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# the Messenger

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## National Law Society President visit to Manchester



Manchester had the pleasure of welcoming National Law Society President Mark Evans to our city on 11 March 2026. No stranger to Manchester, the President is employed by the University of Law and regularly lectures to students here, so he arrived with a real familiarity with both the city and its legal community. Mark took office as the 181st President of the Law Society of England and Wales in October 2025.

The day began at the Faculty of Law at the University of Manchester, where Mark met with students and academic staff. The President spoke warmly of his visit, noting that he never ceased to be amazed at the talent and ability of the young people entering the profession.

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# From the President

Ian McConkey, President



This month, the focus of activity has been around the financial strategy for MLS for the coming year as well as meeting with the national and major regional law societies.

MLS exists to provide services to its members, whether that be education, lobbying, networking or social activities. Balancing the financial cost and the provision of great services relies on the hard work and dedication of the team at MLS as well as the support of members and the generosity of sponsors. Membership engagement is the key to the success of MLS. Thank you to everyone who gets involved in the activities of MLS and please continue to think about how we can all contribute to the success.

On 11 March the National Law Society President, Mark Evans, was in Manchester for a visit. He has strong links with Manchester as he was a former President of Cheshire and North Wales Law Society and he is a lecturer at the University of Law in Manchester. Although sometimes there is (misguided) argument as to which is the Second City, when it comes to Legal Services, there is no doubt – Mark came armed with the statistics to prove it. The thriving legal sector in Greater Manchester is second only to that in London. There are approximately 7,000 solicitors working in a variety of roles, including in 609 law firms. Those firms contribute £1.53 billion to the economy. The lawyers in the City provide an incredibly diverse range of services to the public, business and institutions. This is, in part, illustrated from the fact that

“

The thriving legal sector in Greater Manchester is second only to that in London

95% of solicitors in Greater Manchester work at small firm of less of than 5 partners and only 0.8% work in firms with over 26 partners. The challenge both for the National Law Society and for MLS is to be relevant across this diverse sector.

Mark paid tribute to Fran’s fantastic contribution to MLS and to the influence she has over other local law societies. Mark was also very complimentary about the contribution of the junior lawyers who accompanied him to participate at a session at MMU.

As well as meeting the National Law Society President, the MLS team are meeting up with the Joint V Law Societies; those of Leeds, Birmingham, Liverpool and Bristol. This is an effective group for sharing best practice and a powerful lobbying group. I will have to try to resist referring to the statistics above and the incontrovertible proof that Manchester is the dominant regional force.

Outside of MLS, the excitement this month has been provided by a Billy Joel tribute act and St Patrick’s Day celebrations.

# the Messenger



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



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**Deadline for the  
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# Entries now closed!

The Manchester Legal Awards closed for entries on 27 March. Thank you to all those who took the time to enter. We appreciate the time and effort put into each nomination.

Our judges will now begin reviewing all submissions and assigning scores. The highestscoring entries will progress to the **shortlist**, which will be announced on **5 May**.

All the shortlisted nominees will be interviewed, in person, at our Judging Day on 12th June.

If you have entered, make sure you keep 12th June free in case you are lucky enough to make it to the shortlist.

To make sure you are there when the

winners are announced on 2nd July, please send us your ticket requests now by completing the form [here](#) @ .

## Some FAQs about the tickets:

### How much are tickets?

Tickets are £130 + VAT per person. You can request any number of tickets but tables are of 10 or 12. Smaller parties are more than welcome and will be seated with other guests on a shared table.

### What's included in the ticket?

Your ticket gives you access to the MLA ceremony including the welcome drinks reception, a three course meal, the first to hear who wins, and the post ceremony entertainment with a live band.





Please make sure you let us know of any access or dietary requirements by 12th June. We cannot guarantee any requests made after this date will be honoured.

### **When will I find out if I got my tickets?**

Due to the high demand for tickets, we prioritise requests from shortlisted nominees and sponsors. We will confirm if we have been able to fulfil your request by Friday 29th May.

### **I/my guests have dietary or access requirements. How do I let you know?**

If you know your guests' needs at the time of booking please include them on the ticket request form. This is especially important for anyone with accessibility requirements so we can ensure they have a suitable table in the room.

When your booking is confirmed, we will ask you again to confirm the specific needs of your guests.

### **I want my guests to be sat in a certain order. How do I let you know?**

With your booking confirmation you will receive a blank table plan for your table. Please complete and return it with the guests' names in the order you'd like them to be seated.

### **How do I pay for my tickets?**

When your tickets are confirmed, you will be sent an invoice. Please ensure that the invoice is paid in advance of the event. Payment details will be listed on the invoice and you can pay by bank transfer, credit/debit card over the phone or by cheque.

**If you require any other information or wish to discuss this further please don't hesitate to contact us at [MLAwards@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:MLAwards@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk)** 

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# EXPERIENCE FIRST

BECAUSE YOUR EXPERIENCE MATTERS

## WHY IS CORPORATE HOSPITALITY STILL SO POWERFUL IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION?



By Caroline Maceleney,  
Joint-MD, Experience First Events  
caroline@experiencefirst.co.uk

In a profession built on trust, relationships remain the true currency of success. It's what drives my own business today and, after more than 30 years in the hospitality industry, I can safely say I would not have succeeded without them.

We understand that when work is complex, high-stakes, and very often collaborative, deals are rarely won through a single meeting or pitch. Instead, they develop through a series of interactions where confidence, credibility and understanding gradually deepens.

### Time and Attention Is The Real Luxury

A meeting agenda may last an hour. An email exchange takes minutes. Whereas, meaningful conversations, the kind that strengthen relationships, rarely happen on a tight schedule. The right hospitality setting creates crucial space for that to happen.

Our clients repeatedly tell us that when people have the time to talk freely, relationships deepen in ways that no formal meeting can quite achieve.



Whether it's a day at Royal Ascot, the relaxed luxury rhythm of Henley Royal Regatta, or the atmosphere surrounding a Grand Prix weekend, these environments provide something difficult to replicate elsewhere: time together without pressure. Even in an increasingly digital business world, trust is still built most effectively through face-to-face interaction.

### The Difference Is A Curated Experience

Of course, the effectiveness of hospitality has always depended on how thoughtfully it is delivered. Details matter. The most memorable days are not always the most extravagant. They are the ones that feel carefully considered, where the setting, the guests, their personal tastes and the elevated atmosphere all align. When that happens, an event becomes something more than hospitality, it is time exceptionally well spent. In a business where relationships still underpin everything, that remains as valuable today as it ever has been.



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# M&A Mixer and Market Update

Wednesday 4 March saw the first ever Manchester Law Society *Corporate and Commercial Law Forum* event: The M&A Mixer and Market Update.

Hosted at the Cupra City Garage in the centre of Manchester, the soldout event proved to be every bit the vibrant, fun and insightful gathering we'd hoped.

The evening began with welcome drinks, sushi, and networking upstairs in the garage – allowing attendees the opportunity to catch up with friends and make new connections.

Afterwards, attendees took their seats downstairs as Jenny Sugiarto, Director at the Competition and Markets Authority delivered a brilliant keynote about merger control, and what we as Corporate lawyers should consider from a competition perspective in the course of running our



transactions. Jenny offered an engaging take on current regulatory pressures and evolving expectations in the M&A landscape, as well as interesting insights into recent cases that the Regulator has called in.

The keynote was followed by a panel discussion on trends in the M&A and Private Equity market with a focus on the North West, both looking back to 2025 and looking forward to the remainder of 2026.

I was delighted to moderate the discussion, and the panellists (Amy Huddleston of Grant Thornton, Courtney Walker of BGF, Max Perry of Knight Corporate Finance and Philip Whitcelo of Sterling Technology) brought a brilliant mix of perspectives: from navigating complex deal timetables and innovative structuring, to the realities of cultural fit, sector-specific challenges, and the increasing role of tech in smoothing (or complicating!) the transaction process. The conversation was lively, candid and with plenty of relatable anecdotes.

A huge thanks to *Sterling Virtual Data Rooms*, the event's sponsor, whose support helped make the evening such a success.





Jenny Sugiarto Session



The event struck the perfect balance between professional insight and relaxed social connection, perfectly aligned with the Corporate and Commercial Law Forum's aims of encouraging (and providing space for) connection, support and knowledge sharing.

It was the kind of evening that reminded everyone why Manchester's legal community is known for being both exceptionally talented and exceptionally welcoming. It certainly left me feeling uplifted and looking forward to more events in the future!

**Seraphina Wilkins-Tolliday**  
Senior Associate, TLT

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# Micromanagement: the small things that add up

Most people don't mean to micromanage. It often starts with wanting to get things right and can also reflect a manager's lack of confidence in their own abilities.

But if you're on the receiving end, it can feel very different.

You might recognise it. A manager who checks everything before it goes out. Being asked to copy them into every email. Having work changed without explanation. Needing approval for decisions you would expect to make yourself.

These may not be a big deal on their own. But they can build up and start to affect how you feel and how you work.

## Why it can be hard to spot

Micromanagement in the legal sector is not always obvious. It often takes the form of small, repeated actions.

Because of this, people don't always recognise it straight away. Instead, they may start to question themselves. Am I doing this wrong? Should I be asking for more help? Is this just how things are done here?

In a sector where standards are high, it's not always easy to tell when support starts to feel like too much control.

## So why does it happen?

Legal work comes with a lot of pressure, so it's not surprising that some managers want to stay very closely involved.

“

Micromanagement in the legal sector is not always obvious. It often takes the form of small, repeated actions.

There are a few common reasons for this:

- wanting to maintain high standards
- worrying about mistakes
- working to tight deadlines
- being used to a culture where mistakes are criticised
- managing teams remotely and wanting to stay involved

Another factor is that many people move into management roles without much training. Without support, it can be difficult to know how to manage others without becoming too involved.

## The impact on people

Micromanagement can affect how you feel about your work, your confidence and



your overall wellbeing. When you are being constantly checked, it can make you feel you are not trusted. You might start to:

- wanting to maintain high standards
- worrying about mistakes
- working to tight deadlines
- being used to a culture where mistakes are criticised

managing teams remotely and wanting to stay involved

It can also affect the wider team. When people feel watched, rather than supported, they are less likely to speak up or share ideas.

The legal profession relies on people using their judgement and thinking clearly. These are not things people can easily do when they are being micromanaged.

People tend to do their best work when they understand what is expected, feel trusted to get on with it, and know they can ask for support if they need it.

### Things to think about as a manager

If you manage others, it might be worth asking yourself:

- Am I giving people space to do their work?
- Do I trust them to make decisions without checking with me?
- Do I focus on results, or do I check every step?

“

People tend to do their best work when they understand what is expected, feel trusted to get on with it...

- Am I making changes because something is incorrect, or just because I would do it differently?
- Do I give positive feedback, or do I tend to focus on what's gone wrong?

The good news is that small changes can make a big difference. Stepping back slightly, being clear about what is needed and by when, and giving people more space can help build trust and confidence. It's also important to let people work in their own way, as long as the work is accurate. Make sure your feedback highlights what's going well, not just what needs to change.

### Next steps

LawCare has more resources for [managers](#) <sup>ⓘ</sup>, and [information and resources](#) <sup>ⓘ</sup> for anyone wanting help and support with their mental health.

You can also contact LawCare for free, confidential support if pressures at work are affecting your mental health or wellbeing. Call 0800 279 6888, email [support@lawcare.org.uk](mailto:support@lawcare.org.uk) <sup>ⓘ</sup> or use the live online chat on the LawCare [website](#) <sup>ⓘ</sup>

# The Art of Managing Perceptions

The many benefits of a strong brand for law firms is a subject that has been raised many times by Bill Kirby in his *Management Matters* section. This has been in relation to the ever recurring issues of stress, burn-out, mental health and wellbeing, workplace culture, staff morale, client and staff recruitment and retention and performance and productivity.

## **The danger of just blanding in with the competition**

My observation is that too many firms in the professional services sectors fail to differentiate themselves effectively and stand out from the crowd in what are highly competitive markets. By just blanding in with the competition, they risk being seen to be essentially undifferentiated me-too service providers, as me-too blands as opposed to the go-to brand and go-to employer in their sector.

As a result, among other consequences, they risk failing to attract and retain the new clients they would like, command the fee levels they aspire to and attract and retain the best talent in order to achieve the levels of performance and profitability they would wish.

## **The art of managing perceptions**

The brand image of a law firm is how the firm is perceived by the outside world – including potential clients and new talent from the employer brand perspective. However, that might not be how it believes it is seen or how it needs to be perceived in order to achieve its business objectives – including how to attract and retain the desired clients and best talent.

I view branding as being ‘the art of managing perceptions’ because in the eyes of the outside world,

perception is reality. Brand image is a passive thing that relates to how a firm is seen based on past exposure and experience at all touchpoints. In contrast, the brand identity of a law firm relates to how it wants and needs to be perceived and be seen to stand for in order to achieve its objectives – and this needs to be properly planned and actively managed.

