



June 2026

# the Messenger

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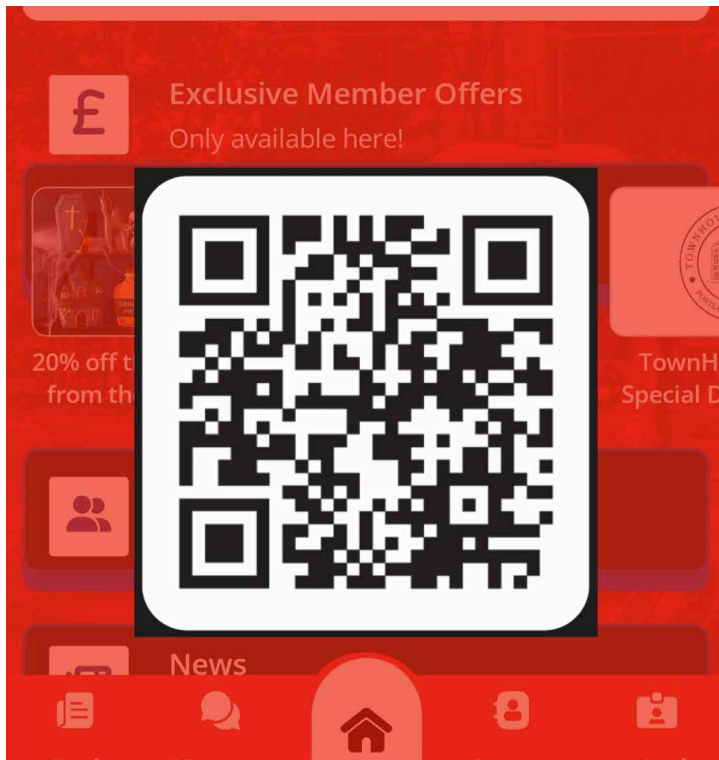


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Manchester Law  
& Technology  
Conference



## Are you on the MLS App?



We have had a raft of time-sensitive offers for discounted tickets at local theatres, and these are only available via the MLS App. An added benefit is that they are sent out on the app first, so when offers are limited you can be the first to know!

Don't miss the other *member only offers* with everything from a deal on your coffee to physiotherapy treatments there is something to suit everyone.

### Building a community

Using the app you can also connect with colleagues from across Manchester through the Connect Directory.

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# MIL AWARDS 2026

# GOOD LUCK ON JUDGING DAY 12TH JUNE!

Thursday 2nd July 2026 at The Kimpton Clocktower Hotel

For more information:

[www.manchesterlegalawards.co.uk](http://www.manchesterlegalawards.co.uk) #MLAwards

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# From the President

Ian McConkey, President



Over the last few weeks I have been tutoring a group of International law students who started their course in January. They were a bit shocked by the winter weather but even more surprised to find that Spring seemed to be as cold and wet. I have reassured them that warm balmy days are on the way.

Hopefully that proves to be true and particularly on 25 June when the Manchester Legal Walk takes place. This is a fantastic event organised by Greater Manchester Pro Bono Committee to raise funds for the Access to Justice Foundation.

While supporting this important cause is reason enough to take part, I must admit I also have a friendly competitive motivation. I recently attended the Leeds Law Society dinner, where it was noted that they had 900 participants in their walk compared with Manchester's 300 last year. It would be fantastic to see Manchester close that gap this year and give Stuart Cartwright, our Vice President, something to celebrate next time around. Please sign up as firms or individuals [here](#) by 17:00 on 1st June.

If you miss the deadline but would still like to donate to the worthy cause please do so on the [dedicated Just Giving page](#).

“

I'm looking forward to the judging day on 12th June and hearing more of the great activities going on

Otherwise June is taken up with judging the [Manchester Legal Awards](#). Thanks again to all who entered and well done to everyone who has made the shortlist. I'm looking forward to the judging day on 12th June and hearing more of the great activities going on. Don't forget this year we will be kindly hosted by Eversheds Sutherland International LLP at their offices in Two New Bailey.

The Awards ceremony itself looks to be a fantastic evening with sponsorship and tickets both sold out.

And don't miss our inaugural [charity netball tournament](#) in aid of my charity of the year Greater Manchester Law Centre taking place on 19th June. We only have space for 10 teams so make sure you secure your places and help raise funds for this great charity.

# the Messenger



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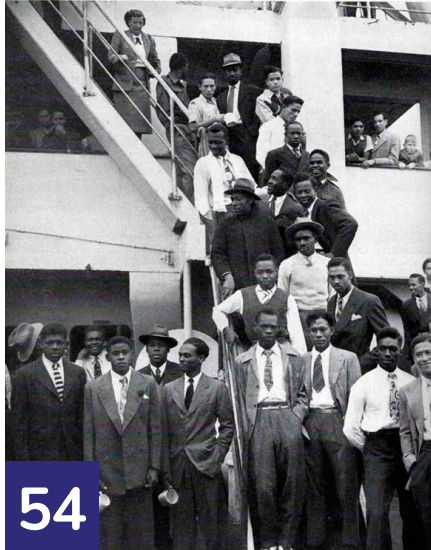
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by following us on social media?





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# Big Report.

2025-2026

In this year's Big Report, we take a closer look at the support we've provided and the positive impact we've been able to have on the lives of solicitors and their dependants.

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## Communications Committee

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**Deadline for the July 2026 edition of The Messenger**

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# Walking for Justice

The Manchester Legal Walk brings together hundreds of the city's legal professionals each year to raise funds for free legal advice services. This year's walk takes place on the 25th of June 2026, and the money raised will make a real difference to people across Greater Manchester.

Over 11 million people across the UK currently have an unmet legal need, unable to access the advice required to resolve problems affecting their housing, income or family (LSB Legal Needs Summary Report, 2024).

At The Access to Justice Foundation, we are working to change this.

We are the only UK funder dedicated to increasing free legal support, advice and representation. We work with other funders, law firms and individuals to raise money. And we use our sector expertise to strategically fund communities where it will



make the greatest impact, targeting areas where legal support can transform lives.

## Our impact in Greater Manchester

We are currently funding five organisations in Greater Manchester that provide vital services to their communities. Our funded partners are Citizens Advice Bury and Bolton; Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit; LGBT Foundation; Manchester Mind; and Greater Manchester Law Centre.

Our grants are multi-year, and we currently have more than £1.3 million committed to these charities.

This means more people like Michael and Ryan can be helped.



### **Greater Manchester Law Centre**

Michael had worked for the same employer for 12 years when he was suddenly dismissed with no warning. Facing financial uncertainty and with no clear route to challenge it, he turned to Greater Manchester Law Centre. They fast-tracked him through the process and helped him reach a settlement without ever setting foot in a tribunal. Michael received £6,000 in lieu of owed wages and was offered a new contract on an enhanced salary.

### **LGBT Foundation**

Ryan was trapped in a relationship that was controlling and financially abusive. Leaving felt impossible, especially with the fear of what separation would mean financially. LGBT Foundation gave Ryan the safe space and practical legal support to take that step. Ryan has now fled the relationship, relocated, and is getting advice on divorce and finances. For the first time in a long time, Ryan can look forward.

When you and colleagues walk and raise funds in June, you are helping make sure we can continue to support organisations like these to be there for the next Michael and the next Ryan.

### **Join the Legal Walk**

Registrations for the 2026 walk close on 1st June at 17:00. [Register your team here.](#) ☞ Donations can now be submitted through a [dedicated JustGiving page.](#) ☞ Our thanks to the Greater Manchester Pro Bono Committee for organising the event.

We encourage every firm and chambers in Manchester to take part, whether that means entering a team, donating, or encouraging colleagues to walk and seek matched funding from their firm.

### **Did you know:**

Another key element of our fundraising is as the prescribed charity to receive undistributed damages from opt out collective action cases.

This year we were able to make almost £4m worth of grants using these funds but we need help to ensure these unclaimed funds continue to be put to good use.

You can find out more about our work, and how you can support us as the prescribed charity [here](#) ☞.

The Manchester legal community has a proud tradition of standing behind them. We hope that tradition continues on the 25th of June.

Legal Walks across England and Wales are sponsored by the Law Society.

### **Other ways to support access to justice**

There are other ways you can help. You can strengthen the long-term impact of your pro bono work by applying for a Pro Bono Cost Order in civil courts, tribunals or settlements. [Find out more here](#)

Donate unclaimed residual client balances where a client cannot be traced. Every amount, however small, is pooled to make impactful grants and we offer indemnities to protect your firm. [Find out more here](#)

For information about the Legal Walk contact Emily Sherratt: [manchester@probonocommittee.uk](mailto:manchester@probonocommittee.uk) ☞

**Eve Slater**  
[eveslater@atjf.org.uk](mailto:eveslater@atjf.org.uk) ☞, Development Officer, Access to Justice Foundation



# From Legal To Literary: Manchester Lawyer's Debut Thriller



relationships with northern law firms and local law societies, including of course the dynamic and supportive Manchester Law Society. I joke with friends that I then became a cliché ... I moved to the Cotswolds with my husband and decided it was time to fulfil my lifelong dream and write a book!

## Is there any overlap between being a lawyer and being an author?

Yes! I think there's a misconception that being creative and writing a great book is enough to get published. Don't get me wrong, that is true for a few incredible talents but for most debut authors it's very hard to get a literary agent, let alone then secure a book deal. In my experience, getting a publishing deal required the same skills I needed as a lawyer: tenacity,

determination, professionalism and attention to detail. There is no escaping proofreading!

After a twenty-year legal career in Manchester, Claire Quinn has made the leap into writing fiction. We caught up with her to discuss her debut thriller *The Games We Play*, which is being published this summer by HarperCollins northern imprint, HarperNorth.



## Tell us a bit about yourself and what made you move from the legal to the literary?

I was a real estate lawyer in Manchester, working at DLA Piper for many years and then as a partner at Irwin Mitchell, before moving to The Law Society where I managed

## Can you tell us a little about the book and what inspired it?

It's a thriller about female friendship, secrets and betrayal, and should appeal to fans of Liane Moriarty, Ruth Ware and Claire Douglas. I'm fascinated by the beautiful and



the toxic in female relationships and wanted to delve into this within a suspenseful novel, hence *The Games We Play*. The three friends are preparing for one of them to get married when their secret about a twisted teenage game comes back to haunt them. As the truth begins to creep out, making headlines that threaten to pull their lives apart, it puts their friendship to the ultimate test – has it been love or fear holding them together? If one of them cracks, will any of them survive?

