotions across the firm's other offices are:

- Stephen Hussey, Head of Personal Injury (EL/PL)
- Kathryn Sharkey, Team Leader in Clinical Negligence

Adrian Denson



Jerard Knott



Sarah Ouko



- Lucy McNally, Solicitor in Court of Protection
- Claire Barnes and Danielle Allan, Heads of Serious Injury in Serious Injury Law
- Antonia Jones and Molly Birchall, Solicitors within the Clinical Negligence teams
- Claire Williams, Team Leader in Personal Injury (EL/PL)
- David Eyres, Solicitor in Serious Injury Law
- Paul Pike, Team Leader in Serious Injury Law

These appointments come at a time of momentum for the firm, which has seen significant expansion in its serious injury and complex litigation teams over the past 12 months, alongside increased investment in digital systems, wellbeing initiatives, and talent development.

“We’re committed to providing clear progression pathways and meaningful opportunities for our colleagues,” added Tim Scott, Director of HR: “Seeing so many talented individuals join us as Associates

reflects that commitment — and the exciting future that lies ahead for Fletchers.”

Adrian Denson said: “We are delighted that such a talented group of colleagues have been successful in their applications to become Associates. They enhance what is already a very strong and impressive Associate group.

“They represent a wide span across the legal teams and we were impressed by their calibre and the standards they set.

“They were able to evidence their commitment to our shared mission of helping the firm to grow and to get better, and each successful candidate was able to demonstrate excellent performance in their day to day-to-day legal roles along with clearly defined ways in which they bring something extra for the benefit of clients, colleagues or the wider business.

“I’m proud to confirm the promotion of these 14 colleagues, bringing the total number of Associates across Fletchers Group to 58.”

Mary Lomas



Natalie Richardson



# Management Matters



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

## This Month

- **Current commercial pressure environment**
  - **Some priorities**
  - **Strategy and realistic operations a,b,c**
  - **Moving forward**
  - **Checklist – much more than IT**

## Commercial environment for lawyers and firms

It is a fascinating time for law firms and the people that work there as the commercial environment changes. People choosing to become a lawyer didn't necessarily expect the management demands – not all want it.

- Compliance and regulation gets harder
- People working in the firm want to change their life experiences
- Clients get harder to find and to keep happy
- Internal as well as external Brand and Image becomes more challenging
- Communication with everyone gets more demanding, harder and less secure
- Financing the business is more of a challenge with less flexibility around cash flow,
- Insurance is harder to get and staff harder to find and keep.

Firms are closing, selling Will Banks, developing will banks, closing or opening up work-types, using third party lawyers, outsourcing of essentials, mergers and acquisitions, staff ownership, funding their performance with changing relationships with banks and venture capitalists, struggling with systems, struggling with compliance and regulations.

The firm has to be clear on where it is at, where it is going and when - plus desperately needs a methodology to keep it on track, make it happen and if necessary, changes the objectives and methodology in time.

Firms really do need a good understanding of their current status – nature and scope of the business, dimensions –

- a year ago – now in 12 months by
- staffing levels,
- offices by location and scale,
- work-types by revenue and gross profit,
- major clients, client structure.

there is also a very significant need for a clear understanding of the staffing structure and the key members – not just partners/ owners but also key staff members.

## Priority A

One of the first priorities is to have a very open discussion with each and every one of the key people in the business covering their performance, their likes and dislikes, intentions in their careers including timing (like giving up management, retiring, happy to fee earn). Planning the future or replacement involvement with these key people is essential. Once agreed, individuals need to stick to the agreed plan.

It is great to see more firms passing ownership to the team. At the other end there is an increase in Venture Capitalist involvement.

## Priority B

- There then needs to be a business strategy by year for the next three years – this to be done ahead of budget (year1)



with clarity around growth objectives – locations and work-types but also Revenue Source – fee income, gross profit, staff leverage.

- Then what actions are going to be taken for profitability – revenue, efficiency, staff mix. Clients New, retained penetration (cross selling) Referrals. Risk Management – continuity, security, compliance, clients (lost, lock up, service and performance demands and of course the competition.

### Priority C

- Finally, changes in support requirements – business development and marketing, HR management, IT and Finance including essential MI.
- Added value is critical – on boarding post portals

This puts the firm in the position to have a plan and to start working it through clear understanding of job responsibilities across the board – legal department heads, team leaders, individual lawyers, compliance and support, business development.

Job descriptions and accountabilities are essential, and performance against these needs to be reviewed on a monthly basis with plans and actions for people development and training. The right sort of management information needs to be available and well communicated, recognising that the business needs to feel confident that the monthly and balance of year objectives are going to be met. The firm cannot wait until the end of a month to see if performance is happening, plus many more junior members of staff psychologically need data and commentary on a daily basis whereas some more senior folks don't want to hear. It is essential to get

the MI/KPI straightforward and clear.