**“The brand of a law firm is probably the single most important investment it can make in its business.”**

## **The most important investment you can make**

Brand identity is future-focused and strategic in nature and is vital in managing the brand image of a law firm. It is a key strategic asset, a key component of a brand strategy designed to position, communicate and present the firm to best effect in the eyes of all relevant audiences. The brand of a law firm is probably the single most important investment it can make in its business.

However, far too few law firms have a clear sense of their identity,

of what they stand for and need to be seen to stand for. They have no clearly defined brand strategy and without that, any marketing and promotional efforts and investments are likely to be misdirected, ineffective and wasteful. Without clearly defining and consistently communicating their promise and the experience they will deliver, law firms risk not being in control of their positioning, brand image and reputation.

## **So much more than just art for art's sake**

Continuing on the theme of the art of managing perceptions in terms of the brand identity of a law firm, the impact and potential benefits of art in the modern workplace go far beyond its superficial appearance. The presence of art can lead to a more positive sense of community and more engaged and motivated management, staff and employees at all levels. With its ability to transform otherwise potentially sterile and featureless offices into more engaging, stimulating and uplifting places to work, the presence of art can play a key role in shaping a positive workplace culture.

Importantly, it can have very beneficial effects in terms of addressing the often interrelated challenges that law firms face today including stress, burn-out, mental health and wellbeing, staff morale, motivation and job

satisfaction – not to mention client and staff recruitment and retention and the overall efficiency, productivity and performance levels of the firm.

Investment in art in a law firm's office has the power to transform the workplace into an inspiring environment that everyone looks forward to being in. At the same time, it serves to demonstrate the firm's values and culture, support employee well-being and enhance its brand identity. It can elevate the mood and serve as a source of inspiration and motivation that can stimulate conversations among employees and clients alike and foster a sense of community, collaboration, open dialogue and pride in the workplace.

### Creating a powerful first and lasting impression

The considered placement of art throughout a workplace can create visually appealing and welcoming

environments for existing and prospective new clients and employees alike starting with the reception and conference and meeting rooms. In client-facing spaces, engaging art can help shape visitor perceptions and create an enduring impression of a firm's brand personality, culture and values.

Paintings with vibrant and energetic colours and dynamic textures can be strategically placed in certain areas as a source of inspiration designed to stimulate imaginative thinking while paintings with cool and soft colours with a calming influence can feature in areas intended for relaxation and refocus.



Abstract paintings in particular can play an important strategic role in the brand identity of a law firm as it calls for a degree of involvement, imagination and interpretation on the part of those who view it. It can help to position the firm as a forward-thinking, approachable and accessible brand while maintaining the essential element of professionalism.

### Phil Strachan – The Think Brand not bland Guy.

Brand, Identity and Graphic Design Specialist. Phil can be contacted on 07770 753 975 [linkedin.com/in/philstrachan](https://www.linkedin.com/in/philstrachan) @

## ORIGINAL ABSTRACT ART by EHLake

Hand-painted acrylic on canvas originals by Norwegian-born Eirin Hallangen-Lake in her studio in the North West of England.

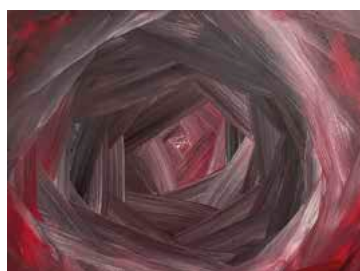
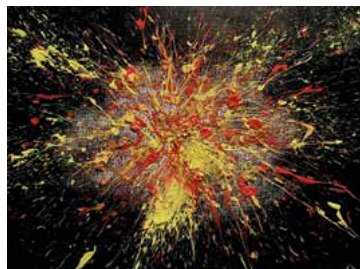
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## Decisions, decisions... why your brain gets tired (and what to do about it)

You might not realise it, but the average person makes somewhere between 30,000 and 35,000 decisions every single day. From what to wear and eat, to how to respond to emails or what task to tackle next – your brain is constantly choosing. No wonder it sometimes feels...tired!



Mike Ode

That's where decision fatigue comes in. Decision fatigue is what happens when your mental energy for making choices starts to run low. The more decisions you make, the harder each one becomes. Your brain, trying to conserve energy, starts to look for shortcuts – and not always the good kind.

So, what does this look like in real life? It can show up in a few familiar ways. You might procrastinate, putting off decisions altogether because they feel too overwhelming. Or you might avoid them completely, hoping they'll resolve themselves (they rarely do). On the flip side, you could make impulsive decisions just to "get it over with," which often leads to regret later. And sometimes, you simply make poor choices because your brain is too drained to think things through properly.

The good news? Decision fatigue is manageable. A few small changes can make a big difference.

First, try to make important decisions when you're at your best. If you're a morning person, tackle key choices early in the day when your mind is fresh. If you're sharper in the afternoon, plan accordingly. Timing matters more than you think. Personally, I'm an early bird, up and working around 5am. I do my best work then.

Next, reduce the number of trivial decisions you have to make. This could be as simple as planning your meals in advance, setting a weekly outfit routine, or creating a structured daily schedule. Less mental clutter means more energy for the decisions that actually matter.

Delegation is another powerful tool. If a decision doesn't absolutely require you, pass it on. Trusting others not only frees up your time but also preserves your mental energy.

It also helps to set clear priorities. When you know what truly matters, decisions become easier because you have a framework to guide you.

Finally, don't underestimate the basics: rest, food, and breaks. A tired, hungry brain is far more likely to struggle with decisions.

In short, you can't avoid making decisions – but you can get smarter about when and how you make them. And your brain will definitely thank you for it.

Do you or your team need a hand with how you manage your time, make decisions and prioritise?  
 Contact Mike direct for a chat at [mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk](mailto:mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk) @

# JOIN BSN (NORTH)



The Black Solicitors Network (BSN) is a not-for-profit company committed to promoting diversity and inclusion within the legal profession through its programme of networking, career development, student engagement, and regulatory consultation activities.

BSN North is looking for new committee members to support its activities. We are looking for trainees or qualified solicitors, working in Manchester, who are passionate about ED&I, eager to broaden their professional and social network, proactive, and willing to contribute to the planning and delivery of events and other programmes.

## INTERESTED IN JOINING US?

If you are interested in joining the BSN North committee, please contact:

[daniela@blacksolicitorsnetwork.org](mailto:daniela@blacksolicitorsnetwork.org)

**FIND OUT MORE  
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## OUR 4 SUBCOMMITTEES

- 1 Grassroots**  
This subcommittee focuses on hosting events that provide students with insights into the legal profession.
- 2 Professional Development**  
This subcommittee is dedicated to promoting the continuous professional development and advancing the skillset of those in the legal profession.
- 3 Events**  
This subcommittee is responsible for planning and delivering large-scale events, such as Black History Month celebrations.
- 4 Health and Wellbeing**  
This subcommittee focuses on promoting health and wellbeing across the network by organising activities such as Pilates sessions and 5-a-side football.

# Regulation Update & News



By **Andrea Cohen**, Compli, Weightmans

March saw a series of developments highlighting increasing regulatory pressure on solicitors, particularly (but not unusually) in relation to anti-money laundering supervision, client accounts and practice authorisation, alongside continued fallout from the Mazur decision on reserved legal activities.

## **AML enforcement: tougher treatment of law firms**

The enforcement gap between the legal and accountancy sectors continues to widen. A report by the Office for Professional Body Anti-Money Laundering Supervision (OPBAS) shows that law firms are subject to significantly more inspections and materially higher fines than accountancy practices. Legal regulators carried out substantially more on-site visits during the most recent reporting period, 2023/24, with average fines for law firms many times higher than those imposed on accountants.

For solicitors, the message is clear: AML supervision remains a priority area for the SRA, with increased inspections and enforcement activity likely to continue. We reported extensively last year on the increasing number and level of fines, and there's already been a raft of letters to firms from the SRA in the first 3 months of this year regarding inspections (desk based and in person visits), so it's likely the number of investigations will rise in the run up to the FCA taking over the work of all 25 organisations responsible at present. Firms undertaking higher-risk work, particularly conveyancing and transactional matters, should expect ongoing scrutiny and ensure that risk assessments, policies and controls are demonstrably effective.

If you've not yet had an independent AML audit, or not had one recently, now is the time to get one booked in. While you can't turn the clock back, you can get your firm into the best position possible before an SRA visit and prior

to the FCA taking over.

## **Client account interest levy: cost risks for the profession**

The MoJ consultation on its proposal to introduce an Interest on Lawyers' Client Accounts (ILCA) scheme and retain 50% of the interest generated on individual client accounts, and 75% on pooled client accounts, which would be remitted into central funds, closed on 9 March 2026, with representative bodies (including the Law Society and regional societies) continuing to oppose the plan, arguing it will increase costs, hit high street firms disproportionately and may push clients to unregulated providers. Without saying whether it was in favour of the scheme or not, in its response to the consultation, the SRA emphasised the operational and financial implications for both the SRA and solicitors, warning that the government proposals could result in higher costs for the regulator and, ultimately, the profession. The SRA highlighted that there may be a need for new IT systems, additional data collection, and ongoing enforcement activity. As the SRA is funded through practising certificate fees, it cautioned that these costs may need to be passed on to firms if the proposals proceed.

## **Conveyancing: HMRC tax adviser registration may be deferred**

Further regulatory uncertainty emerged for conveyancers following HMRC guidance confirming that firms submitting stamp duty land tax returns will fall within the new mandatory tax adviser registration regime. While the requirement is currently expected to



apply from May, there are growing indications that registration for parts of the financial services sector may be deferred, raising hopes that conveyancers could benefit from a similar postponement. The Law Society has warned that imposing registration requirements on conveyancers risks slowing transactions and adding unnecessary complexity to already heavily regulated processes. Firms involved in property work should continue to monitor developments closely.

### **Mazur fallout: limits on who can conduct litigation**

The professional consequences of the Mazur ruling continue to unfold. In March, a senior and highly experienced family lawyer was prevented from acting in Children Act proceedings after the court refused to grant an exemption allowing her to conduct litigation. The decision reinforces the strict interpretation of reserved legal activities following Mazur even where removal of a practitioner causes practical difficulties for clients. Judgment in the Appeal was reserved, with no date, as at the date of writing, for it to be handed down. Firms must ensure that only properly authorised individuals conduct litigation and that supervision arrangements comply with current regulatory guidance.

### **Disciplinary round-up**

**March also brought a number of significant disciplinary decisions, underlining continued regulatory focus on client money, authorisation and professional integrity.**

### **Client accounts used as banking facilities**

An international firm was fined £18,000 after staff allowed its client account to be used as a banking facility during a commercial property transaction. The SRA found that

payments were made from the client account that were not connected to an underlying legal transaction, creating a risk of substantial harm. While the misconduct was not found to be deliberate or reckless, the case serves as a reminder of the strict limits on the use of client accounts.

### **Dishonesty and exceptional circumstances**

A solicitor who admitted lying during a secretly recorded meeting avoided being struck off after the SDT accepted that he had acted to protect a client under extreme pressure. The tribunal imposed a suspension, stressing that the outcome was based on exceptional circumstances and should not be taken as a signal of greater tolerance for dishonesty.

### **Unauthorised practice**

A partner was suspended for nine months after running an unauthorised sole practice for more than three years. The tribunal found that clients had been placed at risk as a result of her practising without authorisation and holding client money when not entitled to do so, emphasising the importance of maintaining proper authorisation at all times.

### **Serious client account misuse**

A City solicitor who had sole access to one of the firm's accounts to which he transferred funds from the client account, was struck off after falsifying bank statements to conceal a £2.1 million client account shortage and misappropriating almost £1m. The tribunal found extensive dishonesty, including misappropriation of client funds and deliberate attempts to mislead regulators, and misleading clients who believed he had safeguarded their money. He was struck off and ordered to pay £65,000 costs.



From page 1

## National Law Society President visit to Manchester (continued)

His optimism for the future of the profession was evident, a fitting sentiment from a president whose key themes for his year of office include building a profession fit for the future.

Mark then joined leaders and senior representatives of in-house legal teams from across Greater Manchester for an In-House Roundtable, kindly hosted by the General Medical Council. Operating under Chatham House Rules, the discussion provided a rare and valuable opportunity for frank dialogue. The President reflected that it was invaluable to hear directly from in-house practitioners about the challenges affecting them and their teams and was pleased by how open and forthcoming participants were in sharing their views.

Key topics included professional ethics, artificial intelligence and technology,

diversity and inclusion, learning and development and the very real pressures on in-house counsel to adopt AI-driven solutions in an effort to drive down costs. Health and wellbeing also featured prominently given that solicitors score lower than the UK average on all positive measures of wellbeing.

The President then attended a meeting with Manchester Law Society officers, where he outlined his three core presidential themes; a profession fit for the future; championing members and supporting solicitor wellbeing, before a lively and candid debate on various topics including wellbeing, the SQE and AI. The President explained that he was a passionate supporter of local law societies and the work done by them and spoke with first-hand knowledge as a Past President of Chester and North Wales Law Society. The





President extended a special vote of thanks to CEO Fran Eccles-Beck for her many years of loyal service to Manchester Law Society, which was warmly received by all present.

The day concluded with a meeting of private client lawyers, kindly hosted by Brabners.