### And what's next for you?

I'm currently working on my next novel, and over the coming months I'm looking forward to getting out and talking to readers about *The Games We Play*. If any of your members are part of book clubs or similar societies, I'd be thrilled to come and speak about my book and the writing process.

*The Games We Play* is being published on 30 July and is available to pre-order now in paperback, e-book and audio.

## UK–India Roadshow 2026:

### Unlock your export growth with the UK–India FTA

Are you looking for the **clarity, confidence and connections** needed to enter, expand or scale successfully in India?

The UK–India Free Trade Agreement (FTA), due to enter into force in 2026, is one of the most significant trade deals the UK has secured, with bilateral trade expected to grow by nearly 39% worth £25.5 billion a year.

For UK businesses, this opens new market access, lower barriers and major commercial opportunities in one of the world's fastestgrowing economies. To help businesses seize this moment, the UK–India FTA Roadshow 2026 is coming to cities across all four UK nations.

Focused on tariff reductions, regulatory change, sectorspecific opportunities and practical export support, the Roadshow places practical opportunity at the centre of every session.

Ready to unlock your export growth? Select your preferred location below to see what's on offer and how the Roadshow can support your business.

[Find out more...](#) 



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Foundation

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## Here's what we provide:



**SRA-backed indemnity** for all donations, making the process risk-free for your firm\*



**Clear guidance** on the donation process – we've designed it to be straightforward and secure



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## \*Based in Scotland or Northern Ireland?

Get in touch with us for support and guidance on donating your residual client balances to us.





## Protection for your firm

We provide written indemnities for all donations. If your client is later traced, simply ask us for the funds back and we'll return them immediately. Your firm stays fully compliant.

## The difference your dormant funds make

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The free legal advice we fund strengthens communities and ensures everyone has the power to seek redress.



Every residual client balance you donate to us transforms the lives of real people by providing free legal advice that diverts people from crisis.

### Get started today

Get in touch: [clientbalances@atjf.org.uk](mailto:clientbalances@atjf.org.uk)

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# Who's who at MLS Towers

As preparations continue for Fran's impending retirement we are delighted to welcome our new Operations Manager Edricia to the team.

Edricia will be supporting me in my new role as CEO when Fran finishes on 31st July and will complete the team. Expect to see her at events, Committee and Forum meetings from 1st June.

Don't worry – Chandre and Grace are going to still be here making sure everything runs properly! Chandre is your first port of call for any membership, Committee or Forum queries. Grace is the person to go to on any event queries or if you need to get your news in the Messenger.

If you're not already please do connect with the team on LinkedIn, see our profiles here:

[Carla](#) 

[Edricia](#) 

[Grace](#) 

[Chandre](#) 

## Meet our new Operations Manager

I'm Edricia, Manchester Law Society's newest recruit

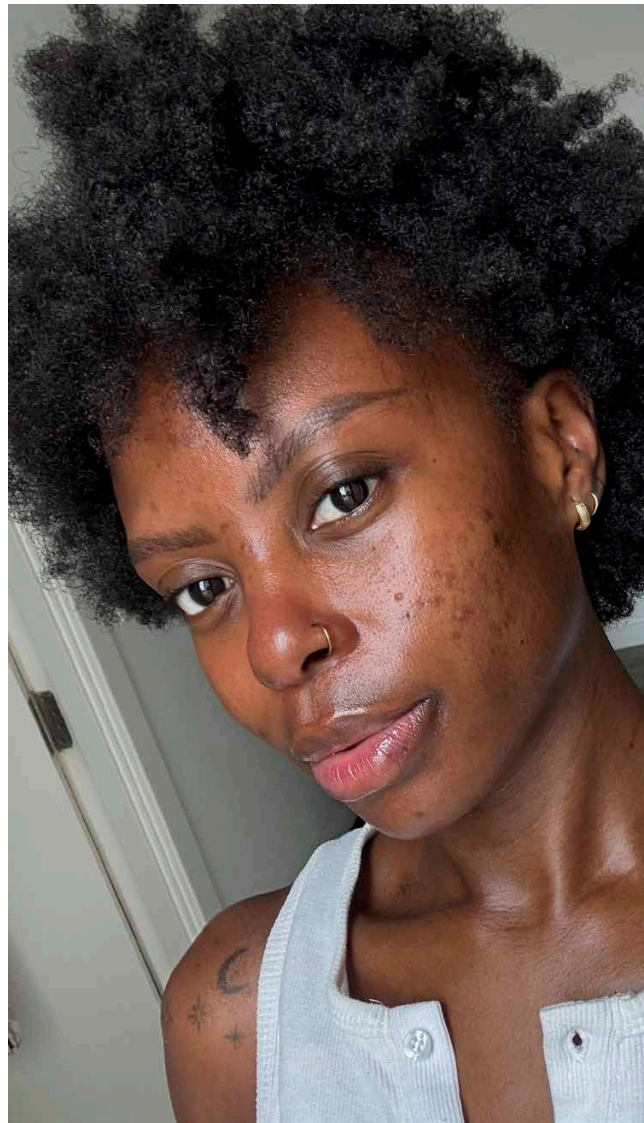
It's a full circle moment to end up in a nonprofit space with initiatives so dear to my heart. From childhood aspirations to help those less fortunate, to countless retail hours, to insurance and teaching abroad, and even the corporate 9-5. One thing that stayed consistent was my love of people, seeking and thriving through life's challenges, and my desire to help; all of which I feel will be handy building blocks as our new Operations Manager at MLS.

I'm looking forward to connecting with the plethora of individuals who each make MLS special as well as finding my work-life rhythm after having a baby in 2025.

**Hobbies:** Anything active, reading (33 books down in 2026 alone!), family time, and figuring out where and when to travel next.

**Book on repeat:** Tschik by Wolfgang Herrndorf, I'm a sucker for a coming-of-age story (bonus points as it also helps me keep my German language skills alive)

**Fun Fact:** My family and I moved to the UK in '97 following volcanic eruptions on our tiny but beautiful island, Montserrat.





# *Manchester Business and Property Courts Forum*

## **BPC JUNIOR BITESIZE Enforcing (and Resisting) Restrictive Covenants**

The Manchester Business and Property Courts Forum is delighted to invite you to the second of this year's Junior Bitesize events aimed at junior practitioners. Suzi Gardener, Associate at Brabners and Rebecca Jones of 23ES, will be speaking on restrictive covenants in employment contracts. The session will provide a practical overview of how post-termination restrictions operate and what courts look for when determining enforceability, including when considering injunctive relief. The speakers will also discuss recent case law and highlight current proposals for reform in this area.

The event will be in-person only, held at Brabners. This event will start at 8:30am and finish at 9:15am with coffees and pastries available from 8:15am.

To book a place, please [click here](#).

*Thursday 4 June 2026 at 8:30am*


*In-person only at: Brabners, 100 Barbirolli*

*Square, Manchester M2 3BD*





## Boss Office – Smarter Solutions for Businesses

Docutech Office Solutions are delighted to introduce their new company – [Boss Office](#) .

At Boss Office, we believe running a business should be simpler, more efficient, and more cost-effective.

Boss Office is an online digital office supplies platform built to help businesses save time and money by providing everything they need in one place. With access to over 30,000 office products, we make ordering workplace essentials quick, easy, and hassle-free.

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- We're also excited to introduce Boss Office Points:
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# CHARITY

# Netball

## TOURNAMENT

19 JUNE

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NOW!**

*Ready. Net. Go!*





# Manchester Law & Technology Conference 2026

The [Manchester Law & Technology 2026 Conference](#) returns on 2nd July 2026 for a one-day, cross-sector deep dive into the technologies reshaping legal services, financial infrastructure and regulation, and to explore possible collaborative business enterprise contributing to Northern UK economic development.

Set in Bruntwood's Circle Square, the annual gathering convenes law firms, in-house legal teams, LegalTech founders, regulators, investors and academic researchers to move beyond the hype and focus on what's changing now, and what's coming next.

Across keynotes and panels, we'll explore **practical advances in generative AI and large language models, bias and responsible AI, regulatory trends in payments, and how digital public money and new payment rails are opening up fresh commercial and policy questions.**

The programme also spotlights **growth pathways for the North's LawTech and FinTech ecosystem** - new partnerships, investment opportunities, and the future skills legal and technology teams need to deliver trusted, scalable innovation.

Ideal for: LegalTech innovators, legal ops leaders, partners and barristers interested in tech at the Bar, compliance and regulatory teams, payments and fintech specialists, policymakers, and researchers.

## Speakers and sessions include:

- Regulatory Trends with Technology, Chastity Murphy (US Treasury), Kristin Johnson (former head of CFTC)



- Economic Growth and digital public money technologies with the Post Office, Simon Youel, Eduard Karel de Jong, Chris Gevers (Director for Centre of Applied Legal Knowledge)
- National digital infrastructure, how do new technologies meet development goals, Michael Butera, Rwanda Government CTO.
- Tech at the Bar, Tom Gosling, 23ES Chambers
- Initiatives/opportunities for academic collaboration, with KTP case study – The University of Manchester
- LawTech UK – trends and opportunities update

[Secure your place](#)



As we approach the midway point of the year (can you believe it?!), check out the events we have in the diary for the remainder of 2026!