Still, some firms, although having the job description at the time of recruitment, there can be a situation where the personality profile is not clear and interviewed against. Communication skills (internal and with clients), Intellectual skills (the ability to analyse the key issues) Management skills (not just for people but also achieving success in the right timeframe on a file or project), Motivational skills (what is the turn on? Wanting to be the greatest fee earner, client satisfaction, promotion).

Annual appraisals and staff development plans take into account personalities as well as numbers.

### Moving Forward

So, year one of the agreed strategy becomes the budget for the first year, but in reality that can only last for one month without review. Perpetual forecasting becomes the key.

What tends to happen with firms I work with is the senior strategic group get together once a quarter to review the overall situation and make decisions around strategic and realistic change.

Each month, there needs to be an operations board meeting where legal department heads are there to report by work type the revenue and gross profit by month for their departments that have been achieved, along with the reasons behind over or under performance of revenue and gross profit.

If there has been over performance, the firm needs to know why and going forward how can this be exploited to enhance new



forecasted revenue and GP by month. It is also important that where there has been under performance by month historically – what is the reason and what has been done within the department to sort this or has it not. Being able to review full year expected performance by month by department is key, as well as the firm's overheads as they potentially are not going to go far away.

In terms of being able to forecast what and when with billing and gross profit – fee earners each month ahead of the Ops Board meeting should be declaring against open files WIP, expected Billing, Expected GP and when. Certainly helps the forecast and needs for recovery or further exploitation.

### Check List for Key Factors and IT, Financial advice

One area that needs firms to step up to the mark is the right relationship with their core IT suppliers where the sector has seen a gap over the last few years with firms not fully understanding the full capabilities of the current systems, the planned enhancements to the systems – content and timetable, the availability of key added value content from third party application specialists linking into the core systems ideally, and the availability of independent specialists that can quickly and easily enhance the current interfaces.

#### Key areas of need at the moment:

- Knowing that the IT is secure and that communication within the firm and with clients is secure
- Resilience of the IT and communication infrastructure whether it be in house managed, third party hosted or cloud based
- Essential application needs:
  - Client enquiry conversions – the training and methodology plus the use of technology to record the enquiry,

allocate the activity, capture the initially essential data, on agreement capture more needed data. One can see variances between 20% conversions and 65%. Means a great deal to revenue as well as the firm's image.

- Further data updates – two-way through secure portals cutting the need for calls, e-mails. Adds to client satisfaction and efficiency – they really do want to know the status of their files and next actions.
- Good systems integration between PMS/CMS applications and added value such as forms, marketing, client communication, AML
- Important compliance and regulation actions that ensure the correct handling, understanding and appropriate sign off. Even effective client account management
- Production of the best and most appropriate MI and BI through the PMS or the use of third party – it no longer is about billing, there is so much more. Right information at the right time.
- Integration with what are becoming essential sources of resource and skills – phone answering, document production, book keeping and accounting, legal skills
- Integration with skilled and secure advisers/consultants for example with part -time FDs, regulation/compliance, brand and image advice, business development advisers

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

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# Legal Costs Update

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



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

The Long Vacation means the calm before the storm in terms of the number of costs judgments being handed down. Thus we have just five cases this month but three of them are absolute stunners! Next month will be business as usual.

We start with costs budgeting and the second costs and case management conference dealing with tranche 3 of the "Dieselgate" costs (for tranches 1 and 2 see [2024] Costs LR 1209). In **Various Claimants v Mercedes-Benz Group AG** [2025] EWHC 2307 (KB), the claimants' Tranche 3 budgets covering causation and quantum issues for an eight-week quantum trial totalled £55.7m : for the defendants, the total was £75.8m. They all came away disappointed. Cockerill J approved £21m for the claimants and £55m for the defendants! She held that Tranche 3 allowances should generally be lower, given fewer complicating factors and greater cooperation between the parties. The Non-lead firms' recoverable involvement was confined to narrow circumstances, and routine "keeping abreast" of the litigation was a solicitor-client matter and not recoverable inter partes. Worse was to come. For the costs of two CMCs and one pre-trial review, the claimants sought £3.3m and £1.5m respectively and came away with £850,000 and £300,000, with the court stating that there had been "overlawering". Nine in-person attendees in court were ample. "Remote monitoring" by 20 more was not and heavy reductions would be made where "overlawering" was detected in future. The next CMC will take place in January when budgets will be fixed for expert evidence and ADR. Lawyers you have been warned!