On his visit, Mark commented: "It was a pleasure to join colleagues in Manchester last month. I had the opportunity to meet with a wide range of solicitors and future solicitors, particularly those working in-

house and doing private client work. I would like to thank Manchester Law Society for their warm welcome and for sharing their thoughts on the future of the legal profession with me."

We are grateful for the President's time and commitment to engaging directly with the Manchester legal community.

**David Joseph**

**Partner at gunnercooke & National Law Society Council Member for Manchester**





## “If you could have dinner with any legal figure, real or fictional, who would it be and why?”

**Daniel Weed**  
**Director, Managing  
Partner & Compliance  
Officer**  
**Burton Copeland**

“Atticus Finch from To Kill a Mockingbird

He fought for the underdog when all abandoned and condemned Tom Robinson, a Black man falsely accused in the segregated American South

He bestowed wisdom and moral courage, both as a

father and as a lawyer. As a parent he taught by quiet example and encouraged empathy, I would ask his advice on both being a successful father and lawyer and teach me the virtues of calmness in adversity.

Professionally, Atticus represented the highest ideals of the legal profession. He demonstrated courage, fairness, and unwavering commitment to justice despite intense community hostility. Unassuming but



a true leader and after a night with him hopefully his view that true strength lies in empathy, fairness, and doing what is right, even when the odds are against you, would rub off on me!”

**Anne Marie Nicholls**  
**Senior Associate**  
**Olliers Solicitors**

“I would love to have dinner with the extremely witty and entertaining Horace Rumpole, of the Bailey. The character, created by John Mortimer who was himself barrister, sparkled both in the book series and the TV series that followed.



A close university friend of mine bought me the first volume in the series when we were both undergraduates – and I was immediately completely hooked.

I read all the books at university at night when I had completed my university work for the day and if I was travelling anywhere there would be a copy in my rucksack.

Dinner with Rumpole (and it would have to be in the form of Leo McKern who portrayed him perfectly on TV) would involve steak and kidney pudding accompanied by over boiled vegetables and washed down with a bottle of Chateau Thames Embankment whilst being regaled with his exploits in his most famous case The Penge Bungalow Murders.

The bill, or course, would go on his legendary pub tab.”

**Martyn Best**  
**Founder and Chief**  
**Executive**  
**Document Direct**

"I'd invite Harvey Specter (Suits) and if he could bring Donna, so much the better.

He's clearly an entertaining and witty character, and it would be fascinating to understand how he analyses situations and looks beyond the obvious. He'd be highly quotable of course, and it would be interesting to see if he orders the meal for us all,

and how he negotiates us into eating something we wouldn't have naturally requested.

I'd love to get under the skin of him believing that "Anyone can do my job, but no-one can be me" and an attitude that says, 'When you're backed against the wall, break the goddamn thing down.'"



**Shane Smith**  
**Associate**  
**Slater and Gordon**

"One of my top legal dinner guests would be America's 16th President: Abraham Lincoln. Often credited as a highly respected, self-taught lawyer, 'Honest Abe' had a renowned reputation for honesty and fairness. From issuing the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, to signing the National Banking Act which established a stable national currency to formally establishing the Thanksgiving Holiday and not forgetting his iconic Gettysburg Address highlighting equality and



democracy there would be lots to talk about. It would be interesting to ask how he navigated the legal and ethical challenges of suspending habeas corpus. Also, given the 161 years since his assassination, it would be interesting to hear his views on the America of today. Having also been in the very same

Ford Theatre in which he was assassinated in Washington DC it would be good to get his thoughts on all of the conspiracy theories about his death since his assassination!"

“  
**Honest Abe'**  
 had a renowned  
 reputation for  
 honesty and  
 fairness



## “If you could have dinner with any legal figure, real or fictional, who would it be and why?”

**Lucy Cresswell**  
**Associate**  
**Vault Private Client**

“It has to be Elle Woods as she is the ultimate inspiration for young women in law because she proves you can be smart, stylish, and unstoppable all at once. Armed with confidence, pink outfits, and serious determination, she smashes every stereotype thrown her way at Harvard Law. People doubt her, but Elle turns that doubt into motivation, showing that hard work and self-belief always win. She reminds future lawyers that authenticity is a superpower.

What like its hard!?”



“

Elle turns that doubt into motivation, showing that hard work and self-belief always win

**Steve Kuncewicz**  
**Partner – Head Of Creative,**  
**Digital & Marketing**  
**Glaisyers ETL Global**

“Judge Dredd. He’d have a truly unique insight into the effective collaboration between the Courts and Law Enforcement, and his unique set of skills would come in useful if the restaurant expects a heftier tip than his government salary allows.”



“

He’d have a truly unique insight into the effective collaboration between the Courts and Law Enforcement



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# EMPLOYMENT LAW *Conference*

*featuring*

**19** MAY



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**  
REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT  
JUDGE FRANEY

**09:00 — 14:00**  
**MANCHESTER HALL**

*More  
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# Manchester Women in Criminal Law: Celebrating Three Years of Community, Progress, and Purpose

February and March were eventful months for [Manchester Women in Criminal Law](#) <sup>Ⓞ</sup>, marked by two events that show who we are at our core, supportive, resilient and absolutely committed to lifting each other in a profession that demands everything from us.

## Our Third Birthday Celebration – 13 February at Hallé St Peter’s

On 13 February we celebrated our third birthday at Hallé St Peter’s. Three years since we decided Manchester needed a space where women in criminal law could connect, be visible, refer work, support each other, and actually talk honestly about the realities of our jobs.

The growth since then has been incredible. Our community now spans solicitors, barristers, pupils, paralegals, CILEX Advocates, students, academics, clerks, legal execs, practice managers, admin teams, probation and police liaison staff, and so many allied professionals. Different roles, shared purpose, that’s our strength.

We all know the truth about this profession. It’s tough. The hours, the pressure, the emotional toll, the conditions... and yet we keep showing up. What Manchester WICL proves loudly is that we don’t have to do it alone.

One of the standout contributions of the night came from Rebecca Filetti, Barrister at Lincoln House Chambers, who summed up the daily grind with wit that only a criminal practitioner could pull off:

“There’s no running water in the Ladies’ toilet at Crown Square and yet none of us caught cholera. What a success!”

From there, she drew on Wicked, comparing MWCL to Elphaba and Glinda, women who choose deep friendship and solidarity over competition:

“Does that not sum up WICL? Women prioritising friendship, support and strength over competitiveness.”

And she delivered a line that will stick with many of us:

“Too loud, too argumentative, and obviously too wise.”

Before ending with: “For all the witches who’ve gone before us... let’s start our fourth year lifting each other up. A massive round of applause for being absolutely wicked.”

As the amazing contributions continued, we then heard from Rebecca Penfold, Barrister at St John’s Buildings and Chair of Manchester WICL, who grounded the night in purpose:

“Today is our third birthday and it’s Galentine’s Day. Whether by coincidence or destiny, WICL was born on a day dedicated to women uplifting and empowering one another.”

“Yes, it’s Friday the 13th, once sacred to the divine feminine before it was rebranded as unlucky. Tonight, we reclaim it.”



She captured the truth of our professional lives:

“We celebrate what we’ve achieved, alongside surviving a system that sometimes feels like it’s crumbling around us.”

Her words about visibility and women at the top of the profession hit home, especially when she spoke about Vanessa Thompson, another of our committee members and our newly crowned KC at Nine Chambers:

“Vanessa shows every woman that what we’ve been told is unachievable is achievable, that women at the criminal Bar in Manchester can and should rise to the very top.”

And she didn’t shy away from reality, continuing with:

“Since Nina Grahame KC, twelve men have taken silk in Manchester and not a single woman. Twelve to one. That ratio is a travesty, and it must change.”

But she finished with hope, belief, and pride:

“Vanessa will lead the way and the brilliant women in this room will follow, applying earlier and applying boldly. Ladies, you do WICL proud.”

The speeches finished with Vanessa Thompson who then spoke with the mix of honesty and humour we know and love and with a message that fits Manchester WICL to its core. She acknowledged how strange and exhilarating the moment feels, and how impostor syndrome can creep in for many women:

“We overthink, we question ourselves, but that isn’t a weakness. It’s what makes us check and get it right.”

Her central image was the one that stuck with everyone:

“We don’t just climb the ladder, we widen it, we strengthen it, and we hold it steady for the next woman up.”

She spoke about the grind of the publicly funded Bar, the uneven opportunities, and the importance of mentors and allies, women and men, who drop ladders down when they’re further up:



“Take the opportunities when they come, grab them with both hands and know you won’t be climbing alone.”

Vanessa also reminded us that the work we do affects our families, our time, and our lives and that making it worthwhile matters. Above all, she called this what it is for many of us: a sisterhood. Manchester WICL adds another level to that sisterhood, real support, real referrals, real community and we’re stronger for it. I certainly know I am grateful for these women.

### **From Galantines to International Women’s Day – Manchester Crown Court, Crown Square**

A few weeks later, we gathered again, this time inside Manchester Crown Court, marking International Women’s Day in the heart of the criminal justice system. A place where women have always belonged, even when the walls didn’t reflect us.

This year’s event showcased the Women’s Faces Project, the inspiring brainchild of Katy Thorne KC, the original founder of WICL. In 2023, she organised the first-ever set of women’s portraits for criminal courts. And before we go any further, it’s worth recognising just how absurd that fact is!

Because before 2023, the number of women’s portraits on the walls of criminal court robing rooms and bar messes across England was exactly:

**Zero!!**

Not one.

Not a single face.

Centuries of criminal justice... and the walls suggested women had never set foot inside a courtroom, let alone shaped it.

When you say it out loud, it’s outrageous. And Manchester, progressive, outspoken, justice-driven Manchester, didn’t get its first women’s portraits until now 2026.

We managed to develop AI, electric cars, and reusable rockets faster than we managed to put women on the courtroom walls.

Because of Katy’s persistence (and patience that frankly deserves its own entry in the Honours List), the first portraits were finally installed at Crown Square, giving long-overdue visibility to the women who shaped and continue to shape criminal practice.

We were honoured to have HH Judge Nicholas Dean KC, Honorary Recorder of Manchester, help host the event and deliver a thoughtful, generous speech. His support for the project and for women in the profession more widely means a lot to everyone present.

Even more special was joining up by live link with Katy Thorne KC and the celebrations taking place simultaneously at Southwark Crown Court and Sheffield Crown Court. Three courts, three bar messes, one message: women belong here, and we are only getting stronger.

### **The Women Honoured**

#### **Dame Rose Heilbron**

In 1949, Dame Rose Heilbron became one of the first two female King’s Counsel in England. She went on to become the first female Recorder and later the second woman appointed as a High Court Judge.

#### **Edith Hesling**

Called to the Bar by Gray’s Inn in 1923, Edith Hesling was the first woman on the

**Continued on page 32**



WOMEN IN JUDICIAL HISTORY Dame Rose Heilbron

Dame Rose Heilbron



WOMEN IN JUDICIAL HISTORY Edith Hesling

Edith Hesling



WOMEN IN JUDICIAL HISTORY Dame Elizabeth Lane

Dame Elizabeth Lane



WOMEN IN JUDICIAL HISTORY Nicola Gatto

Nicola Gatto

“

If witches are women who widen ladders, lift each other up, and occasionally terrify the status quo, then Manchester is absolutely crawling with them and long may it continue



WOMEN IN JUDICIAL HISTORY Baroness Patricia Scotland

Baroness Patricia Scotland



WOMEN IN JUDICIAL HISTORY Baroness Sue Carr

Baroness Sue Carr



WOMEN IN JUDICIAL HISTORY Dame Margaret Obi

Dame Margaret Obi



Northern Circuit. She later became the first woman to preside over a County Court as a Deputy Judge.

### **Dame Elizabeth Lane**

In 1965, Dame Elizabeth Lane became the first woman appointed as a High Court Judge in England and Wales. In 1979, she became the first female Lord Justice of Appeal.

### **Nicola Gatto**

Nicola Gatto was widely respected for her exemplary advocacy, professionalism and integrity throughout a distinguished legal career.

### **Baroness Patricia Scotland**

Appointed to the House of Lords in 1997, Baroness Scotland holds the distinction of being the first Black woman and the youngest woman to take silk.

### **Baroness Sue Carr**

In 2023, Baroness Sue Carr was appointed Lady Chief Justice of England and Wales, becoming the first woman to lead the judiciary in nearly 800 years.

### **Dame Margaret Obi**

Dame Margaret Obi began her career as a criminal defence solicitor in 1998, became a partner in 2002, served as an acting judge of the Supreme Court of the British Indian Ocean Territory, and was appointed a High Court Judge in 2025.

These women changed the landscape. And now their faces, finally, are on the walls where they always should have been and here for you to see now, in the reflection of the pictures are those who attended and supported the event and hopefully some of

the future faces of the portraits.

One of the most beautiful moments for me at the Women's Faces event and one that will stay with many of us, was seeing the families of the women being honoured standing beneath their portraits. Edith Hesling's great granddaughter was there, quietly taking in the sight of her trailblazing relative finally given her place on the walls of Manchester Crown Court. Members of Nicola Gatto's family also attended, proud and visibly moved as they watched her legacy recognised in the very building where she spent so much of her professional life. There were tears from Nicky's old colleagues, a reminder of just how deeply these women shaped the profession, and how powerfully their stories still resonate across generations.