- [MLS X Datalaw: New Funded Route for Trainee Solicitors After Level 7 Defunding](#) ☞ – Thursday 11th June
- [Charity Netball Tournament](#) ☞ – Friday 19th June
- [MLS X Quiss: Maximizing Efficiency with Intranet, Workflows, and Microsoft 365](#) ☞ – Wednesday 24th June
- [Manchester Legal Awards](#) ☞ – Thursday 2nd July
- [Pride Afternoon Tea](#) ☞ – Saturday 29th August
- [Charity 5-a-Side Football Tournament](#) ☞ – Friday 18th September
- [Private Client Conference](#) – Wednesday 23rd September

- [Fran’s Retirement Party](#) – Thursday 8th October
- [Local Authority Conference](#) – Wednesday 14th October
- [MLS X Fletchers Solicitors: Changing Language in the Workplace](#) – Thursday 15th October
- [Family Law Conference](#) – Wednesday 21st October
- [Criminal Law Conference](#) – Wednesday 4th November
- [Management Conference](#) – Wednesday 11th November
- [Practice Management & Compliance Conference](#) – Wednesday 18th November

Please click the link for each event to find out more and book today. Alternatively, email us at [events@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:events@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk) and we'll add you to the interest log for your chosen event.

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## Posh Pub Quiz 2026

It's the event we all know and love, it's the Posh Pub Quiz! Yes, for yet another year, 15 teams of Manchester's finest legal professionals joined together at Manchester Hall for some friendly competition to decide which firm had the best trivia knowledge.

This year's Posh Pub Quiz was also importantly in aid of [Greater Manchester Law Centre](#) @, our President's Charity of the Year. Set up by local lawyers and community activists, the charity strives to provide free legal advice to the community across the region and improve access to justice. They are based in Levenshulme in South Manchester but take clients from Rochdale to Reddish, from Wigan to Wythenshawe, and all places in between!

In 2025, GMLC received over 21,000 enquiries, supported 10,600 people with their legal issues and took on over 1600 cases. They undertake a full range of advice and case support and advocacy for the cases they take on. They do some incredible

work in our local community, so we are always delighted to support them in any way we can.

As is tradition in our Posh Pub Quiz, we had prizes for the most points scored, the best team name, and a wooden spoon prize of five £5 Greggs gift vouchers – which somehow always end up being an ironically sought after prize!

Our quizzers arrived and were greeted with a glass of bubbles to begin the night, before making their way into the gorgeous Goulburn Suite in Manchester Hall.

Our resident quizmaster, Chris Payne then greeted our guests and explained the rules of the quiz. Chris is no stranger to a pub quiz, having hosted the weekly quiz at the famous Cornerhouse Pub for many years – so our teams were in very safe hands.

Kicking off the quiz, Chris began with a general knowledge round, with topics ranging from geography to the Bible!





Winners - Fletcher's team Janice from Accounts



Wooden spoon winners Leonard Curtis Legal's team the Tort-illas

We were then quizzed on TV show theme tunes, which the MLS Team admittedly didn't perform too well on. Who knew you could get confused between the theme tune for 'Game of Thrones' and 'The Traitors?'

It was after this round that our quizmaster chose the best team name. While there were plenty for Chris to choose from, there was a clear winner in his eyes.

To provide some context, the venue was hosting another event the next day and a sign reading "Welcome to Katie's Wedding (Featuring Mike)" was visible as you exited the lift.

While this caused a slight bit of confusion for a few attendees who accidentally turned a wrong corner before seeing the wedding sign, one team used this as inspiration for their team name! Burton Copeland very timely called themselves 'I Thought This Was Katie's Wedding,' which received plenty of laughs all around when read out and thus made it the rightful champion of the best



team name. The firm received a free round of drinks from Manchester Hall for their creativity – congratulations to them (and also to the happy couple!)

While we tucked in to some food, teams looked over the picture round, which was a selection of children's TV presenters. Think Blue Peter, Newsround – the kinds of faces that unlocked a wave of collective nostalgia. Some were immediately recognisable,

others required some very confident guessing, or if you were Team MLS, needed a few made up names to try and score some points.

It was then time for the music round, also known as the only round the MLS Team ('The Wise Quackers') scored decently on! We heard the intros to a range of popular songs spanning across many decades, including the rather ominous beginning to Prince's '1999' – we all, including Chris, seemed to forget this strange start!

Continued on page 20



To close off the quiz, Chris decided to throw in a little drama and gave all the teams the chance to take a gamble with the genius round. Teams had to name as many films in Daniel Day-Lewis' filmography as they could, but they were warned to proceed with caution as a wrong answer meant a point deducted.

## Final Scores

Team Name	Scores
Janice from Accounts	61
Property Prophets	52
Divorce Force	48
Splits and Giggles	47.5
Unexpected Item in Bagging Area	47.5
Caveat Guesser	46
Risky Quizness	44.5
I Thought This Was Katie's Wedding	44
Quiz Pro Quo	42.5
TUPE or Not TUPE	38.5
Norfolk and Chance	38
The Wise Quackers	37.5
Open The Door, Get On The Floor, Needs An AnswerSAUR	36
Is Winning This a KPI?	35.5
Tort-illas	28.5

After all this quizzing, it was time to see who were the champions! The winners of the quiz were 'Janice from Accounts' – the team representing Fletchers Solicitors. They scored an impressive 61 points and left with a bottle of wine each paired with some chocolates.

The wooden spoon prize (the famous Gregg's vouchers) went to Leonard Curtis Legal's 'The Tort-illas,' who were actually the two-times winners of this prize! At this point, we're starting to think they might have a particular goal in mind...

A huge thank you to Chris for keeping the evening running so smoothly, to Manchester Hall for their wonderful hospitality, and of course to all those who joined us on the night and who supported Greater Manchester Law Centre through their participation. A portion of every ticket sold goes towards an organisation doing genuinely vital work for people across our region.

**See you again next year for more quizzing!**

In addition to being a Quizmaster extraordinaire and a fantastic photographer Chris also co-hosts *The Gig Stories* Podcast with Alex Winters – a celebration of gigs, venues, festivals and live music. With a new series coming soon you can check out their past episodes featuring (the one and only) Chesney Hawkes, Nigel Clark of 90s indie band Dodgy, DJ Paulette and many more Check them out on [Spotify](#) or wherever you get your podcasts.



## How self-aware are you?

We've all worked for managers who have zero self-awareness. Similarly, we've all worked for managers who are fully aware of how they come across to others. Self-awareness is one of the most important qualities a manager can develop. In today's workplace, technical knowledge and experience are no longer enough to lead a successful team. Employees expect leaders who can communicate clearly, manage emotions effectively, and create a positive and safe work environment. A self-aware manager understands their own strengths, weaknesses, emotions, and behaviours, and this understanding helps them lead others more effectively.

Being self-aware helps to improve decision-making. A self-aware manager recognises how emotions, stress, and personal biases can influence decisions. Instead of reacting impulsively, they take time to think carefully and consider different perspectives. This leads to more balanced and fair outcomes, which increases trust among team members.

Self-awareness also strengthens communication skills. Managers who understand their communication style are better able to adjust their approach depending on the situation or the individual they are speaking with. For example, some employees may respond well to direct feedback, while others may need a more supportive conversation. A self-aware manager can recognise these differences and communicate in a way that motivates and encourages employees rather than discouraging them.

Another important aspect of self-awareness is emotional intelligence. Managers often work in high-pressure environments where conflicts and challenges are common. A self-aware leader can identify their emotional triggers

and manage their reactions appropriately. Instead of allowing frustration or anger to damage relationships, they remain calm and professional. This creates a more stable and respectful workplace culture. Employees are more likely to feel valued and understood when their manager demonstrates emotional control and empathy.

In addition, self-awareness helps managers build stronger relationships with their teams. Employees are more likely to respect leaders who are honest about their limitations and willing to admit mistakes. Authenticity builds trust, and trust is essential for teamwork and collaboration. A self-aware manager creates an environment where employees feel comfortable sharing ideas, raising concerns, and contributing to the organisation's success.

Finally, self-awareness contributes to better leadership overall. Managers who understand themselves are more capable of inspiring others, handling challenges, and adapting to change. They are able to lead with confidence while remaining humble and approachable. In a constantly evolving business world, these qualities are essential for long-term success.

Overall, self-awareness is a critical skill for all managers. It improves decision-making, communication, emotional intelligence, and relationships within the workplace. A self-aware manager not only enhances their own leadership abilities but also creates a positive and productive environment for their team. By investing in self-awareness, managers can become stronger leaders and help their organisations achieve greater success.

Do you need a hand developing your managers and leaders?

Contact Mike direct for a chat at [mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk](mailto:mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk) 

## Why difficult conversations at work matter

Most people working in the legal sector will have put off a difficult conversation at some point.

It might be raising concerns about workload, giving feedback, addressing behaviour or checking in with someone who does not seem themselves. These conversations can feel uncomfortable, especially in busy workplaces where people are already under pressure.

But one of the strongest messages from LawCare's recent webinar, Let's talk about difficult conversations at work, was that avoiding conversations rarely makes things better.

The panel explored practical ways people can approach difficult conversations more confidently and constructively, while also helping create healthier workplace cultures across the legal sector.

### Don't avoid the conversation

Several panellists reflected that issues almost always become harder to manage when they are ignored. Communication is

often one of the most important tools for stopping problems escalating.

The webinar highlighted simple but important approaches, including:

- speaking up early if something feels wrong
- keeping communication regular and open
- addressing issues before they grow into bigger problems
- making time for informal check-ins and conversations

### Managing workload and unrealistic expectations

Another of the themes from the webinar was workload pressure and managing expectations. Webinar attendees were asked which workplace conversations they found hardest, and the highest response was around dealing with unreasonable demands and expectations.

The panel discussion reflected how closely this is linked to legal workplace culture, where being constantly available and responsive is often rewarded. Many people feel pressure to say yes to everything, even when their workload is already unmanageable.

One key message was not to simply agree to unrealistic requests and hope things will somehow work themselves out later.

Instead, the panel encouraged people to have more open conversations about priorities, deadlines and capacity earlier on. That could include asking whether deadlines are flexible, being honest about workload





pressures and discussing what work realistically needs to take priority.

### Listening and psychological safety

Listening was another theme running through the session. The panel reflected that people often go into difficult conversations focused on what they want to say, rather than properly listening to the other person's perspective.

The webinar also explored psychological safety and what it looks like in practice. That includes workplaces where people feel able to:

- admit mistakes
- ask questions
- say they are struggling
- challenge behaviour respectfully
- raise concerns without fear

A strong message was that leaders play an important role in shaping this culture through their own behaviour. Being open, admitting mistakes, apologising when needed and checking in regularly with people can all help create safer and healthier workplace environments.