By comparison, the next costs budgeting case is a mere minnow. Nonetheless, the judgment has useful take-aways. In **Xtellus Capital Partners Inc v DI Invest Group Pm S.A.** [2025] EWHC 2168 (Comm), following judgment being entered in favour of the Claimant for €1,792,247.93, the Court addressed consequential. Having dealt with interest, the court decided that the costs of the action should be paid by the defendants on the indemnity basis because a dishonest defence had been pursued which had been supported dishonestly. Should there be budget variations under CPR 3.15A? There were 3 points (1) given the court's decision about indemnity costs, was variation relevant? (2) If so, were there "significant developments in the litigation that warranted variation? (3) If so, what should the variation be? Under CPR 3.18, when conducting a detailed assessment, the Court would not depart from the receiving party's last approved or agreed budgeted costs unless satisfied that there was good reason to do so. Did an order for indemnity costs make any difference? Yes it did held HHJ Bird. On an indemnity basis assessment, CPR 3.18 did not apply and the Court could depart from the budget without requiring a "good reason" to do so. Consequently, he declined to deal with any application under CPR 3.15A, leaving any adjustment to the last approved or agreed budgets to be decided by the costs judge.

In this context, it is noteworthy that in **Barry v Barry** [2025] Costs LR 69, the Court had also made an order for indemnity basis costs and Dexter Dias J went on to deal with budget variations under CPR 3.15(A), rather

than leaving the budgets to be dealt with at detailed assessment. It is not clear whether he was aware of the decision in **Lejonvarn Burgess** [2020] Costs LR 45 which states that the Court is not constrained by the last approved or agreed budget where an indemnity basis costs order has been made. In **Xtellus**, it appears that the Court had that clarity, and therefore left the matter for the Costs Judge.

Next security for costs under CPR 25. **Baker Botts (UK) LLP v Carbon Holdings Ltd** [2025] EWHC 2225 (Comm) concerns complex proceedings and Texan lawyers claiming for their fees. David Elvin KC was satisfied that the Part 20 claimant would be unable to pay the firm's costs if unsuccessful and security of 75% of £2m was ordered. In addition, even on the defendants' own case, the firm was entitled to be paid for work indisputably done for them, and summary judgment was granted in respect of invoices for that work which claimed a total of US\$1,026,053.60. Those fees would be subject to a common law assessment [emphasis added] and not a detailed assessment to which the Solicitors Act 1974 applied, meaning that the assessment costs will be decided on a "costs follow the event" basis and not under the s70(9) "one fifth" rule.

Returning to "consequential", in **Ellis v John Benson Ltd** [2025] Costs LR 1525, it was common ground that the claimants were the winners and entitled to costs, but it was the defendant's contention that these should be discounted by 20%, and paid on the standard basis, rather than the indemnity basis. Freedman J ordered standard basis costs. The refusal to accept three offers made by the claimants did not constitute unreasonable conduct of a high degree, nor did the failure to accede to a notice to admit. Moreover, the fact that the claimants had

not succeeded in each of their allegations did not mean that they were not overall the successful party. No percentage reduction was justified. It was also appropriate to grant a higher percentage as a payment on account where costs were budgeted. That was because the Court was entitled to assume that a large percentage of the approved costs budget would be recoverable at detailed assessment. 85% was ordered.

Finally, a case on retainers that should be a caution to both barristers and solicitors doing work under Damages Based Agreements (DBA). Having won their case involving a disputed will, the defendants looked to recover costs of £1.3m from the losing claimants. However, in *Reeves v Frain* [2025] EWHC 2311(KB), Dexter Dias J held that the DBAs were unenforceable so nothing was payable. Clause 10.1 was the downfall. *"If you win you agree to pay us [10% for D1 ; 24% for D2] of any money and any non-monetary award or settlement received."* Whilst the defendants had succeeded in obtaining a finding that a will made in their favour was valid "... no assets were transferred. Nothing changed hands. Nothing was recovered .....". It followed that the DBAs did not meet the requirements under the Regulations for permitted payment under Regulation 1(2) and Regulation 4 of the DBA Regulations (2013), so the lawyers won the case, but lost all the costs. Add to that the defendants now having to pay the other side's costs and their own...Ouch!

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

## Introducing Firm Friends: Standing together for solicitor wellbeing

Since 1858, [The Solicitors' Charity](#) <sup>Ⓞ</sup> has been there for solicitors in difficult times – offering confidential, compassionate support when it's needed most. But today, demand for help is rising faster than ever, while traditional sources of funding are under increasing pressure.

That's why we've launched [Firm Friends](#) <sup>Ⓞ</sup> – a new way for the legal sector to come together, show leadership, and make sure no solicitor faces hardship alone.

### What is Firm Friends?

Firm Friends is our voluntary giving initiative, open to law firms, suppliers, insurers, technology providers and sector allies of all sizes. By joining, your organisation makes a commitment to solicitor wellbeing – and helps fund the essential services that keep people in the profession supported, resilient and ready to thrive.