### **Looking Forward**

We support, retain and celebrate women in criminal practice, and we make sure none of us feel we have to do this alone.

We refer work.

We mentor.

We share opportunities.

We lift each other.

And we are helping change the culture of criminal law in this city, one connection at a time.

If witches are women who widen ladders, lift each other up, and occasionally terrify the status quo, then Manchester is absolutely crawling with them and long may it continue. Here's to another year of clever, chaotic, brilliant women doing what we do best: supporting each other and mildly scaring the patriarchy.

### **Claire Parrott**

**Managing Partner at Tuckers Solicitors & Manchester Women in Criminal Law Committee Member**

Click for more info

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## Myerson Wins “Best Place to Work – Law Firms” at the British Conveyancing Awards 2026

**Myerson’s Residential Property Team** celebrated success at last night’s British Conveyancing Awards, taking home the “Best Place to Work – Law Firms” award.

The ceremony took place at Manchester Cathedral and was organised by Today’s Media, publishers of the online trade publication Today’s Conveyancer, recognising excellence and innovation across the conveyancing profession.

The award represents another accolade for Myerson’s distinctive workplace culture, which places people at the heart of the firm’s success. As a 100% employee-owned law firm,

Myerson has built a culture that encourages collaboration, provides strong employee benefits and prioritises a healthy work-life balance.



**Heather Adams**, Partner and Head of Residential Property at Myerson, said: “We are absolutely delighted to receive the ‘Best Place to Work – Law Firms’ award. Conveyancing can be a demanding sector, so creating a supportive environment where people feel valued and able to maintain a healthy work-life balance is incredibly important.

At Myerson, we are proud of the collaborative culture we have built and the support we provide for our people. When our team feels motivated and supported, it enables them to deliver the best possible service for our clients.”

Myerson’s Residential Property Team, led by Heather Adams, has continued to grow in response to increasing demand. The department currently comprises six fee earners, three Legal PAs and an apprentice, with further recruitment underway as the team expands.

Heather added: “Our culture is fundamental to our success. Being employee-owned means that everyone is invested in the firm and in supporting one another. It’s also what helps us attract and retain talented people as our team continues to grow.”



(L-R) Heather Adams and Carly Traverse

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**MAXIMISING EFFICIENCY WITH  
INTRANET, WORKFLOWS,  
AND MICROSOFT 365**



## Pannone wins at the Legal 500 Northern Powerhouse Awards

**Pannone** was named the Diversity, Inclusion and Equality Firm of the Year at the 2026 Northern Powerhouse Awards.

The awards shine a spotlight on the top law firms, lawyers and in-house legal departments across the whole of the north, recognising the exceptional work done in the past 18 months.

The nominations and winners are selected based on Legal 500's market-leading, independent research, drawing from the latest Legal 500 UK 2026 research. The winners are selected by a judging team led by Legal 500 UK regions editor Amy Ulliott, UK regions deputy editor Edgar Tate, and senior research editor Allan Cohen, supported by the research team, which produces the UK guide every year.

Commenting on the win, Pannone partner Sarah Bazaraa, said: "We're really proud of this award which recognises the firm's long-term commitment to developing, nurturing and promoting talent. I joined the firm as a trainee and been promoted to partner so have experienced first-hand the value of being mentored and forging a career in such a supportive culture."

Senior partner, Paul Jonson, added: "As a Manchester firm up against some global and national firms, it's very pleasing to be recognised for our culture. As a values-led organisation, diversity, inclusion and equality is in our DNA and we're grateful to our people, clients and partners who are all key to this success."



## Aequitas Legal Named Law Firm of the Year at the 2026 Modern Claims Awards

**Aequitas Legal** has been named Law Firm of the Year at the 2026 Modern Claims Awards, securing national recognition for its peoplecentred approach and innovative contribution to the sector.

This latest success follows another major accolade, with the firm also winning Claimant Team of the Year at the Personal Injury Awards in November 2025, reinforcing Aequitas Legal's reputation for excellence across client care and case outcomes.

The Modern Claims Award recognises firms demonstrating exceptional commitment to clients, strong internal culture, effective use of technology, and meaningful contribution to the wider legal community. For Aequitas Legal, the honour reflects the way its team supports injured people through some of the most challenging moments of their lives while maintaining a collaborative, valuesdriven working environment.

Rhys Davies, Managing Director, commented: "Awards like these matter because they recognise the real work

“

Awards like these matter because they recognise the real work happening behind the scenes

happening behind the scenes - the care, dedication and teamwork that's put into every case. Technical expertise is essential, but what makes the biggest difference for our clients is empathy, clarity in communication and the willingness to go the extra mile to get them the best outcome possible, even when the route to justice isn't straightforward."

The recognition comes during a period of strong development for the firm, driven by investment in staff wellbeing, technology, streamlined processes, and a commitment to sector-leading client experience. These improvements also build on Aequitas' long-standing ethos: putting people at the heart of every decision.





## Myerson celebrates successful A Taste of Altrincham Festival as headline sponsor for second year

**Myerson** is celebrating the success of this year's *A Taste of Altrincham*, having returned as headline sponsor for the second consecutive year.

The 10-day festival, which ended on 8 March 2026, brought together residents, visitors and local businesses to celebrate Altrincham's thriving food and drink scene. A diverse programme of events, tastings, demonstrations and family-friendly activities took place across the town.

As a firm deeply rooted in Altrincham, Myerson played an active role throughout the festival, supporting local hospitality

businesses and helping showcase the town's vibrant culinary offering.

The festival began with a launch party, welcoming local hospitality and leisure businesses alongside members of the media to officially kick off the programme of events and celebrate the town's thriving independent sector.

Throughout the festival, Myerson organised eight client events across a range of local venues. The firm also engaged with members of the public in the town centre with its popular Giant Myerson Wheel, adding to the festival atmosphere.

A Taste of Altrincham Pudding Competition Winners and Judges

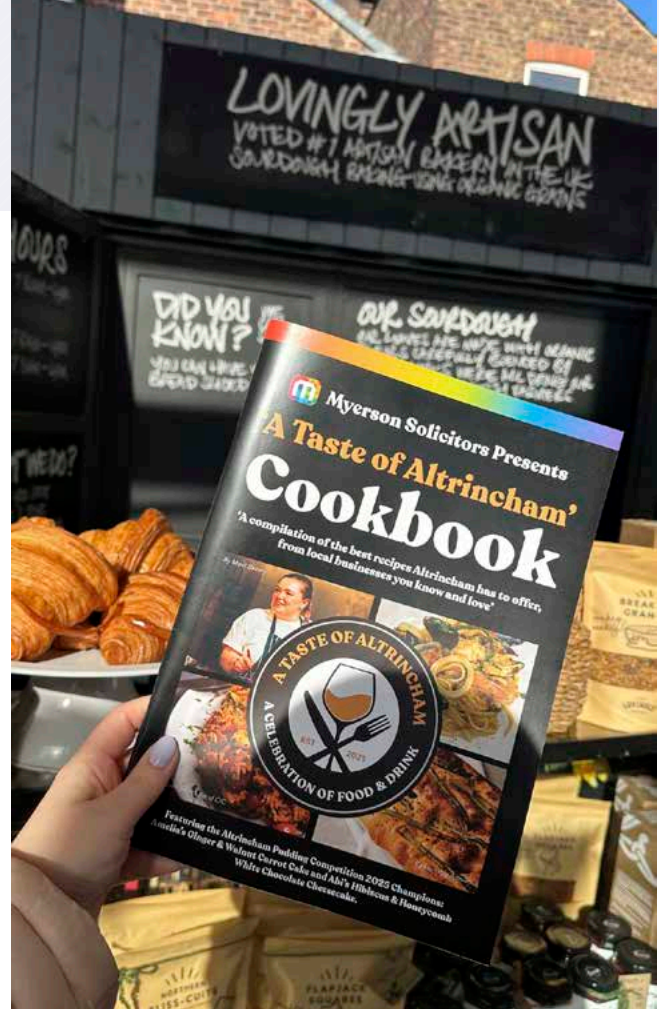


Myerson also launched the *A Taste of Altrincham* Cookbook, bringing together a curated collection of recipes and drinks from some of the town's best-known hospitality businesses. The cookbook allows readers to recreate elements of the festival experience at home.

Competitions were another highlight of this year's festival. [Carl Newton, CEO of Myerson](#) <sup>®</sup>, returned as a judge for the Ultimate Pudding Competition, which featured three categories: children, students and adults. He was joined by Lisa Warnes, Founder of the Cheshire Cookery School; Matt Townley, award-winning baker and founder of MOST Bakery; and baker, cookbook author and former Great British Bake-Off contestant Maisam Algirgeet. Judges praised the exceptionally high standard of entries, which ranged from classic puddings to creative sweet treats.

Myerson was also represented in the festival's Table Setting Competition, which showcased the creativity and hospitality skills of students from Trafford and Stockport College Group. Emily Brooks, Senior People Executive at Myerson, joined the judging panel alongside Helen Wood, Vice Principal at Stockport and Trafford College Group; Paul Peachey of Oyez Arts; and Nina Daniels, Founder of NINA D and bespoke tableware designer.

Carl Newton, CEO of Myerson Solicitors, said: "A Taste of Altrincham is a fantastic celebration of everything that makes our town such a vibrant and exciting place. The food and drink scene here is truly exceptional, and the festival is a brilliant opportunity to support and showcase the talented businesses that make Altrincham so special.



"As a firm proudly based in the town, we were delighted to support the festival for the second year as headline sponsor and to play our part in bringing the community together to celebrate local hospitality, creativity and innovation."

Organised by Altrincham BID, the team behind Visit Altrincham, *A Taste of Altrincham* continues to grow as a highlight of the town's annual calendar, attracting visitors from across Greater Manchester and beyond.

*A Taste of Altrincham* Cookbook is now digitally available [here](#) <sup>®</sup>.



## Forbes Solicitors acquires prominent employment law firm as it continues ambitious growth

**Forbes Solicitors** (Forbes) has announced the acquisition of North West-based Legal 500 and Chambers tier 1 boutique employment firm, e3 employment law LLP (e3).

The acquisition sees three new partners join Forbes – Simon Ost, Nick Jones and Dan Bickerstaffe.

With 11 offices nationwide, the firm has 64 partners and nearly 400 staff, advising on a wide range of commercial, public sector and personal matters. The acquisition strengthens Forbes' employment team and expands the firm's service offering to both existing clients and e3's established client base.

Pauline Wild, managing partner at Forbes, said: "Our vision is to be the number one regional law firm with a national reach. e3 is a perfect acquisition to help us deliver against that promise, bringing outstanding

client experience and a brilliant team of lawyers."

Jonathan Holden, National Head of Employment at Forbes, adds: "Dan, Simon and Nick have built an enviable business that punches above its weight and we embrace that entrepreneurial spirit and experience. It's clear that they always go the extra mile for clients, which mirrors our own approach to delivering exceptional client results – just like we do at Forbes.

"What's more, e3 co-founder Dan Bickerstaffe was previously an associate at Forbes so knows our authentic and united culture first hand and we knew it would be a great fit. I look forward to working closely with the e3 team as we deliver against our shared ambitions."

Forbes' employment team has grown by more than 300 % in the last 10 years; the acquisition will accelerate that growth while

(L-R) Pauline Wild, Nick Jones, Jonathan Holden, Dan Bickerstaffe, Simon Ost



maintaining consistently excellent client service. The team is now one of the largest employment teams by headcount and specialism in the North West

Dan Bickerstaffe, partner at e3, commented: "We established e3 to create a specialist law firm focused on effectively and efficiently delivering the needs of today's business community.

"Joining forces with Forbes was a logical next step in our evolution. There are very few firms like Forbes which deliver a truly full-service offering across commercial, public sector and private client from a regional HQ. We look forward to bringing our expertise to the firm and driving growth across the North West, while benefiting from the wider team, reach and resources that will enable us to serve our clients even better."

## Clarke Willmott announces support for the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter

**Clarke Willmott LLP** is proud to announce that it has become an official supporter of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter, reaffirming its commitment to being an inclusive, fair and responsible employer in the city.

The Charter is a voluntary initiative that encourages organisations to adopt and maintain best employment practices across Greater Manchester. By joining as a supporter, Clarke Willmott has committed to ensuring fair pay, promoting employee engagement and creating an environment where colleagues can thrive both professionally and personally.

The firm's Manchester office, which has been part of the city's professional landscape for 15 years, has long focused on building a culture where people feel valued and supported. This commitment now extends beyond the firm's internal policies, aligning with city-wide standards to promote good work and a positive employee experience for everyone.

Ed Foulkes, Head of Clarke Willmott's Manchester office, said: "Joining the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter is a



Clarke Willmott Manchester Team

natural step for our firm. We are committed to providing our people with meaningful work and the support they need to develop and succeed. Our people are at the heart of everything we do. Supporting the Charter reflects our belief that great client service starts with great employment practices."