### Conversations do not need to be perfect

A reassuring point from the webinar was that difficult conversations do not need to be handled perfectly.

People are not usually expecting managers or colleagues to have all the answers. Often, they simply want someone to listen properly, show understanding and take concerns seriously.

Creating the right environment matters too. People are far more likely to speak honestly when they feel respected, listened to and safe from blame or embarrassment.

The overall message from the webinar was not that difficult conversations suddenly become easy, but that open, respectful and honest communication helps prevent problems building up over time.

You can read a more detailed write-up of the webinar here: [Let's talk about difficult conversations at work webinar highlights](#) .

LawCare also offers training on difficult conversations at work, protecting your wellbeing, leading well and vicarious trauma. Find out more here: [Training offered by LawCare](#) .

### Upcoming LawCare webinar

In July, LawCare will host *Introducing the Heads & Hearts model of reflective practice groups to senior lawyers*, led by Drs Arabella Kurtz and Anna Churcher-Clarke.

The session will explore how reflective practice groups can help legal professionals process challenging work, feel less isolated and support healthier ways of working.

It is aimed at lawyers with management responsibilities who sometimes feel overwhelmed, isolated or as though they have nobody to talk through work dilemmas with.

The webinar is free to attend and is part of LawCare's wider work to support healthier workplace cultures and more sustainable careers across the legal sector.

Sign up for free here: [LawCare - Reflective practice with Drs Arabella Kurtz & Anna Churcher-Clarke](#) .

# Regulation Update & News



By **Andrea Cohen**, Compli, Weightmans

You have to love a month with two Bank Holidays, and at the time of writing, we're being promised record temperatures and a hot Bank Holiday Monday (for a change!) However, by the time this goes to print, that could have changed, which is not dissimilar to the regulatory and compliance world where things change rapidly – over the last few months alone we've had the announcement of the FCA takeover of AML regulation, Mazur, SRA interventions etc.

## Regulatory landscape: pressure on standards and resources

Recent developments continue to underline the increasing expectations placed on firms and the corresponding pressure on the regulator. Reports indicate a continued rise in misconduct referrals to the SRA, with suggestions that increased funding is now being positioned as a necessity rather than a choice. It remains to be seen, although it is an educated guess, that the large increase is in part due to the use of AI to draft referrals, rather than a huge increase in solicitors behaving badly.

Alongside this, scrutiny of the SRA's approach to regulation has intensified, with commentary questioning whether perceived failures arise from the substance of regulation or its structural delivery. There is also ongoing debate, arising in part from the CA decision in Dentons around the threshold for misconduct, that breaches of the SRA Standards and Regulations must reach a level of "sufficient seriousness" before disciplinary action is justified.

Separately, proposals to strengthen whistleblower protections suggest a continued policy shift towards encouraging reporting and transparency. For firms, this reinforces the importance of having robust internal reporting channels and a culture that supports early escalation of concerns.

## SRA strategy, funding and competence reforms

The SRA's draft business plan and funding proposals for 2026/27 highlight ongoing cost pressures across the regulatory framework and signal the likelihood of further financial demands being placed on the profession.

At the same time, the SRA continues to emphasise professional ethics and competence. Its ongoing consultation on raising the bar on continuing competence is likely to have practical implications for firms' appraisal, supervision and training processes. Firms should anticipate a more structured and evidence-based approach to competence assessment in future, building on the SRA's wider focus on maintaining high ethical standards.

These developments collectively point towards a regulatory environment where firms will be expected not only to comply, but to demonstrate how compliance is embedded in practice.

## AI and professional obligations

Concerns around the use of artificial intelligence in legal practice have come into sharper focus following judicial criticism of lawyers relying on unverified AI-generated material in court proceedings. Two solicitors were referred to the SRA after submitting court documents relying on AI-generated authorities which were not



checked and were found to be inaccurate. The court emphasised that responsibility for the accuracy of submissions cannot be delegated to junior staff or technology. The case reinforces the fundamental duty not to mislead the court and highlights growing regulatory risk around the use of AI without effective supervision and verification processes.

In parallel, the Law Society has called for clearer and more immediate guidance on the use of AI in preparing court documents, recognising both the potential benefits and the risks.

The consistent message is clear: while AI may support efficiency, it does not dilute a solicitor's professional obligations. Firms should ensure appropriate supervision, clear policies and robust verification processes for any AI-assisted work.

## Sanctions and AML developments

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) has marked its 10-year anniversary by emphasising the growing importance of coordinated sanctions enforcement and the role of partnerships across government and industry.

Recent regulatory changes also have practical implications for firms. Amendments to the UK sanctions regulations introduce a shift from euro to sterling thresholds, with the €10,000 reporting threshold now replaced by £10,000. This is intended to align sanctions reporting with UK anti-money laundering requirements and simplify compliance processes.

Additional changes include confirmation that licensing notices may be served electronically, clarification of the Treasury debt exception across payment chains, and broader flexibility in licensing "prior obligations." While largely technical, these changes reinforce the need for firms to keep sanctions compliance frameworks under regular review.

In addition, new HMRC requirements mean that firms interacting with HMRC on behalf of clients may need to register as tax advisers from May 2026. This includes demonstrating AML supervision and ensuring the firm is appropriately registered via HMRC's digital system.

## Financial services and claims sector scrutiny

Beyond the legal profession, the FCA's review of claims management companies signals increased regulatory attention on sectors perceived to be causing consumer harm. The FCA has recently launched a market study to gather evidence to understand the root causes of practices it has observed by firms in the claims management market and requested responses by 19 June 2026. If it finds the market is not working well, next steps may include making recommendations to other bodies, such as the SRA. While not directly impacting all law firms, those operating in adjacent areas should be alert to the potential for increased scrutiny and tightening standards.

## New SRA guidance and Law Society practice notes

[Terminating a retainer](#) ⓘ

[Mazur and the conduct of litigation](#) ⓘ

[Rights of audience](#) ⓘ



## Disciplinary decisions

Recent SRA and SDT decisions provide a continued reminder of the breadth of conduct issues giving rise to enforcement action:

### Failure to report criminal conduct

A solicitor was fined £15,000 for failing to notify the SRA of multiple drink driving convictions. The Tribunal made clear that prompt self-reporting of criminal matters is a core regulatory obligation. Delay or omission, even where there is no underlying professional wrongdoing connected to client work, will be treated seriously as a failure of transparency and integrity.

### Dishonesty involving client records – exceptional circumstances considered

In a case concerning the creation of a false client attendance note, the SDT found dishonesty but nevertheless stopped short of a strike off. The Tribunal accepted that exceptional circumstances were present, demonstrating that while dishonesty will ordinarily lead to removal from the roll, the SDT retains discretion where there is compelling mitigation.

### Failure to comply with court orders and Ombudsman decisions

A solicitor was struck off following a sustained failure to comply with court orders and a Legal Ombudsman determination. The decision reflects the Tribunal's clear expectation that solicitors must engage with and comply promptly with both court processes and complaints outcomes. Persistent non-compliance is treated as a serious breach of professional obligations and undermines public trust.

### Misleading conduct and attempted concealment of errors

A solicitor was struck off after attempting to conceal a missed court deadline, including misleading others about the position. The Tribunal regarded the attempt to cover up the error, rather than the underlying mistake itself, as the most serious aspect of the misconduct.

### Improper dealings with clients and third parties

A solicitor was struck off following involvement in property transactions where he agreed to sign leases confirming he'd witnessed a signature as a favour to a client and subsequently provided misleading information to the police. He asked the client to get the leases signed as soon as possible and return them, but they were never received.

### Allegations of misleading communications not upheld

A solicitor accused of sending misleading emails was cleared by the SDT, with the Tribunal accepting that workload pressures and context were relevant to the assessment of conduct accepting her evidence that when writing the email she had no intention to mislead.

### How Compli can help...

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

 **QUISS**

# WEBINAR SERIES

last  
wednesday  
of the  
month!

Gain an understanding of Intranets, optimisation of workflows and how to leverage M365 Tools for efficiency at the last webinar in our series with Quiss

**MAXIMISING EFFICIENCY WITH  
MICROSOFT 365**

**WEDNESDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

**FIND OUT MORE**



From page 1

## Are you on the MLS App?

There's also a growing number of groups you can join. Here, you can curate your feed with the news that matters most to you. You will automatically be added to some groups, but you can join as many as you like!

See all those available [here](#) and let us know if there are any you'd like to see. Perhaps book recommendations, restaurant reviews, or a running group? If you want to lead one, email [enquiries@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk) or send one of the team a message on the app!

In the Connect Directory, you will also be able to see which members are in our Committees and Forums via a badge on their profile. If you're interested in joining any of the 16 Committees and Forums, do let us know!

### Get ready for the Manchester Legal Awards on the app!

As we build up to the [Manchester Legal Awards](#) the app will be the first place the winners are announced (outside of the Kimpton Ballroom of course!) so if you haven't managed to get a ticket this year you can watch out on the app for the winners.

We will also be running a competition on the night for the best table photo. You'll be able to see the table plan on there too so no need to queue at the printed version – more time to enjoy the drinks reception!

There may also be some behind-the-scenes footage of us setting up for the night so you can have a sneaky peek behind the curtain.



### This all sounds great – how do I get it?

You can download the MLS App from the [App Store for iPhones](#) or the [Play Store for Android](#) and have MLS in your pocket at all times. If you prefer, you can also [access the platform in a web browser](#), which can be easier when registering your account.

### How do I register?

All members are pre-registered and the easiest way to register is to use the web browser:

1. Visit <https://app.engageesp.com/mls/login>
2. Click the Existing Member Sign Up button
3. You will be asked to enter your last name and email address – please use the information that MLS holds for you
4. You will then be asked to create some security questions and set a password

Once that is completed, you will be able to access your account, see your news feed, message contacts, and access the member-only offers.

You can also download the app to your phone and just use your password to log in. If you allow push notifications you'll be the first to hear about offers and news.