### Why it matters?

Solicitors are the backbone of access to justice – but behind every role are real people facing real challenges. Burnout, redundancy, financial strain, health issues and personal loss are becoming increasingly common. That's where The Solicitors' Charity steps in – providing holistic support across emotional, professional, physical and financial wellbeing.

### The benefits of becoming a Firm Friend

- Be recognised as a supporter of solicitor wellbeing through a digital badge, certificate and acknowledgement across our channels
- Gain early access to wellbeing webinars and resources for your team
- Join a community shaping the future of wellbeing in the legal sector
- Show your clients, colleagues and networks that care and compassion are part of your culture

Whether you contribute as a Supporter, Advocate, or Pioneer, your commitment makes a real difference. Every voluntary donation helps fund direct support where it's needed most.

- **Supporter** – Join the movement: A meaningful first step for organisations who want to stand in solidarity with solicitor wellbeing.
- **Advocate** – Fuel the mission: For those ready to go further, helping us deliver deeper, preventative support for the profession.
- **Pioneer** – Shape the future: A leadership-level commitment for organisations that want to co-create long-term change and set the standard for the sector.

By becoming a Founder Member at any level, your organisation will be recognised as part of the first wave leading this movement for solicitor wellbeing.

### Join the movement

Firm Friends is for every organisation that believes solicitor wellbeing matters – from small firms to major sector suppliers. Together, we can create a profession where people feel safe enough to ask for help, and where support is always within reach. Find out more about Firm Friends [here](#) <sup>Ⓞ</sup>





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# Pet of the Month

**Name:** Sarah Walsh

**Organisation:** The Business Desk

**Pet Name:** Buddy

**Pet Nickname:** Budster

**What kind of pet do you have?**

Cockapoo

**Is your pet:** Male

**How old is your pet:** 4 years old

**Favourite Toy:** Squeaky orange ball

**Favourite Activity:** Fetching and catching the ball

**Favourite Treat:** Bacon twists

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

*My perfect day* would be going to the park, then home for treats and to chill out with my family

*My favourite thing my parents do* is give me treats and cuddles



## Is your pet the perfect poser?

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

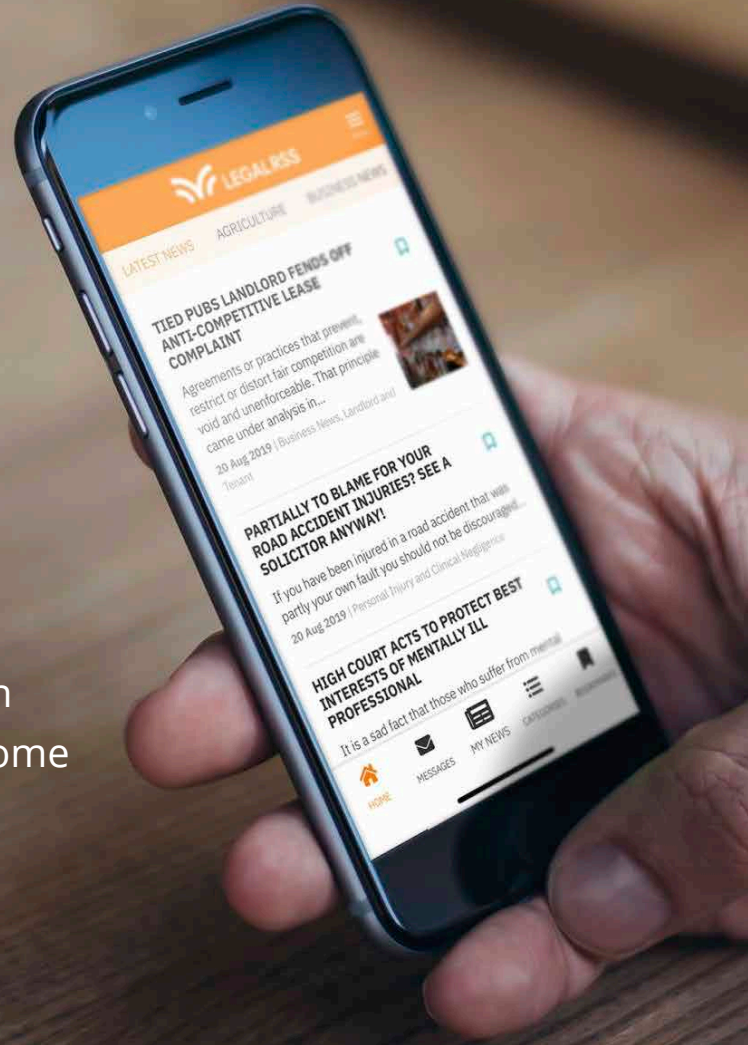
Each month we'll pick a couple of 'Pets of the Month' for the next edition so keep a look out to see if your pet has made it, modelling in *The Messenger* magazine!

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



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