Clarke Willmott's membership of the Charter complements the firm's long term focus on responsible business and diversity and inclusion. As a supporter, the firm will continue to work closely with the Charter to implement best practice and ensure its Manchester colleagues benefit from a fair and positive working environment.



## Individual and firmwide awards for Leigh Day at Northern Powerhouse Awards

**Leigh Day** <sup>®</sup> has been recognised for excellent client service at the Legal 500 Northern Powerhouse Awards 2026, with personal injury senior associate solicitor **William Broadbent** also being awarded Insurance Leading Associate of the Year.

The Northern Powerhouse awards recognise high quality work undertaken by law firms in the north of England, with Leigh Day's offices in the region spanning Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds.

The ceremony, which took place on 12 March 2026 at the Royal Armouries in Leeds, saw the firm pick up the Client Service Excellence award, along with William's leading associate award.

### **William Broadbent – Insurance Leading Associate of the Year**

William, based in Manchester, works as a senior associate solicitor in the firm's personal

injury department and is part of the cycling injury team.

William has been at Leigh Day since 2017 and looks after cases ranging from cycling and road traffic collisions, to accidents at work and public liability claims.

He has worked on high value cases involving complex and life changing injuries, including traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries as well as amputations and fatalities.

In his time at the firm, William has helped numerous clients secure multi-million pound settlements. These include settlements for brain injury involving a doctor, a poly-trauma case involving a cyclist, and a settlement for a fatal road traffic incident.

### **Client Service Excellence**

Leigh Day received the Client Service

## Fletchers launches maternity training grants programme to support maternity professionals

**Fletchers Solicitors** <sup>®</sup> has launched a new grants programme aimed at supporting professional development for those working in maternity and neonatal care.

The Fletchers Maternity Training Grants Programme will provide quarterly grants of up to £300 to help midwives, obstetricians and other maternity and neonatal professionals attend training courses, conferences and professional development opportunities.

The initiative has been developed to support access to professional learning

for those working in maternity services, recognising the important role that training, shared knowledge and continuing professional development play in improving maternity care.

Fletchers has one of the largest specialist birth injury practices in the country. The team represents families affected by life-changing injuries sustained during pregnancy, labour or shortly after birth, including complex cases involving cerebral palsy.



William Broadbent

Excellence award at this year's Northern Powerhouse ceremony.

The firm has received positive feedback from clients noting the level of dedication to achieving the best possible outcome for clients, along with a commitment to justice and delivering outstanding results.

The firm has also been commended by clients for the depth of knowledge and experience in its northern offices.

Alongside its legal case work, Leigh Day is undertaking an audience insights project to better understand the motivations and behaviours of prospective clients, as well as what barriers might be in place to some people.

The firm also has a dedicated press team, which is able to offer support to clients whose cases come under the media spotlight.

Leigh Day partner Clare Campbell said: "We are delighted to have been recognised again at the Legal 500 Northern Powerhouse awards, both as a firm and at an individual level. Supporting clients throughout what can be a long and difficult legal process is of great importance and something we pride ourselves on across the whole firm, and it is positive to see this recognised with the client service award. We're also hugely pleased for our solicitor William Broadbent, whose fantastic work in the personal injury department has been justly rewarded."

Leigh Day senior associate solicitor William Broadbent said: "It's a great honour to have been recognised at this year's Northern Powerhouse awards. I'm immensely grateful for the hard work and support of my team, as well as my colleagues across the whole personal injury department where everyone is working tirelessly to secure justice for clients."

The maternity training grants programme reflects the firm's commitment to supporting professional learning across the maternity sector.

Trevor Ward, Partner and Head of Birth Injury at Fletchers Solicitors, said:

"Our birth injury team works with families who have experienced life-changing injuries, and through that work we see how important learning and professional development are within maternity care.


We hope this programme will support maternity professionals in accessing

valuable training opportunities and sharing knowledge that benefits their teams, their services and ultimately the families they care for."

The programme forms part of Fletchers' wider commitment to supporting families affected by birth injury and driving positive change across maternity care through its Every Birth. Every Baby. Every Family. campaign, which focuses on learning and improvement in maternity services.



Trevor Ward

Further information about the programme can be found [here](#) 



## DWF secures landmark Supreme Court victory in THG shareholder dispute

**DWF** has secured a major victory in the Supreme Court, successfully representing Zedra Trust Company Ltd in a high-profile shareholder dispute involving Manchester-founded THG Plc.



Joel Heap

In a judgment handed down by a majority of four to one, the Supreme Court ruled that no statutory time limit applies to claims brought under section 994 of the Companies Act 2006. The decision settles an important legal question and will have wide-reaching implications for shareholders, boards and advisers throughout the UK who are involved in company disputes.

The appeal concerned Zedra's application to amend its existing section 994 petition to add a further allegation that it had been unfairly excluded from a July 2016 bonus issue of shares made by THG. By this amendment Zedra sought monetary relief by way of equitable compensation. THG argued that the new allegation was time-barred under the Limitation Act 1980,

contending that a petition seeking solely monetary relief was an "action to recover a sum recoverable by virtue of an enactment", triggering the six-year limitation period in section 9.

The High Court held that no limitation period applied to claims under section 994. The Court of Appeal allowed the appeal and held that all petitions under section 994 are subject to a 12 year limitation period under section 8 of the Limitation Act and that claims for monetary relief under section 994 are subject to a six year limitation period under section 9. The Supreme Court has now reinstated the longstanding position that section 994 petitions are not subject to a statutory limitation period, whether or not monetary relief is sought.

By a 4-1 majority, the Supreme Court held that:

- A petition under section 994 CA 2006 is not an "action upon a specialty" under section 8 of the Limitation Act 1980.
- Nor is a petition seeking monetary compensation an "action to recover any sum recoverable by virtue of any enactment" under section 9 of the Limitation Act 1980.
- The broad remedial discretion in section 996, which allows the court to grant any relief it considers appropriate, is incompatible with applying a fixed limitation period tied to the form of relief sought.

Accordingly, no statutory limitation period applies to unfair prejudice petitions, including those seeking compensation.

The DWF team was led by managing partner of DWF in Manchester and national head of dispute resolution, Joel Heap and senior associate Sam Pringle, who instructed Andrew Thompson KC of Erskine Chambers and George McPherson of 3VB.

This judgment provides important and welcome clarification for shareholders, companies, and practitioners advising on historical allegations of unfair prejudice. It confirms that petitioners are not barred from seeking relief, including monetary compensation, simply because more than six years have passed since the underlying events.

Joel Heap, partner at DWF, said: "This is a significant and very practical decision for minority shareholders and their advisors. The Supreme Court has re-affirmed what those specialising in shareholder litigation have understood for over 40 years, that is there is no limitation period in unfair prejudice. DWF is proud to have advised Zedra on a case that has clarified the law at the highest level and will have lasting importance for shareholder disputes across the UK."

This latest ruling follows DWF's recent success in the Supreme Court in the dispute between Dairy UK and Oatly.

## Burton Copeland grants Jack Ashworth a sabbatical to 'race across the world!'

Jack Ashworth has been given a sabbatical by [Burton Copeland](#) to travel Asia for 12 months with his girlfriend in their own version of *Race Across the World*.



Jack Ashworth

Jack has been a bastion of police station advice and Crown Court preparation for Burton Copeland, working long days and late nights. Before he embarks on a career in the law and his vocation very much dedicated to Criminal Law and Burton Copeland, he wished to spread his wings and see what was beyond Manchester Police cells and Court rooms.

He promises to provide a blog of his adventures (which may feature in The Messenger) to cheer up seasoned criminal 'hacks' on what could have been! First stop is Japan. All at Burtons wish him a safe and adventurous sabbatical and look forward to his return and sending him off to those late-night visits to Manchester Police custody suites! It will also give those at Burton Copeland time to practice their pool in our breakout area as Jack was very much Burton Copeland's Pool Shark.



## Cartwright King celebrates landmark success and peer recognition

*Cartwright King* is proud to share a celebratory update following a successful evening at the Manchester Resolution Legal Awards, held on Thursday 5 February 2026 at the Lowry Hotel. As an organisation committed to the highest standards of the Resolution Code of Practice, it was a privilege to see our team members recognised for their dedication to constructive and compassionate legal practice.

The event, which brought together over 200 members of the legal community, highlighted the exceptional work being done across the region to support families. Team

CK was shortlisted in three of the five award categories, a reflection of the specialist expertise and talent within the firm.

### Recognising Excellence in the Community

The evening resulted in two major wins for the team, alongside a significant shortlisting that reflects our core values:

- **Brontë Ashworth** was named **Resolution Community Champion**. This award recognises Brontë's tireless work in supporting local initiatives and her commitment to fostering a collaborative

Emma Cordock and Bronte Ashworth with their awards



environment for those navigating the complexities of family transition.

- **Emma Cordock** was awarded the prestigious **Lawyer of the Year**. The judges commended Emma's legal skill and her standing as a leading advocate within the circuit, particularly noting her professionalism and dedication to her clients.
- **Rachel Jones** was celebrated as a finalist for the **Resolution Kindness / Wellbeing Champion award**. Being shortlisted from a vast pool of applicants is a wonderful testament to Rachel's character and the positive impact she has on the colleagues and clients she supports.

### National Peer Recognition

The firm's success at the awards is further bolstered by the continued recognition of our practitioners in respected legal directories. We are pleased to note that **Stacy Fox** has been featured in the **2025 Doyle's Guide** as a Recommended Leading Children Lawyer.

This peer-reviewed listing identifies solicitors based on their expertise in Public,

Private, and International Children law. Such recognition from fellow professionals reinforces the calibre of the specialist Child Care department at Cartwright King, ensuring that we continue to provide high-level representation for the most vulnerable members of society across England and Wales.

### A Word from our CEO

Abdul Hussain, CEO of Cartwright King, said: What a fabulous evening for the firm. We are incredibly proud of Brontë and Emma for their wins; their success is a testament to the hard work and heart they bring to their roles every day. We also extend our congratulations to Rachel Jones for her shortlisting in such a vital category.

To have our practitioners represented so strongly among such esteemed peers, and to see Stacy Fox recognised in the Doyle's Guide, reflects the high standard of specialist care we strive to uphold at Cartwright King. These accolades reinforce our commitment to being a premier choice for Child Care law, providing expert, compassionate legal support to the children and families who rely on our specialist expertise across England and Wales.

## Save the dates!

Make sure to get these dates in your diary!

**Posh Pub Quiz** – 7th May

**The Next Generation of Legal Professionals** – 13th May

**Employment Law Conference** – 19th May

**MLA Judging Day** – 12th June

**Manchester Legal Awards** – 2nd July





# AI Is Turbo-Charging Cyber Attacks. Is Your Law Firm Ready?

Artificial intelligence has changed the rules of cybercrime. Attacks that once required significant skill and resource can now be executed at scale, at speed and with unsettling precision. Handling large amounts of sensitive client information makes law firms attractive targets for cybercriminals, with [attacks on UK law firms surging by 77% in a single year](#) .

And law firms are far from alone. Across UK sectors, the NCSC's [Annual Review 2025](#) recorded a 130% increase in cyber incidents, identifying artificial intelligence as a key driver.

In a [separate report](#) , the NCSC warns that AI is already tipping the scales toward attackers by lowering the skill threshold needed to run sophisticated campaigns across any sector, shrinking the window between vulnerabilities being discovered and exploited.

Statistics like these make it clear that AI is accelerating cyber threats – and law firms must strengthen their defences.

## How Criminals Are Using AI Against Law Firms

Phishing emails used to be easier to spot – poor grammar, odd phrasing, something slightly off. That is no longer the case. AI can now generate grammatically perfect, convincing messages that replicate the writing style of colleagues, partners or clients, complete with the right logos and tone. For law firms managing client correspondence and financial transactions, this significantly increases the risk of convincing payment diversion or email account takeovers.

Phishing is already the most common form of cyber attack facing firms. The UK Government's [Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2025](#) found that 79% of UK businesses experienced phishing attacks, making it the most widely reported cyber incident. [AI is making this method more effective, with AI-generated phishing achieving significantly higher click-through rates than human-crafted attacks](#) .

Then there are deepfakes. In 2024, a finance worker transferred \$25 million after a video call in which every participant – including the CFO – was a deepfake. For law firms, this tactic could easily target conveyancing, M&A or litigation teams who routinely authorise significant transfers under time pressure – a convincing deepfake posing as a client, lender or senior partner is all it takes.

## The Repercussions Are Severe – And Most Law Firms Are Not Ready

A successful cyber attack doesn't just take down your systems. It can end your business.

[The average cost of a data breach in the UK now stands at £3.29 million](#) – before factoring in downtime, recovery costs, and reputational damage. For law firms, the regulatory exposure is compounded. [The ICO can issue significant fines under GDPR Article 32](#) , and the SRA expects firms to have robust data security measures in place – making it critical for firms to understand their exposure before an incident occurs.

Yet the gaps are stark. *Only 19% of businesses have any cybersecurity training programme in place, and 78% have no incident response plan. Board-level responsibility for cyber risk has fallen to just 27% of organisations* <sup>②</sup>.

Too many firms assume their IT provider is managing this. They are not.