**If you have any issues registering or using the MLS App, email us at [enquiries@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk) and we'll do some troubleshooting for you!**



# CHARITY FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT 2026

**Date:** Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September

**Time:** 14:00 — 17:00

**Venue:** Power League Manchester Central

Team Registration:

**£300 + VAT**





In recognition of World Bicycle Day (3 June) and Bike Week (8–14 June), this month we asked our *Talking Heads*:

## “What is your favourite bike ride or route around Greater Manchester/the North West?”

**Kath Wilson**  
Senior Lawyer  
Government Legal  
Department

“I am a commuter cyclist and last year I decided to cycle from Lands End to John O’Groats (1100 miles). There are lots of gorgeous routes along the way, but what really surprised me was the route just north of Clitheroe in Lancashire on the section between Clitheroe and Sedbergh for

45 miles. Once you get to the top of Waddington Hill, the views are to die for. As a cyclist you have to keep stopping and taking photos. And you question yourself – why have I not known about this beautiful route. It is a tough ride up to the top, but the downhill segments make up for it and go on for a long, long way. Also, there were hardly any cars so you can pretend that you are in the Tour De France. According



to my Strava stats, I hit 54.5 km/h on the downhill.”

**Ian McConkey**  
Partner, Weightmans LLP  
President, Manchester Law Society

My favourite cycle ride from Manchester takes in the Goyt valley. This a beautiful climb from the reservoir up to the Cat and Fiddle at the top. It is a very quiet one-way road and it winds its way up the valley along the river. It is popular with

cyclist and walkers. The gradient is not too steep and the views over the hills are spectacular. It is often the farthest point on my ride so it also has the attraction that I know that at the top I am heading for home.





[Click for more info](#)

# Pride

## afternoon tea

In aid of



**Saturday 29th August 2026**  
**12:00 to 17:00**



**Peter Street Kitchen at The  
Edwardian Manchester, A Radisson  
Collection Hotel, Free Trade Hall,  
Peter St, Manchester M2 5GP**



**£51.00 including VAT per guest**

# Find out more!



## Bank of Dave: The FeelGood Financial Revolution Takes to the Stage

New musical '*Bank of Dave*' [@](#) has officially hit the stage, bringing an extraordinary true story from screen to spotlight. Based on the hit Netflix film of the same name, the musical tells the inspiring story of entrepreneur Dave Fishwick and the creation of Burnley Savings and Loans, a bold challenge to the traditional banking system.

The premiere took place at The Lowry, Salford on 2nd May, where Chris Moss, Corporate Partner and Head of Financial Services at [Myerson Solicitors](#) [@](#) and the 'real lawyer behind the story', attended to celebrate the launch of this uplifting new production. Bank of Dave's book and lyrics are by Rob Madge, music and lyrics by Pippa Cleary and the stage production is directed by Nikolai Foster

### From Netflix to the Stage

Adapted for the stage, the musical follows Dave Fishwick, portrayed by Sam Lupton, and his lawyer Hugh, portrayed by Lucca Chadwick Patel, as they take on the financial establishment to create a community bank designed to serve local people and businesses in Burnley.

Both heartfelt and highenergy, the show captures the humour, frustration and determination behind a story that resonated with audiences nationwide when first released on screen.

### A Review from the 'Real Lawyer' Behind Bank of Dave

Reflecting on the performance, Chris Moss shared his thoughts:

'The show is a fantastic celebration of community, small business, and what can be achieved when you don't take no for an answer. Looking back now, I feel incredibly lucky that he knocked on my door all those years ago, it's not every day you get the chance to be part of something that goes on to change lives.

Setting up Burnley Savings and Loans was a huge challenge on every level, structural, regulatory, and cultural. At the time, following the financial crash, the idea of a so-called "small bank" felt almost impossible. The regulators had to rethink longestablished processes, and the system itself needed to evolve, making it an unprecedented undertaking.

Dave came to me with an unconventional idea, and from the outset it was clear that



he was determined to make it work. He had a goal and he wasn't going to let anything get in his way.

I was proud to support Dave from the very beginning, helping him navigate the legal complexities of bringing Burnley Savings and Loans to life, and, in doing so, playing a part in something that has gone on to change lives across the local community.

The stage adaptation delivers on every front. The music is catchy, the atmosphere is uplifting, and the cast brings incredible energy to the story.

Seeing that journey brought to life on stage was a surreal experience. It's not often you find yourself represented in a musical, and I have to say, the character is definitely more charming than I remember! But in all seriousness, it made me proud. It's a great story to be able to share with family and friends, and one I'll always value being part of.

Lucca Chadwick Patel's performance of Hugh was excellent. I could really feel the determination and struggle through his portrayal, which brought back many memories of that journey.

At its core, *Bank of Dave* is about challenging the status quo. The key takeaway from the story is to never give up. Think outside the box. Don't accept 'that's just how it is'. If something's broken, challenge it and build something better.

These principles were central to the creation of Burnley Savings and Loans and remain just as relevant today, especially in an industry often seen as rigid and resistant to change. I feel lucky to have been, and still to be, part of something so transformative in British banking.



Chris Moss (left) attended *Bank of Dave* Musical invited by Dave Fishwick (second to Right)

Being invited to the premiere was a real honour, and sharing the evening with Dave Fishwick himself made it even more special. The atmosphere at The Lowry was electric, the sense of celebration was palpable, and it was a joy to see this extraordinary journey brought to life on stage. I would encourage everyone to go and see this uplifting and inspiring show.'

### On Stage at The Lowry and Soon In Leicester

With its move to the stage, this remarkable story has found a new way to inspire audiences. And as the final curtain falls, one thing is clear: the story of *Bank of Dave* is far from over.

The show opened its UK run at The Lowry from Saturday 2nd May – Saturday 16th May 2026. The show will then be moving on to The Curve theatre in Leicester from the 20th May.



## Double marathon effort raises funds for neonatal charity

**Venus Legal's** @ Craig Johnson completed both the Manchester and London Marathon in seven days, covering 52.4 miles in support of The Alfie Roland Foundation.

A member of the Manchester legal community has completed an extraordinary physical challenge, running both the Manchester and London Marathons within the space of a week.

Craig Johnson, Associate Solicitor at Venus Legal, took on his first 26.2-mile challenge at the Manchester Marathon, one of the UK's largest running events with over 40,000 participants, before travelling to The Big Smoke the following weekend to take part in the London Marathon – bringing his total distance to an impressive 52.4 miles in one week.

“

In hindsight running two marathons two weekends on the bounce was a big undertaking, but now it's over, I'd go again”

Craig undertook the challenge in support of The Alfie Roland Foundation, raising funds for The Little Roo Neonatal Fund in memory of Alfie Roland Duke – a cause that holds particular personal significance.

He commented: “In hindsight running two marathons two weekends on the bounce was a big undertaking, but now it's over,



“

It may not have been a year for PBs, but I came very close, just seven minutes shy in the second marathon, so I'm proud to have pushed myself and achieved that”

I'd go again. It was such an incredible experience, with an amazing atmosphere at both events – the crowds and support were endless, which really kept me going, as well as knowing it was all for such a worthy cause so I'm incredibly proud to have been able to help in some way.

“It may not have been a year for PBs, but I came very close, just seven minutes shy in the second marathon, so I'm proud to have pushed myself and achieved that.”

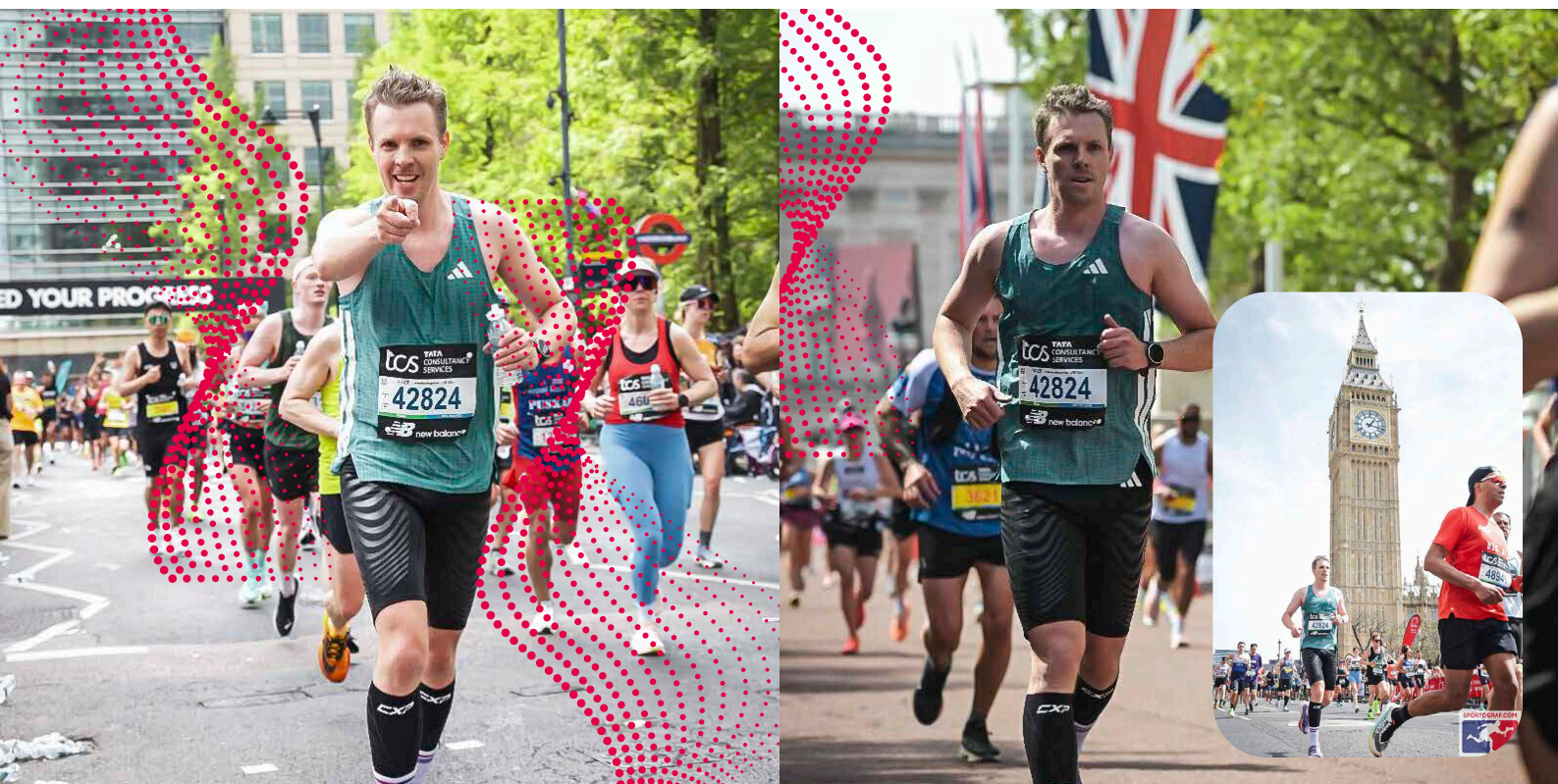
Colleagues at Venus Legal followed Craig's progress closely across both events, describing his achievement as incredibly inspiring and a reflection of the dedication and determination he brings both professionally and personally.