Cyber risk management and IT support are not the same thing – and firms that recognise this are the ones best placed to respond.

### What You Need to Do

Cyber attacks are inevitable. What you do now is what matters. The right response comes down to three things: **Assess** your exposure, **Act** on the gaps, and **Assure** ongoing resilience.

**Assess:** Start with an independent risk assessment – covering people, processes and governance, not just technology. Your IT provider cannot do this objectively. With AI lowering the bar for attackers, gaps that once seemed minor are now critical for law firms.

**Act:** Build and test an incident response plan. If your firm suffered a cyber attack tomorrow – AI-driven or otherwise – would you survive? Furthermore, if your staff are using AI tools such as Copilot or ChatGPT, ensure clear policies are in place on what client data is being shared.

**Assure:** Board-level accountability is no longer optional – cyber risk is a leadership issue, not an IT one. Treat it as an ongoing discipline, not a one-off exercise. That means regular assessments, continuous oversight, and having a trusted cyber partner with specialist legal sector expertise.



### How Mitigo can help

Mitigo is a specialist cyber risk management partner to the legal sector, and the trusted cyber risk management partner to the Law Society of England and Wales, the Bar Council, the Law Society of Scotland and Manchester Law Society.

Mitigo provides independent assurance to protect firms against operational, financial and reputational risk, supporting firms with cyber risk assessments, incident response planning, policy and process development, staff training, and regulatory compliance support.

To discuss your firm's exposure and how to strengthen resilience, contact Mitigo at [info@mitigogroup.com](mailto:info@mitigogroup.com) <sup>②</sup> or 0161 883 3083.



# A Day in the Life of Government Legal Department lawyer: Radhika Das

## What is your role at the Government Legal Department (GLD)?

I am a lawyer in the Employment Directorate. I have been here since December 2024, and my role is to defend employment tribunal claims for government departments and provide advice on day-to-day HR issues, like disciplinaries, absence issues, performance issues, and any other HR or employment law work. I'm also involved in drafting policies and providing client training.

## What first attracted you to a law career?

When I was at school, I really enjoyed politics. I did it at A level, and as much as I love the subject matter, I didn't want a career in politics. I remember speaking to a teacher about it, and they said, "If you do law, it's quite a broad subject, so you can then see where that gets you."

I then went on to do some work experience with a criminal barrister, which was interesting, so a combination of these things set me on this path!

## Before working at GLD, you worked in the private sector. What made you want to move from private to public?

I'd heard great things about GLD through a friend that works here. I think with private practice, the more senior you get, the more difficult it becomes with things like work-life balance and all the extracurricular activities around bringing in clients, which did not appeal to me.

I like the flexibility that you get here. For example, I work compressed hours. I do nine out of ten days a fortnight – they were open to considering a work pattern that suited me.



Probably the biggest factor was the interesting, varied and high profile work you can get here – it's not like the work you get anywhere else. For example, often cases go to the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court, and we get claims in the High Court and County Court. You are also surrounded by a huge team of experienced lawyers, there are nine employment teams spread across London, Manchester, Leeds and Bristol. Together we are the biggest Employment Law practice in the UK!

**What would you say are the biggest differences between the private and public sectors, and what do you think is the best thing about working in the public sector?**

For starters, the people and culture are great. But the thing I like the most about the public sector is how flexible it is and how much autonomy and trust you are given to get on with it and do your job. That works here because you're provided with all the tools needed to succeed. For example, we have a comprehensive bespoke knowledge management system, a dedicated knowledge management lawyer who update us on latest case law and legislative changes, really supportive colleagues, so much training provided in house and by panel firms, and excellent supervision and management. I love being able to do my job confidently and keep a separation between work and my home life.

Obviously, no two days are the same in your role, but what are the kind of typical tasks and responsibilities you have? What does a typical day for you look like?

Today, I'm drafting witness statements for a case that will be in its final hearing next month, so that is going to take up my day predominantly.

While today I'm focusing on my litigation, another day, I could be doing advisory work. It's great to have a mix.

**What would you say is one of your biggest achievements at the GLD so far?**

Shortly after I started, I worked on a huge, High Court case, with over 120 claimants. It was great exposure for me. I was working on it with a paralegal, a junior barrister, a more senior lawyer, and we had a King's Counsel, so we had quite a big legal team.

It was really rewarding to be part of that team and to learn from such experienced lawyers.

**Is there anything about working in the public sector you think would surprise people?**

How big it is! And the fact that we have so many regional offices. I think people who aren't aware of the regional offices assume that London is where everything is based. But, we have big offices in Manchester, Leeds, Bristol, and I can only see that growing.

**What advice would you give to anyone looking to get into the public sector?**

If you're thinking about working in law in the public sector, or joining GLD, it's good to know Civil Service interviews are a bit different from what you might be used to, so I'd recommend doing your research and spending some time preparing.

But honestly, it's worth sticking with it. If you don't get in the first time, keep trying. It's a genuinely great place to work, and I'd recommend it to anyone.

# MLS Advantage



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

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## News from HQ

# Nominations open for the Law Society's Legal Heroes

Nominations for the Law Society's **2026 Legal Heroes** are now open.

This is an opportunity to spotlight a solicitor from your region who has:

- Made a demonstrative, lasting and tangible difference to the life or lives of others, their local community or society
- Brought distinction to the legal profession

Solicitors contribute to communities and in the public interest, regularly going above and beyond. Many important awards already recognise professional excellence in legal services, but Legal Heroes recognises solicitors who have shown personal commitment and leadership to make a significant difference to other people's lives.



This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase the breadth of talent in your area and those who work tirelessly to drive positive change in the public interest and made a difference to an individual, group or whole community.

### How to nominate

Do you know a solicitor who has driven positive change in the public interest and made a difference to an individual, group or whole community? They could be recognised as one of our Legal Heroes.

Anyone can nominate a solicitor in England and Wales as a Legal Hero, you don't have to be a solicitor yourself.

You can [find out more and view the nomination form here](#)

Please complete the nomination form on their webpage by **Monday 13 April**.



MANCHESTER LAW SOCIETY'S

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ANNUAL

# POSH PUB QUIZ

2026

THURSDAY **07** AT 18:00 PM  
MAY

MANCHESTER HALL



# Passover

April is a busy month this year, with three religious festivals being celebrated: Passover (sundown 1 April to sunset on April 9), Easter (3 April – 6 April) and Vaisakhi (14 April).

Passover, Pesach in Hebrew, is the Festival of Freedom, commemorating the story of Exodus, when God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Egypt was ruled Pharaohs, and a particularly hostile Pharaoh ordered the drowning of all the Israelites' first-born sons in the Nile. One baby boy was rescued by the Pharaoh's daughter, given the name Moses (meaning "one who is pulled out") and adopted into the Egyptian royal family.

Moses was commanded by God to free his fellow Israelites from slavery and when the Pharaoh refused, God unleashed 10 plagues on the Egyptians. The Israelites' homes were "passed over" during the last and most punishing plague, hence the name of the holiday. The Egyptians convinced the Pharaoh to release the Israelites, and Moses quickly led them out of Egypt. However, the Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his soldiers to retrieve the former slaves. As the Egyptian army approached the fleeing Israelites at the edge of the Red Sea, a miracle occurred and the sea parted, allowing Moses and his followers to cross safely, and then closed, drowning the Egyptians.

The Israelites, numbering in the hundreds of thousands, trekked through the Sinai desert for 40 years, living on manna sent from heaven and receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, before finally reaching their ancestral home in Canaan, later known as the Land of Israel.

According to tradition, the Israelites fled Egypt in such haste that there was no time for their bread to rise. One of the most important Passover rituals is removing all leavened food products (known as chametz) before the holiday begins and abstaining from eating them throughout its duration. Chametz means leavened grain, so any food or drink that contains wheat, barley, rye, oats, etc. for example: bread; cake; biscuits; cereal; pasta and most alcoholic drinks. Instead of bread, we eat a type of flatbread/cracker called matzah. To commemorate the unleavened bread, we do not eat any chametz from the day Passover starts until the conclusion of the holiday. Passover foods are unique in that, beyond the usual rules of keeping kosher, there are special rules for preparing food that is kosher for Passover. Many Jews have special Passover dishes that are only used once a year during the holiday.

The celebration of Passover is prescribed in the book of Exodus in the Old Testament (in Judaism, the first five books of Moses are called the Torah). The holiday is celebrated for eight days, and incorporates themes of a Jewish homeland, remembrance of Jewish history, family, springtime, and social justice and freedom, including recognising those who are still being oppressed today. All of these aspects are discussed, if not symbolically represented, during the Passover meal known as a Seder (derived from the Hebrew word for "order" or "arrangement", because there is a ritual order that is followed, from the order of

prayers and songs to the sequence of specific foods eaten), which takes place on the first two evenings of the festival. The story of the Exodus from Egypt is retold using a special text called the Haggadah. Symbolic foods eaten at the seder are: maror (bitter herbs, usually horseradish, a reminder of the bitterness of slavery), salt water (symbolizing the tears of the slaves), charoset (sweet paste made of fruit, wine and nuts, symbolizing the mortar the slaves used to build the Egyptian pyramids), shank bone, (representing the Passover sacrifice), hard-boiled egg (symbolic of life and birth associated with the spring season), and karpas (a leafy green vegetable, symbolizing hope and redemption). Four cups of wine are drunk throughout the seder, as a celebration of freedom.

Every family has its own Passover rituals, which may reflect family tradition, the denomination of Judaism (some are more orthodox, others less traditional), or whether, having been dispersed from Israel, they are Mizrahi (from the Middle East and North Africa), Ashkenazi (from Central and

“

The Israelites' homes were “passed over” during the last and most punishing plague, hence the name of the holiday

Eastern Europe), Ethiopian, Indian, Sephardi (e.g. from Spain and Portugal) etc.

The text of the Haggadah, which has been used for generations to guide the Seder, says that in every generation each Jew must regard themselves as though they were personally brought out of Egypt. Through the annual retelling of the Passover story, Jews reflect on how their ancestors survived adversity, and are reminded that, as a people, Jews were all slaves in Egypt, and of the challenges that Jews faced over the centuries and continue to face today.

**Andrea Cohen  
Weightmans**

## Messenger deadlines for 2026

 **Messenger**

Please find the deadlines for forthcoming issues of *The Messenger*.

published on the first working day of each month.

Make sure to get your copy in before these dates to ensure that your article is featured in your chosen edition. *The Messenger* is

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May 2026	24/04/2026	Aug 2026	24/07/2026	Nov 2026	23/10/2026
June 2026	22/05/2026	Sept 2026	21/08/2026	Dec 2026	20/11/2026
July 2026	19/06/2026	Oct 2026	18/09/2026		



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### About the role

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- Proven ability to build strong, trusted client relationships, including on sensitive and highprofile matters.
- Demonstrable experience within at least two of the following areas; Community (Adult Social Care & Education), Employment, Housing, Litigation and Regulatory & Enforcement
- Strong strategic thinking, political awareness and the ability to influence at senior level.
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5. Ensure **both CV and Supporting Statement** are uploaded **before submitting** your application.
6. If you have a long-term health condition or disability and would like your application to be considered in accordance with a Disability Confident Scheme, please email: [execapplications@penna.com](mailto:execapplications@penna.com), to inform the Penna team.

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## Glaisyers ETL welcomes new insolvency and restructuring partner

**Glaisyers ETL** <sup>®</sup> has announced the appointment of Stuart Beatson as a partner specialising in insolvency and restructuring.

Mr Beatson, who joined Glaisyers ETL from Primas Law, has more than 17 years' experience advising insolvency practitioners, directors, lenders and investors across the UK. His career has included stints at Napthens, Taylors Solicitors and Pannone.

His practice covers the full lifecycle of financial distress and enforcement, and he regularly advises administrators on all aspects of administrations. This includes acting on distressed business and asset sales across sectors ranging from manufacturing and logistics to retail, leisure and multi-site organisations.

As well as working with insolvency practitioners, Mr Beatson also advises directors and boards in relation to their duties when companies are facing financial difficulties. This includes advising on restructuring and refinancing options, and the acquisition of assets from insolvency practitioners.

He regularly acts in contentious insolvency matters, and has been recognised by the Legal 500.

Mr Beatson said, "Glaisyers ETL has a superb reputation among financial institutions and businesses alike, particularly in contentious matters and distressed situations. I look forward to building a practice that complements and augments these strengths, while guiding clients through what are always highly challenging circumstances."



Stuart Beatson

Mr Beatson's insolvency and restructuring practice sits alongside Glaisyers ETL's Legal 500-listed commercial litigation team. His appointment follows the promotions earlier this year of real estate specialist Kathryn O'Rourke to partnership and litigator Sam Garrett to the position of associate, boosting the firm's highly regarded and fast-growing Recoveries practice.

The firm has a particularly strong reputation among financial institutions and investors. It is on the panels of a number of a number of challenger banks, and also acts regularly for bridging, secondary and peer-to-peer lenders.

Commenting on Mr Beatson's appointment, Russell Brown, managing partner of Glaisyers ETL, said, "Financial distress and insolvency are a sad fact of business but we are here both to help creditors secure their rights and, wherever possible, guide businesses toward the light at the end of the tunnel.

"Stuart's practice is a valuable addition to our offering and I look forward to the contribution it will make both to our firm's performance and the outcomes we achieve for our clients over the months and years ahead."



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## Mills & Reeve bolsters North West construction team with quadruple hire

**Mills & Reeve** <sup>®</sup> has bolstered its North West construction team with the appointment of four industry specialists. This follows the arrival of construction partners Ian Hardman and Jody Kite, who joined the firm's Manchester team at the end of last year.

Joining Ian and Jody in strengthening Mills & Reeve's regional construction offering are principal associate, Eve Johnstone, senior associate, Amy Johnson, and associates, Abigail Bowers and Freya Mayall.

Eve and Amy, who have ten and eight years' experience respectively, will work alongside Jody, as the team looks to expand its offering in construction, engineering and energy dispute resolution. Abigail and Freya will work alongside Ian, specialising in non-contentious and transactional construction law.

Ian comments: "As a firm, we have set out a clear goal to grow our market-leading construction practice, particularly in the North West where the sector contributes significantly to the regional economy.

"North West construction has an important part to play in powering future economic growth, by creating high-value employment in all parts of the region, while supporting wider infrastructure ambitions. In the last 10 years, construction has been one of the fastest growing sectors in the region. In order to maintain momentum, we need the best people in place and our latest round of appointments does exactly that."

Jody adds: "We're delighted to be joined by Eve, Amy, Abigail and Freya. We understand the value that they will all bring to Mills & Reeve and we're really looking to working alongside them to deliver an ambitious growth plan, alongside exceptional service to companies operating in the development, construction and engineering sectors."

Their appointments come at a time of significant expansion for Mills & Reeve's construction practice, as well as a recent change in leadership for the firm's construction team. Dominic Jones took over the role as head of construction at Mills & Reeve at the end of 2025, after nearly three years as partner in the firm's Oxford office.





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## Markel Law promotes from within to drive strategic growth plan

**Markel Law** <sup>®</sup> has announced six internal promotions as it continues to invest in its people and strengthen its platform for future growth.

Aaron Marshall has been promoted to the senior leadership team as Head of Civil Litigation. Fran Snape, Jess Daniel and Danielle Fox have been promoted to Senior Associate roles, while Jack Poole becomes an Associate Solicitor and Frank Sowerby Thomas a Paralegal.

Commenting on the promotions, Charlotte Rees-John, Managing Partner at Markel Law, said: "These appointments are a testament to the depth of talent within our business and reflect our commitment to developing our people while continuing to deliver

“

Our ambition is to build on a strong foundation, expand our legal offering and invest in the next generation of legal talent

high-quality, practical legal services for our clients.”

The promotions span multiple practice areas and levels of seniority, reinforcing Markel Law's capabilities and supporting its ability to deliver innovative and client-focused solutions.

“Our ambition is to build on a strong foundation, expand our legal offering and invest in the next generation of legal talent,” continued Rees-John. “By championing

internal progression, we retain valuable expertise, ensure continuity for our clients and foster a collaborative and ambitious culture.”

Markel Law continues to invest in its people, technology and processes, with the latest promotions underlining its focus on developing future leaders and enhancing the service it provides to clients across the UK and beyond.

“Promoting from within allows us to offer clients a more consistent service, delivered by advisers who already understand their needs and the way we work,” Rees-John concluded.

Charlotte Rees-John



## Trowers bolsters Construction practice in Manchester

*Trowers & Hamblins* <sup>®</sup> has bolstered its Construction practice in Manchester with new Partner Nita Mistry.



Nita Mistry

Nita specialises in complex, high-value disputes arising out of major construction, infrastructure, engineering and energy projects. With 13 years' experience, Nita joins Trowers from K&L Gates.

Katie Saunders, co-Head of Trowers' Manchester office and Head of the Manchester Construction practice, commented: "We are delighted to welcome Nita to the Manchester team. Her extensive experience in complex, high-value construction and infrastructure disputes further strengthens our offering at a time when demand for specialist contentious construction advice continues to grow.

Manchester is a growth market for the firm and we are proud to support the ambitions set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy, particularly in relation to regeneration, infrastructure and sustainable growth. Our Construction practice plays a central role in

“

The firm has a strong reputation in the construction and infrastructure sector

advising on major developments across the region, and Nita's expertise enhances our ability to support clients delivering these transformative projects.”

Nita added: "I am very pleased to be joining Trowers & Hamblins at such an exciting time for the Manchester office. The firm has a strong reputation in the construction and infrastructure sector, and a clear commitment to the North West market.

I look forward to working with colleagues across the national Construction team to support clients in navigating complex disputes and delivering successful outcomes on significant projects.”

Trowers & Hamblins has had an established presence in the North West for more than 50 years. Its Manchester office comprises more than 150 people, led by an eighteen-strong partnership, advising clients across the public and private sectors, with particular strength in commercial, construction, corporate, disputes, employment, finance and real estate.

The depth of the Manchester team combines detailed local knowledge with the broad perspective and resources of an international law firm, supporting businesses, organisations and communities in delivering growth strategies, managing risk and supporting their people.



## Olliers Solicitors bolsters specialist pre-charge team with the appointment of Catherine Baird

**Olliers Solicitors** <sup>®</sup> has further strengthened its pre-charge and privately funded client offering with the appointment of Associate Solicitor Catherine Baird.

Catherine joins Olliers from Robert Lizar Solicitors, where she was a key member of their Youth and Magistrates' Court department. She brings eight years of experience in handling complex pre-charge investigations and proceedings across both the Magistrates' and Crown Courts.

At Olliers, Catherine's role is uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between high-level legal defence and strategic business growth. As a member of the New Enquiry Team, she will be responsible for the initial consultation and conversion of high-stakes instructions, ensuring potential clients

receive a seamless, professional experience from their first point of contact.

In line with Olliers' reputation as a leader in pre-charge representation, Catherine will undergo the firm's intensive internal accreditation. This specialist training focuses on the latest legal frameworks, including the DPP's Guidance on Charging (DG6) and the 2024 Attorney General's Guidelines on Disclosure, specifically Annex B regarding pre-charge engagement.

Matthew Cloughton, Managing Director of Olliers Solicitors, said: "Catherine is a fantastic addition to the team.

"Her background in Magistrates' Court work, combined with her experience in youth justice, makes her a versatile and formidable advocate.

## Fletchers Solicitors strengthens Clinical Negligence leadership with two Director promotions

**Fletchers Solicitors** <sup>®</sup> has announced the appointment of Alison Flaherty and Phil Barnes as Directors within its Clinical Negligence practice, further strengthening the firm's senior leadership team following a period of significant growth.

Alison Flaherty is a long-standing senior leader at Fletchers and leads specialist teams handling complex spinal, brain injury and amputation claims. She has played a central role in shaping the firm's approach to supporting seriously injured clients and their families, consistently delivering high-quality outcomes across some of the most challenging clinical negligence cases.



Alison Flaherty

“At Olliers, we are redefining how criminal defence firms interact with clients at the earliest stages of an investigation. Catherine’s dual focus on legal excellence and professional client enquiry management is central to our strategy of providing unmatched client care from the very first phone call.”

Beyond her legal caseload, Catherine will play a vital role in Olliers’ business development initiatives. She will be instrumental in identifying and converting private instructions, ensuring the firm continues to grow its market share in specialist private defence.

Catherine said: “Joining a firm with the reputation and forward-thinking approach of Olliers Solicitors is an incredible opportunity.

“The legal landscape is shifting and the importance of proactive, pre-charge engagement has never been higher.

In addition to her casework leadership, Alison leads Fletchers’ collaborative work with NHS Resolution and its Solicitor Panel, developing constructive, solutions-focused relationships aimed at achieving fair and timely outcomes for claimants. Her appointment formally recognises her contribution to the development, reputation and strategic direction of the Clinical Negligence practice.

Commenting on the appointments, Peter Rigby, Managing Director of Clinical Negligence at Fletchers, said: “Alison and Phil are exceptional leaders and highly respected lawyers whose experience, judgement and values reflect the very best of our Clinical Negligence practice.



Catherine Baird

“I am looking forward to applying my experience to help potential clients navigate their most challenging moments, while ensuring they benefit from the results-driven legal brilliance that Olliers is known for.”

The appointment follows a record-breaking year for Olliers Solicitors, which was recently named a Times Best Law Firm 2026.

“Alison’s strategic leadership and collaborative approach, alongside Phil’s deep expertise and ability to bring teams together, make them ideally placed to help guide the practice through its next phase of development.

These appointments recognise the significant contribution both have made and will continue to make for our clients, colleagues and the wider firm.”

The promotions underline Fletchers’ ongoing investment in senior leadership and specialist expertise within its Clinical Negligence practice and follow the promotion of Michelle Heyes and Gillian Lakes at the end of 2025 to Directors within Fletchers’ serious injury division.

# Management Matters

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



## This Month

- **Handling some big challenges**
  - Done properly then real benefits
  - Marketing Plan - existing clients and new business
  - The image
  - People and Resourcing - Including alternatives
  - Systems Review

Please read in conjunction with or at least reference back to the [March edition](#) ☺

Law firms are currently facing a great many challenges and even if we assume that the delivery of legal services is excellent, there is so much more that has to be handled. This ranges from the handling of the annual three year strategy and delivery of performance as budgeted and forecasted. We have to face commercial challenges like revenue, gross profit, working capital, compliance and regulation, avoiding poor image, fines and harder to get Pi insurance, IT reliability and security for client data and client communication.

- [Katchr](#) ☺ : MI and BI availability- Right stuff at the right time for action
- [etiCloud](#) and [Quiss](#) ☺ : getting IT managed well and secure needs experience and track record
- [Optsm](#) ☺

Assessing the business risks around regulation and compliance and developing an action plan.

- [Forsyte](#) ☺

As well as working profitably, we need to find new and the right clients, retain existing ones across all work-types and develop them to add work-types, provide repeat business and to become work referrers to their friends and other businesses.

## Marketing Plan

In order to achieve the right success for existing clients and new ones, it is essential that there is a marketing plan that covers the firm and its positioning and image. Plus by work-type a similar plan which covers every work-type, including getting repeat business from existing clients and of course - new ones.

It is scary the number of Private Client teams that are not working their databases, providing new info on things like equity release, IHT changes, who to change the beneficiaries to and if members of the family/friends are involved in businesses. The Will Bank of a firm is a very valuable asset that is not being worked by so many firms - revenue, GP, asset value.

- [WBT](#) ☺: effective management of a key asset - adding revenue, GP and asset value

We then need to review the strength of the products and services that the firm can offer and who the targeted market is. It is reckoned that it is now more than 50% of the adult population that hasn't got a Will that will include other existing clients of the firm in other areas as well as targeted new business.

The firm needs to decide on the legal activities that it wishes to promote: the benefits that it can bring to clients, the target for those clients - geographical, verticals, scale and then decide the most effective way to approach and deal with them - image, marketing activity, conversion and will it be web site, staff referrals from across the board, targeted campaigns for companies in Town X through third party referrers (estate agents, care homes, chambers of commerce). Organising the business to communicate is



then key and training and developing the staff technically and attitude is also critical.

The firm needs to be very aware about it is handling potential new business enquiries – data capture, right response at the right time, performance by individuals and teams. The right contact route can then be enhanced, along with the right people to handle or coaching requirements.

- **Lexidesk** <sup>Ⓞ</sup>: effective on boarding and relationships

Achieving say 65% contact conversions is much more rewarding than a standard 20%.

Just getting teams from different departments aware of the activity and benefits that their clients, friends and networkers could get by dealing with one of the firm's teams should be worked upon regularly.

### Getting the image of the firm right

This is key and it needs to be able to cover all areas of business and the firm overall. It affects existing clients, potential new clients, referrers of business as well as staff who these days are becoming much more aware of profile along with their desires for social changes and contributions to community.

- **The 'Think Brand - not bland' Guy - Phil Strachan** <sup>Ⓞ</sup>
- **Legal RSS** <sup>Ⓞ</sup>: firms able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in key areas of interest. So many firms during lockdown lost existing clients as well as not winning new ones with little demonstration of market issue awareness.

Phil provides very experienced advice to firms having worked in so many sectors for so long. A sensible conversation up front would do no harm.

Legal RSS is providing information that can be shown on the firms website confirming their knowledge of key areas – Wills, IHT, multiple court cases – this demonstrates the firm is aware of the updated changes in the market place.

What people think about the firm in terms of client relationships, performance, skills is absolutely key to repeat business, new business and referrals.

### People

Another significant challenge for firms - at the moment is geared to their staffing levels. There are a number of firms that have taken initiatives to generate more business but have then lost staff and have slowed up the process for accepting new prospects.

The good management of staff is often overlooked and there is evidence that many younger performers are ready to leave their firms with the right opportunity as they are not receiving regular updates on performance and management attitude, not aware of the changes in operation being made, not on a sensible appraisal and personal development plan and concerned about the image of the firm they are working for (externally in terms of clients and community awareness) but also involvement in existing and potential new clients wanting to be well received. It is awful to get told by the client of a law firm that "the lawyer did well but I am not going back there because of staff attitude"

Too many firms when recruiting are not looking at the personality profile that they need – intellect, relationships, management – people or files, ambitions as well as performance – it also needs to be high on the appraisal scenario.