Completing one marathon is widely regarded as a major achievement, but to complete in the space of a week requires not only physical endurance, but significant mental resilience, particularly when balancing the demands of a busy legal career.

Craig's achievement highlights the continued commitment within the legal community to support charitable causes and give back beyond the workplace.

His efforts stand as a reminder of the positive impact individuals within the sector can have, both within their roles and in the wider community.

Well done Craig.





## MSB Solicitors' LGBTQIA+ recognition and inclusion continues in Manchester

By **John Owens**, Partner, MSB Solicitors

June is Pride Month, a month that offers an opportunity to reflect on the legal sector's role in advancing equality and inclusion. This is something that has always been important to **MSB Solicitors** in our home city of Liverpool as part of our 'justice for all' ethos and which is equally as vital to our Manchester team.

Pride represents visibility and responsibility as an opportunity to advocate for those who continue to face discrimination, particularly those within more vulnerable groups.

### National recognition

At the British LGBT Awards 2026 which were held on 28 May, MSB received three nominations: Managing Partner, Emma Carey, as business ally; Associate, Michael Boland, as future leader; and MSB's LGBTQIA+ committee as network group.

The awards bring together leading organisations, individuals and allies who drive meaningful change for the LGBTQIA+ community and these nominations acknowledge the firm's efforts on one of the UK's most prominent platforms celebrating diversity, visibility and impact.

They reflect a collective effort, from senior leadership advocating for inclusion, to internal networks driving grassroots change and emerging leaders championing inclusion in practice.

### Embedding inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are not standalone initiatives at MSB. They are embedded in our Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy, the core pillars of which underpin every aspect of our operations – in particular, creating an inclusive and empowering environment where opportunity is open to all.





John Owens

Internally, we have invested in creating a supportive and visible LGBTQIA+ network which participates in Manchester Pride and which has developed resources and other awareness campaigns. We have also received Navajo accreditation, which is a mark of commitment to inclusion to the community as well as offering ongoing education and awareness programmes, led by our LGBTQIA+ subcommittee.

This subcommittee plays a central role in shaping initiatives, policy development and community engagement. Our approach goes beyond internal culture, though, as we see inclusion as part of our broader responsibility to contribute to a fairer, greener and more inclusive society. This reinforces the approach of law firms not just advising clients but actively advancing social justice across race, gender, disability and social mobility, representing our intersectional approach to equality.

Our message is clear: inclusion must be lived daily and limited to symbolic gestures or annual events.

### **Practical support for the LGBTQIA+ community**

Our commitment can be clearly seen in the practical services we offer to LGBTQIA+ clients. Our dedicated offering to the needs of the community includes surrogacy

“

The awards bring together leading organisations, individuals and allies who drive meaningful change for the LGBTQIA+ community

and adoption advice, applications under TOLATA and free change of name deeds for transgender clients.

The latter is particularly notable as it addresses a practical barrier often faced by individuals during social transition. We also work with specialist organisations such as CMAGIC to ensure clients receive informed, holistic support.

This work is delivered as part of a culture that emphasises empathy, respect and understanding, recognising how legal issues often arise alongside broader personal challenges.

### **Looking ahead**

Through education, fundraising and community partnerships, MSB continues to contribute to meaningful change both in and outside of the organisation.

Our LGBT Awards recognition is a milestone but it is not the destination. Our objectives are ongoing as we keep embedding inclusion into every aspect of our work.

As the profession continues to evolve, we will keep combining professional excellence with genuine social impact – because inclusion is not just a moral imperative but a fundamental part of the modern legal practice.



## Fletchers Solicitors expands dental negligence team into Reading and Birmingham amid rising demand

**Fletchers Solicitors** <sup>®</sup> has expanded its specialist dental negligence practice into both Reading and Birmingham as part of its ongoing national growth strategy.

The move follows the firm's expansion into both regions last year, after acquiring Shoosmiths' personal injury and clinical negligence practices. Fletchers Solicitors now operates the largest clinical negligence practice in the UK.

The new teams will be led by Associate Katie Parr, who will oversee dental negligence operations across multiple locations.

Katie Parr, Associate and Team Leader within Fletchers' Dental Negligence practice, said: "We are seeing a clear and sustained rise in dental negligence enquiries, highlighting the growing need for specialist legal expertise in this field.

"Expanding into both Reading and Birmingham allows us to better support clients locally, while continuing to deliver the high standard of representation our teams are known for."

Katie brings over 16 years' experience in dental negligence and has built a strong reputation for securing justice for her clients. She previously led a landmark case in the Royal Courts of Justice which resulted in the highest-ever general damages award for a dental negligence claim; a record that remains unbroken more than a decade later.

Over the past 12 months, the firm's dental negligence division has seen significant growth, including a 135% increase in signed cases and the addition of eight new fee earners to its Liverpool team.



The expansion will initially see the creation of dedicated teams in both locations, with plans to grow to around seven fee earners in each office across a range of roles from Grade A to Grade D.

This latest development forms part of the firm's broader strategy to strengthen its presence in key regions across England.

Peter Rigby, Managing Director of Fletchers' Clinical Negligence practice, said: "This expansion reflects our long-term investment in growing a dedicated dental negligence capability across the country.

"By establishing stronger regional teams, we're building the infrastructure needed to support continued national growth."

"Expanding into these key areas is the next step in our growth strategy, as we continue to build a truly national practice with strength in major regional centres."

The firm ultimately aims to operate five dental negligence teams nationally, with three based in Liverpool and one each in Reading and Birmingham, alongside further expansion plans in the pipeline.

## Pannone strengthens Manchester ties with Factory International partnership

**Pannone Corporate** <sup>®</sup> has strengthened ties within its Manchester heartland, after announcing a new partnership with Factory International – the organisation behind Manchester's iconic cultural landmark, Aviva Studios.

The Manchester law firm, which has strong roots in the city region, has become an associate supporter of Factory International, an existing client of the firm.

Paul Jonson, senior partner at Pannone Corporate, commented: "As a Manchester law firm, we are fiercely proud of our roots and committed to investing back into the regional ecosystem to help it thrive and grow.

"At its heart, Factory International is built on the same ethos – a partnership that is and will continue to have a positive impact on the local economy through Aviva Studios, driving job creation and fostering opportunities for all ages and backgrounds. Factory International was a natural partner for us and we're excited about the relationship."



Paul Jonson

Aviva became Factory International's Principal Partner in June 2023, launching a long-term collaboration that includes naming rights for Aviva Studios, its landmark arts venue and permanent home for Factory International.

Pannone was appointed by Aviva Studios to provide legal support to the cultural venue in 2024. This latest partnership builds on that growing relationship, cementing its relationship with an important and influential regional brand.

## Olliers Solicitors celebrates double win at the Modern Law Awards

Olliers Solicitors has scooped two major accolades and a further commendation at this year's Modern Law Awards,

The wins at the prestigious ceremony underline the Manchester-headquartered firm's position as one of the UK's standout criminal defence practices.

The firm enjoyed a successful evening at The Belfry, at a ceremony hosted by Rob Rinder. Olliers was named Crime Team of the Year and Boutique Law Firm of the Year (11+ employees) and was also highly commended in the Client Care category.

The recognition marks another significant milestone for Olliers, reflecting both its legal excellence and its continued commitment to delivering exceptional service to clients.

Matthew Cloughton, Managing Director of Olliers, said: "These awards are a real testament to the dedication and expertise of our entire team.

"We pride ourselves on combining legal brilliance with genuine client care and to be recognised in multiple categories in prestigious national awards means a great deal to us. It reflects the standards we set ourselves every day."

Ruth Peters, Partner and Business Development Manager at Olliers, said: "Being named both Criminal Team and Boutique Law Firm of the Year is a huge honour and a real reflection of the strength, dedication and expertise within our team.



Commercial Director Stacey Mabrouk and Business Development Director Ruth Peters

"Olliers Solicitors handles some of the most serious and complex cases and this award recognises us as an outstanding criminal defence firm partnering legal brilliance with unmatched client care. As a specialist criminal defence firm, we combine the personal service and agility of a boutique practice with deep technical expertise and a national reputation for excellence."

Established in 2013, the Modern Law Awards celebrate excellence and innovation across the legal industry. Judged by a panel of leading legal figures, the awards recognise the achievements of firms and professionals making significant contributions across the UK legal sector.

Olliers is ranked as a top-tier law firm by both the Legal 500 2026 and Chambers Guide 2026. They are a Times Best Law Firm 2026 and the Manchester Legal Awards 2025 Crime Team of the Year, an award they have won eight times since 2011.

Headquartered in Manchester and with a presence in London, the team of 29 experienced criminal defence lawyers is led by Managing Director Matthew Cloughton, Commercial Director Stacey Mabrouk and Business Development Director Ruth Peters.

## Myerson Solicitors Celebrates Double Accolade at Clio Modern Law Awards 2026

Myerson Solicitors has been Highly Commended in two categories at the Clio Modern Law Awards 2026: “Law Firm of the Year (50 to 249 employees)” and “Best Company Culture”.