Firms do need in many cases third party advice in terms of recruitment. There is a great deal of experience here: [Peter Manners](#) <sup>Ⓞ</sup>. Many years as a consultant to the sector plus the recruitment company that is not only connected to firms looking for staff but is approached by people wanting to move on because of issues with their firm.

### Alternative resources.

The world has changed so much in the last few years so many firms are short of resources, the appropriate skilled resources at the right time for client activity, compliance, regulations – just look at the fines being issued. This is an alternative methodology that not only allows compliance and performance but can also save a lot of money for the firm and enhance performance for clients.

#### March 2026 Edition <sup>Ⓞ</sup>

- Document production and transcription – Document Direct: skilled, out of hours, remove slowness of file action
- Telephone answering quickly and for 24 hours – Moneypenny: plus web communication
- Outsourced book keeping and accounting - The Cashroom: volume of work covered or specific areas such as client account management – flexible profile. Or just covering lack of skills
- Irrespective of the size of firm – financial management is critical to all and firms need advice regularly around working capital management as one example. Accountants are being much braver – not just doing audits but also offering consultant type advice for say a couple of days a month – Armstrong Watson, Menzies, Mitchell Charlesworth (e.g. cashflow and profitability but also M&A potential)

In order to retain some clients, legal skills needed go wider than those existing within the firm – LawShare, Bexley Beaumont – a couple of collaborative resources

### PMS/CMS

It is so important for the management of the firm to be on top of the capabilities of the existing PMS/CMS system and to be demanding in terms of the delivery of added value solutions by the suppliers or third party – such as on boarding, working capital management, MI and BI, effective compliant workflows, and client communication. As a business, it cannot be left to IT teams – department heads, financial controllers, business development leads, management team all have to spend some time sorting this.

This part of the IT sector has seen many acquisitions by VC organisations. Some are a bit selfishly focused whereas others looking for added value needs of their law firms – either directly or through added value third party suppliers.

We have also received a few developing added value businesses – UK based but also some fascinating suppliers from Australia and Singapore – beginning to make inroads.

Bill Kirby is a director of [professionalchoiceconsultancy.com](http://professionalchoiceconsultancy.com) <sup>Ⓞ</sup> 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) <sup>Ⓞ</sup> and [LinkedIn](#) <sup>Ⓞ</sup>



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## Going further guides clients and practices towards cleaner environments

By Eve Gallagher, Trainee Solicitor, [MSB Solicitors](#) 

As we quickly approach World Earth Day 2026, which this year comes around on April 22nd, it is just as important that we turn our focus on our own actions and standards as well as how we advise and guide our clients through such a complex world of compliance requirements.

The course of environmental regulations is an ever-changing landscape that can be difficult to navigate. While the eyes of the world are falling to policy makers and scientists to tackle climate change, in reality legal teams which also play a key role in protecting the planet. They do this by helping businesses navigate these regulations and embedding long-term sustainability into decision-making.

A large part of this role sits in our day-to-day work. Environmental regulations and compliance with them is increasingly complex, following the implementation of the UK Environment Act 2021. Focusing on emissions, waste and supply chains, to name just a few, our job is to interpret these requirements and ensure clients and organisations – and our own practice – understand what is expected of them and make this workable as part of their daily operations.

The best way to do this is to ensure we do the same as our clients in the ways in which we work. We do this by making sure internally that our environmental issues and compliance with regulations is at the core of business concerns.



Guaranteeing this can be so simple. It can be as easy as ensuring sustainability reporting is accurate or supporting internal policies that are already in place. As environmental factors become more about risk and governance, so our input and putting this in practice in our own work becomes increasingly important.

Many teams have already adopted changes such as these, yet going forward the role will change so that it sits between what is legally required and what is ethically responsible. While the legislative framework in the UK is continuously progressing, the climate crisis can often progress quicker. Should this continue, going beyond the standard terms of environmental compliance is undoubtedly the right action to take.

To assist organisations and clients of the same fast-moving landscape, we must understand the regulations placed on both us and them but always ask ourselves: what is coming next and how can we be ready for it?

Our legal teams are in the best position to foresee how increased scrutiny and tighter reporting may impact us all. This is where our value can be added, not just as advisers but as partners to help create more sustainable businesses for ourselves and clients.

So on World Earth Day 2026, we can draw from its theme of 'Our power, our planet'. Legal firms may not always be the most visible contributors to a cleaner environment in which we live, but the influence our teams can have with the right knowledge at their disposal should not be underestimated.

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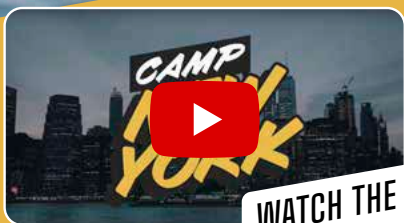
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## The Solicitors' Charity announces Wealthbrite's membership of Firm Friends

*The Solicitors' Charity* is pleased to announce that Wealthbrite has joined Firm Friends, the corporate giving scheme for the sector, launched last year.

Firm Friends enables law firms, legal suppliers and partners like Wealthbrite to join a programme that helps to fund direct support for solicitors, from therapy to emergency grants, and career coaching after redundancy to practical help during illness.

“

Life in the law rarely presents a single challenge. Pressure can build over time professionally, personally, and financially

By joining, organisations are recognised as champions of wellbeing and part of sector-wide positive change.

At the same time, the charity is also expanding its approach to corporate and sector fundraising, introducing new ways for law societies, legal firms, suppliers and partners to play a more visible role in supporting the wellbeing of solicitors across England and Wales.

Nick Gallagher, CEO of The Solicitors' Charity, said: “Life in the law rarely presents a single challenge. Pressure can build over time professionally, personally, and financially. When support is visible and trusted, concerns surface earlier, and careers are more likely to remain sustainable.

We are delighted Wealthbrite has been among the first to demonstrate commitment to wellbeing in the legal sector through its membership of Firm Friends. We are aligned in terms of values and both organisations are committed to supporting sector health – in all its forms.



With Firm Friends along with an expanded range of corporate giving options, we hope our colleagues within the profession and suppliers to the sector will find it even easier to support our vital work in a way that fits with their organisation."

Carla Hoppe, Founder of Wealthbrite, said: "Becoming a Pioneer member of Firm Friends reflects a natural alignment between the work we do at Wealthbrite and the mission of The Solicitors' Charity.

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Becoming a Pioneer member of Firm Friends reflects a natural alignment between the work we do at Wealthbrite and the mission of The Solicitors' Charity.”

Through our work with law firms across the profession, we see first-hand how financial pressure can affect people's confidence, wellbeing and decision-making at work. The Solicitors' Charity provides vital support when individuals face difficult periods in their lives and careers.

For us, joining Firm Friends is about standing alongside that work and playing our part in strengthening the profession's overall wellbeing. While the charity provides essential support in times of need, our focus at Wealthbrite is on building financial confidence earlier in people's careers so that fewer individuals reach crisis point.

Together, that combination of prevention and support helps strengthen the long-term resilience of the profession.

Being part of Firm Friends allows us to contribute to that broader ecosystem of support for solicitors across England and Wales, while also helping raise awareness of the resources available to those who may need them."

As regulatory change, economic pressure and rising client expectations continue to increase strain across legal practice, the charity has three straightforward ways to get involved:

1. **Firm Friends** – structured annual corporate giving
2. **Charity of the Year** – 12-month partnership programmes or single gifts
3. **One-Off Giving** – flexible donations and sponsorship opportunities

Since 1858, The Solicitors' Charity has supported solicitors through emotional, physical, professional, and financial challenges. Support ranges from counselling and therapeutic services to short-term financial assistance, professional guidance during career transition, and help in navigating periods of acute pressure.

It encourages others, like Wealthbrite, join in standing alongside the profession and provide visible support.

**THE  
SOLICITORS'  
CHARITY.**  
Supporting you, since 1858

# 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.

This month we have what might be the final word, subject to a second appeal, on the vexed issue of providing a breakdown of fees where an agency has been involved in the provision of a service, here the use of an interpreter. Conflicting decisions have been circulating for years at costs judge, regional costs judge and district judge level, but in [Motor Insurers' Bureau v Santiago](#) [2026] EWHC 513 (KB), Moody J has hopefully drawn a judicial line at High Court level. Below, HHJ Dight had assessed the recoverable figure to be £794.40 as opposed to the claimed sum of £924. The defendant argued that in the absence of a breakdown, the court should assess the fee at nil because the £924 included an undisclosed agency element and the interpreter's fee would have been less had his instruction been concluded directly with him. That argument failed. Moody J held that there is no rule of law or practice that requires a breakdown in every case where a litigation service is provided through a company. The court's task is to assess reasonableness and proportionality. There had been no error by HHJ Dight in reaching his decision to allow £794.40 without a breakdown, so the appeal was dismissed.

Turning next to two cases on security for costs under CPR 25. In [Harrington & Charles Trading Co Ltd \(In Liquidation\) v Mehta](#) [2026] EWHC 387 (Ch) – 19 Joanna Smith J decided who should pay the costs of an application for security for costs which had been resolved before the return date for the application. It was the defendants' case that they now had the

benefit of a satisfactory ATE Policy with cover for some £13 million which they did not have before they issued the application, and should have the costs. The claimants argued that the application had been issued prematurely. Joanna Smith J held that the court needed to be alive to the fact that parties compromised applications for many different reasons, sometimes pragmatic and commercial, and that they should be encouraged to do so rather than be penalised for doing so. It was not the role of the court to make predictions about what the outcome would have been if the application had been argued. No order as to costs was the appropriate order.

The second case is [Soprim Construction Sarl v Djibouti](#) [2026] EWHC 418 (Comm). The case has a lengthy and complicated history which is too complex to recite here. In short, Soprim obtained an arbitration award worth ultimately \$135m which it sought to enforce against the republic of Djibouti via cash held in UK banks. A third party company objected to the enforcement on the basis that the cash belonged to the company and not to the republic. It then sought security for costs against Soprim and failed. Waksman J held that under CPR 25.26, security for costs can only be ordered in favour of a defendant to a claim, and since the company was merely an objector to the enforcement proceedings, no order could be made.

Next a Court of Appeal decision about the validity of a bill of costs for detailed assessment under CPR 47.6. In **Duffy v**

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) @

**Birmingham City Council** [2026] EWCA Civ 146, the solicitor had not expressly certified that “the costs claimed do not exceed the costs which the receiving party is liable to pay to me/my firm”, that is to say, that the bill complied with the indemnity principle. Ljrd Newey, Phillips and Nugee held that there was no justification for treating a breach of that requirement as fatal to the validity of the bill any more than any other breach. The signature on the bill constituted implicit certification and the omission might be seen as a less serious error than many others. The bill was valid and effective to commence a detailed assessment and the claimant was entitled to a default costs certificate following the failure of the losing party to serve points of dispute.

Still in the Court of Appeal, in [Attersley v UK Insurance Ltd](#) [2026] EWCA Civ 217, Lewison, Falk and Miles LJs reversed the decision below by Mrs Justice Stacey (see [2025] Costs LR 615). In proceedings in a claim for damages for personal injury following a road traffic accident, the issue was whether the claimant was limited to fixed costs, or entitled to costs assessed on the standard basis, up to the point of the expiry of the relevant period for acceptance of a Part 36 offer that she had subsequently accepted late. Her claim had been commenced under the Pre-Action Protocol for Low Value Personal Injury Claims in Road Traffic Accidents (£1,000–£25,000) (“the RTA Protocol”). At the defendant’s request the claim had exited the RTA Protocol since liability was in dispute. In subsequent proceedings under CPR Part 7, the defendant had made a Part 36 offer of £45,000, before allocation to a track. The claim had subsequently been allocated to the multi-track: after that, the claimant had belatedly accepted the Part 36

offer. It was the defendant’s case that the claimant was only entitled to her fixed costs up to that date, pursuant to CPR 36.20, as then in force. Below, the judge had held that the claimant was entitled to her reasonable costs on the standard basis up to the expiry of the Part 36 offer in accordance with CPR 45.29 then in force. That decision had been wrong. Where a claim started under the Protocol and was later allocated to the multitrack due to late acceptance of an offer, the costs were governed by CPR 36.20. As such, the claimant was entitled only to the fixed costs. CPR 36.20 required the application of the fixed costs rules in Part 45 applicable on the date on which the relevant period expired in any case which had not, by that date, already been allocated to the multi-track. Appeal allowed.

Finally, as we await the judgment in Mazur which was heard by the Court of Appeal over three days about who is authorised to conduct litigation, we have another decision about who is not. In **XX v GH** [2026] EWFC 53(B), a very experienced legal executive without Independent Practice Rights granted by CILEx Regulation, applied for the permission for the court to conduct litigation in a family matter involving financial remedy proceedings, work she had been doing for many years. HHJ Farquhar refused the application, holding that there was a route which could be followed to obtain authorisation and it was not for the Court to provide a short cut remedy to permit the person applying to conduct litigation prior to being authorised by her Professional Body.

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