The awards ceremony took place on Wednesday 29th April 2026 at The Belfry, Sutton Coldfield, and was hosted by barrister turned broadcaster Rob Rinder MBE, best known as Judge Rinder. The event brought together leading firms and professionals from across the legal sector.

The firm was also shortlisted across a number of categories, including Family Team of the Year and Conveyancing Team of the Year, reflecting the quality of its specialist teams.

**Carl Newton**, CEO of Myerson Solicitors, commented: “We are delighted to be highly commended in both Law Firm of the Year and Best Company Culture at the Clio Modern Law Awards. These achievements reflect the commitment and professionalism of our people. As a full-service, 100% employee-owned firm, this recognition means a great deal to our co-owner employees, who all play a part in the success of the business. Being shortlisted in multiple categories further demonstrates the calibre and expertise of our lawyers.”

The firm congratulates all nominees and winners at this year’s awards. The Clio Modern Law Awards are a well-established event in the legal calendar, recognising excellence and innovation across the profession.



Carl Newton, CEO of Myerson



## Freeths clinical negligence and Court of Protection teams to be acquired by Fletchers Group

**Fletchers Group** <sup>®</sup> has agreed to acquire the clinical negligence and Court of Protection teams of Freeths LLP, strengthening its position as a leading UK provider of specialist legal services.

A total of 42 colleagues will join the Group, comprising 21 in clinical negligence and 21 in Court of Protection.

Under the agreement, the clinical negligence team will join Fletchers Solicitors, while the Court of Protection team will become part of EMG Solicitors, a standalone business within Fletchers Group led by Emma Gaudern.

Freeths' teams bring a strong reputation for high-value, complex work, with Tier 1 legal directory rankings across both disciplines, alongside a high-quality caseload including over 530 active clinical negligence cases and a substantial Court of Protection portfolio.

The clinical negligence team is led by Jane Williams and Carolyn Lowe. The Court of Protection team is led by Natasha Molloy.

Both teams are based in Nottingham, Oxford and Derby and will join Fletchers in June, expanding the Group's reach and capability across these key regions.

Fletchers Group CEO Peter Haden said: "Our new clinical negligence colleagues will help reinforce our position as the UK's largest clinical negligence practice, strengthening our support for clients with the most serious, life-changing injuries.

"The Court of Protection team adds significant depth to our national offering, enabling us to support clients across their



Peter Haden

“

Our new clinical negligence colleagues will help reinforce our position as the UK's largest clinical negligence practice

full journey – from serious injury and clinical negligence cases through to lifelong Court of Protection support.

"These teams are a strong cultural fit for the Group, with a shared commitment to delivering excellent outcomes for clients, working collaboratively, and supporting our people to succeed."

Emma Gaudern, CEO of EMG, said: "This is another important step in the continued growth of our Court of Protection business.

"Alongside our new colleagues from JE Bennett Law and Fletchers' Court of Protection team, we are delighted to

welcome the Freeths team to EMG as we continue to grow our specialist Court of Protection and private client business. With more than 300 colleagues across the business, this gives us even greater strength and depth to support clients with long-term and complex needs.”

Commenting on the deal, Freeths National Managing Partner Karl Jansen said: “We are proud of the strength and reputation our clinical negligence and Court of Protection teams have built, and the high-quality work they deliver for clients.

“The market continues to evolve, and long-term success in these specialist areas increasingly requires scale, focus and sustained investment. We are confident that Fletchers and EMG offer the right platform for our clients and our people, with the ambition and capability to support their continued growth.”

Jane Williams, Partner and Head of Clinical Negligence, East Midlands at Freeths, said: “I am excited to be joining Fletchers, recognised as one of the UK’s leading clinical negligence practices. There is no doubt in my mind that Fletchers is the perfect home for both our team and our clients. Our shared values and unwavering dedication to doing what is right for those we represent, many of whom have faced the most difficult times in their lives, make this transition a natural and positive step forward for everyone involved.” Natasha Molloy, Partner and Head of Court of Protection at Freeths, added: “I am pleased and excited to be joining Fletchers Group. I am delighted that we will be working alongside the highly respected and experienced Court of Protection practitioners from EMG Solicitors, JE Bennett Law and Fletchers. This is a fantastic opportunity for our team to be part of a nationwide force in Court of Protection, and we are confident that our values align as we come together to



Karl Jansen

continue delivering exceptional outcomes for vulnerable individuals and their families.”

This latest transaction builds on Fletchers Group’s recent expansion, including the recently announced additions of specialist businesses EMG and JE Bennett Law, alongside last year’s acquisition of Shoosmiths’ serious injury practice. Together, these moves reflect strong momentum as Fletchers Group continues to grow organically and through acquisitions, strengthening its capabilities across clinical negligence and Court of Protection.

Following completion, Fletchers’ clinical negligence business will comprise more than 400 colleagues managing over 10,300 cases, while EMG’s Court of Protection and private client business will grow to more than 300 colleagues, further strengthening its position as one of the UK’s largest specialist practice of its kind.

Peter Haden added: “Together, we are building a market-leading group of specialist, independent firms, each focused on delivering the best possible outcomes for clients in their area of law, supported by the scale of the Group to invest in growth, technology and M&A.”

The transaction is expected to complete in June. Financial terms are undisclosed.



## JMW Personal Injury team cycle 305km across France for charity

This month (May 2026) Rachel Botterill, Cathy Leech and Jamie Rhind of JMW's Personal Injury team joined the Spinal Injuries Overseas Bike Ride as part of a 40-strong team raising money for the Spinal Injuries Association (SIA), a national charity supporting people affected by spinal cord injury.

The intrepid trio cycled from Toulouse to Bordeaux: it was particularly poignant for Jamie, who was paralysed from the chest down after a diving accident when he was 19, leaving him with only limited arm and hand movement, because after he crossed the finish line on his specially modified hand bike he found out he had been voted the "Ride Hero" by his fellow cyclists.

Congratulations to all three, and if you would like to support their fundraising efforts you can do so here [Rachel Botterill is fundraising for Spinal Injuries Association](#) @



(L-R) Cathy Leech, Jamie Rhind and Rachel Botterill



Manchester Law Society

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# MLS MEMBER BENEFITS

MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE MANCHESTER LAW SOCIETY  
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## New Committee for Manchester Young Lawyers

**Manchester Young Lawyers** @ has now appointed its new committee for the 2026/2027 year. They received an unprecedented number of applications, highlighting the enthusiasm within the junior legal profession to get involved in exciting events, networking opportunities, and building connections across the industry. The new committee is as follows:

- Emma Whitehead (Chair)
- Eva Tite, Ron Leong and Emily McLoughlin (Social Directors)
- Hannah Smale and Amber Cowgill (General Directors)
- Ana-Victoria Coast (General and Community Director)
- Cori McKeown (Inter-Professional Director)
- Hannah Mycock, Holly Navarro and Maya Tajuddin (Charity Directors)
- Kennedy Kay and Carla Hazelwood (Professional Development Directors)
- Rebekah Fender, Kate Wright and Matt Ayer (Health and Well-Being Directors)
- Kirsty McKenzie (JLD Director)

Several members of the previous committee have remained in their existing roles or transitioned into new positions, whilst they also welcomed eight new members to the committee: Emily McLoughlin, Ana-Victoria Coast, Holly Navarro, Maya Tajuddin, Carla Hazelwood, Rebekah Fender, Kate Wright and Matt Ayer. This year, due to the ever-growing membership and demand for events, MYL have introduced two brand-new roles: Community Director and a third Health & Wellbeing Director.

There are already several exciting events in the pipeline, including the return of the MYL x MJN Run Club for a Summer Series,



Rebecca Whitehead

featuring 5km runs in the sunshine followed by drinks and networking. They have also recently completed the MYL x CapeClarke four-week Padel Series, which proved hugely popular and offered a fantastic lunchtime reset. Rebekah, Matt, and Kate have plenty of exciting initiatives to get involved with as part of their roles as Health & Wellbeing Directors.

Joining Kennedy as Professional Development Director is Carla, a barrister called to the Bar last year, who will bring a new perspective to the committee and help ensure MYL continues to be inclusive not only for solicitors, but also for barristers and pupils. Kate Wright and Kirsty McKenzie who have both gone down the CILEX route to qualification, will also help ensure representation within the committee across the profession, whatever route or area of law members have chosen to pursue.

Manchester Young Lawyers is a completely voluntary, not-for-profit organisation. They rely entirely on the generosity of sponsors to support and sustain the MYL community through events and initiatives. If anyone is interested in sponsorship opportunities or collaborating on upcoming events — whether social, charitable, educational, health and wellbeing-focused or otherwise— are encouraged to contact Emma Whitehead at [emma.whitehead@hallbrown.co.uk](mailto:emma.whitehead@hallbrown.co.uk) to discuss further.

# Report from UKREiiF in Leeds

By **Michael Taylor**, Editor of TheBusinessDesk.com



**The rain falls hard on Leeds Dock and somewhere, inevitably, somebody references Tony Wilson.**

UKREiiF has returned to Leeds once again, dragging with it the entire ecosystem of regional regeneration: council leaders, developers, consultants, PRs, architects, investors, pseudo-investors and at least 400 men wearing navy quarter-zips over white shirts while discussing “place”.

Leeds itself feels transformed every year. New towers appear overnight. Streets disappear. Entire districts materialise where surface car parks once stood. By UKREiiF 2027 there is every chance the Royal Armouries will have been converted into a co-living scheme with padel courts.

And still it rains.

Not picturesque rain either. Not cinematic northern drizzle. This is deeply inconvenient rain. The kind that destroys suede loafers and forces senior local authority figures to walk around wrapped in branded waterproofs like disgruntled Premier League assistant coaches.

The event itself remains oddly charming. Less polished than MIPIM, less aggressively corporate, more like Glastonbury for people who know what “viability gap funding” means. Everyone is constantly lost. The site appears to have been designed by somebody who fundamentally opposes straight lines.

The East Midlands and West Midlands pavilions sit side-by-side in a sort of devolution cage match. Manchester buzzes nearby with the confidence of somebody who knows they’ll get invited to the afterparty anyway. Yorkshire’s spaces are packed. Cumbria, meanwhile, is positioned

somewhere close to continental drift.

Phone signal is non-existent. Laptop charging points are treated with the desperation of wartime resources. Entire consultancy teams wander the docks holding dead iPhones aloft like explorers searching for rescue aircraft.

And yet it works.

There is something uniquely British about hundreds of people discussing £12bn infrastructure projects while balancing paper coffee cups in a marquee that appears one gust away from collapse.

The politics, meanwhile, has become increasingly theatrical.

At the Great North investment summit before the main event, Tracy Brabin introduced Kim McGuinness as the “Queen of the North”, before segueing into an introduction for Andy Burnham as “King of the North”.

What followed was less Westeros and more local election leaflet, with Burnham launching into a passionate address on potholes and regional inequality while TV cameras hovered nearby. Somewhere in the audience, Ben Houchen looked like a man reconsidering several life choices.

Houchen himself appeared briefly on Tuesday for a conversation with Rain Newton-Smith, where he dedicated a healthy portion of his session to criticising Burnham for “talking down the North”. He then vanished back towards Teesside with the energy of a man who had attended against medical advice.

Brabin, meanwhile, remains the most naturally suited to UKREiiF theatre.



She arrived in a sharp purple suit and immaculate white trainers. A decision that looked increasingly optimistic as Yorkshire's weather system escalated into open hostility.

There is also now the curious trend of regional mayors placing their own names prominently on pavilion branding. Brabin can perhaps justify it given her acting background. Others adopting the same approach feels slightly more Year 11 election poster.

Still, credit where it's due. The West Yorkshire pavilion won the unofficial UKREiiF catering war with Seabrook crisps and Fox's biscuits. This represented a significant tactical victory over neighbouring McDonald's McFlurries.

Greater Manchester and London, by contrast, largely avoid pavilion culture altogether. Their shared pop-up pub, The Canary, operates on the assumption that if you already dominate the national economic conversation, there is little need to hand out branded tote bags beside the docks.

Elsewhere, Cumbria attempted to pitch £12bn-worth of investment opportunities while inexplicably deploying Bradley Wiggins as a star attraction. Investors were given approximately two minutes to absorb the economic future of Barrow, Carlisle and Workington before being ushered towards the next networking session and the Cumberland sausage rolls.

And underpinning almost every conversation was the word "viability".

Viability, in UKREiiF terms, is the polite industry synonym for "none of this stacks up without public money".

Affordable housing is not viable. Office schemes are not viable. Town centre

“

Not picturesque rain ... not cinematic northern drizzle. This is deeply inconvenient rain. The kind that destroys suede loafers

regeneration is not viable. Student accommodation may be the last viable asset class left in Britain besides self-storage and rage bait podcasts.

Which raises the obvious question. Where are the investors everyone keeps talking about?

Apparently they exist. Rumour has it they are hidden away in the Lamb and Flag pub outside the event perimeter, eating steak sandwiches and quietly deciding the fate of northern England between pints.

Hovering over all of this is the growing sense of political uncertainty. Civic leaders remain outwardly upbeat, but conversations increasingly drift towards what a radically different national political landscape could mean for devolution, regeneration funding and net zero strategies.

One construction firm invited delegates to answer a question on a whiteboard: "What's the biggest change the industry needs to get ready for?"

Alongside AI and contractor relationships, one answer simply read: "Farage/fascism."

Which, in its own strange way, may have been the most honest thing written anywhere at UKREiiF all week.

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— Sarah Gillen, ADHD coach and former law firm partner

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— Karl Brown, Partner at Clarke Willmott LLP and founder of the Bristol Property Inclusion Charter

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# What is Windrush Day?

Windrush Day is a day of recognition and reflection. It takes place on 22 June each year to mark the anniversary of the arrival of HMT Empire Windrush, at Tilbury Docks (Essex), on 22 June 1948. HMT Empire Windrush carried hundreds of passengers from the Caribbean, many of them had served in the British Armed Forces during the second world war. It took around 22 days to make the journey.

Following the second world war, people from the Caribbean and Commonwealth countries were invited to immigrate to the United Kingdom to help rebuild and contributed to industries such as manufacturing, construction, transport, and the NHS.

People continued to immigrate from the Caribbean during the post war period, the term “Windrush Generation” refers to those who came to work or join family in the UK between 1948 and 1973.

They arrived with a strong desire to help rebuild the “Motherland”, expecting a

“

In 2018 the UK government announced a National Windrush Day to acknowledge and pay tribute to the important and ongoing contributions made to British society by the individuals who immigrated”

warm welcome from the communities they joined. Unfortunately, for many, the reality was very different. They encountered widespread racism and hostility, including signs reading “No Blacks, No Dogs, No Irish” when seeking housing.

Despite these challenges, the Windrush Generation demonstrated remarkable resilience. They established strong



communities, created business opportunities, and made enduring contributions to British society. Today, their legacy is reflected in cultural landmarks such as the Notting Hill and Leeds Carnivals, which remain significant events in the UK's cultural calendar.

In 2018 the UK government announced a National Windrush Day to acknowledge and pay tribute to the important and ongoing contributions made to British society by the individuals who immigrated, and their families, and to honour the British Caribbean community, whilst recognising inequalities they have faced. Caribbean communities have had a huge impact on British culture and society including but not limited to food, the arts, political activism, music, and media.

### The Windrush Scandal

The Windrush scandal became a national scandal around 2018. However, the systemic issues contributing to the crisis started years before.

When the Windrush generation arrived in the UK they were legally permitted to stay without time restriction. The Immigration Act 1971 came into force which preserved the rights of those from the Commonwealth who had immigrated and built their lives in the UK. These citizens could travel in and out of the country as they wished. Many of those who immigrated and settled were not issued formal paperwork.

In 2010 the Home Office destroyed the archive of thousands landing card slips which recorded the dates of arrival for the Windrush Generation. This created huge problems for those who did not have formal documentation to resolve immigration status issues.



In 2012 policy change within the Home Office was put in force, which asked the NHS, landlords, employers, banks, and other organisations to enforce immigration controls. As many of the Windrush Generation came to the UK on their parent's passports, did not obtain formal documentation, and their landing cards along with other documentation had been destroyed or lost, they could not prove their immigration status and right to live and work in the UK. Thousands of people lost access to employment, housing, healthcare, bank accounts, benefits, and driving licenses. At least 164 people were detained or wrongly deported to countries that they did not call home, many of whom had not visited since childhood.

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Rhuma's grandparents

The inequality and profound harm faced by the Windrush Generation became a national scandal, the government admitted to its failings against British citizens in 2018. They suspended the deportation flights to the Caribbean, and an independent review was undertaken.

### Why Windrush Day Matters

Windrush Day carves out a special day to recognise and appreciate the vast and ongoing contributions made to British society and culture by the Windrush Generation and Caribbean Community, who made the UK their home, whilst highlighting the wrongs that took place. It is a celebration of culture and heritage whilst providing an important reminder for the need for equality and accountability.

“

Windrush Day carves out a special day to recognise and appreciate the vast and ongoing contributions made to British society and culture by the Windrush Generation and Caribbean Community”

“My grandparents came to England in the 1960s from Jamaica as part of the Windrush Generation. Despite arriving in their early twenties and facing significant challenges, they built a fulfilling life for themselves and their four daughters. They are kind, hardworking individuals who made meaningful contributions to their local community — my grandmother as a mental health nurse, and my grandfather as a builder.

I feel incredibly grateful that they are both still with us and that I'm able to visit them regularly. I enjoy hearing about their experiences growing up in Jamaica and their early years in Sheffield. Their stories have helped me to truly appreciate, and take pride in, my Black Jamaican heritage.” – Rhuma Russell-Longden (Irwin Mitchell LLP).

Windrush Day honours the legacy created and creates an opportunity to listen, learn, and stand in unity.

**Rhuma Russell-Longden, Funding Team Leader, and Charlotte Abbott, Serious Injury Solicitor, at [Irwin Mitchell LLP](https://www.irwinmitchell.com)**



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## After Level 7 Defunding

**11 JUNE**  
**13:00 - 14:00**

This free webinar will explore how the Advanced Paralegal Apprenticeship and Chartered Legal Executive Apprenticeship can provide a strategic progression pathway for individuals who still want to build a long-term legal career, gain advanced legal skills and work towards qualification with practice rights in a chosen area of law.





## ED&I Committee Update

June is a busy month of celebration, recognition and reflection and here we take a look at some of the key dates being observed nationally.

### Armed Forces Day

On 27th June, the nation celebrates Armed Forces Day. Marked since 2006, this day is a chance to celebrate and show support for the men and women of the Armed Forces; from serving personnel to service families, veterans and cadets. Military displays, parades and celebrations will take place right across the UK. Here are some of the official events taking place in Manchester as stated on The Armed Forces Day website:

#### 1. St Peters Square. 11am to 4pm.

Manchester will come together and celebrate with an action packed day of free activities. The event will be formally marked by the presence of the Lord Mayor of Manchester and the Lord-Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, paying tribute on behalf of the city. Throughout the day, the square will come alive with stirring performances from local military bands, alongside a dynamic live stage programme featuring both military and civilian entertainment.

Visitors of all ages are invited to get involved – from face painting and hands-on activities for younger visitors, to information and support stalls from Armed Forces charities and organisations including the Royal British Legion.

One of the highlights of the day will be the chance to explore current and historic military displays, giving the public a rare, up-close opportunity to see military kit and equipment and to meet the organisations

proudly showcasing the Armed Forces' remarkable heritage.

#### 2. Winton Park, Salford. 10:30am – 4pm.

There will be a number of fun activities ranging from small children's rides, face painting, climbing wall, magician and lots of other entertainment. Forming part of the event will be a Parade; starting from Dukes Drive Car Park, off Parrin Lane, Monton, Eccles at 10.30am, concluding at Winton Park, Dover Street, Winton.

#### 3. Trafford Armed Forces Day. 10am to 12pm.

Enjoy a breakfast with fellow veterans from 1000, at 1100 there will be a display from the North West Veterans Corps of Drums.

The Reserve forces are also celebrated on 24th June in recognition of their invaluable contribution to the Armed Forces by balancing their civilian life with a military career.

### Pride Month

June marks Pride month, to commemorate the Stonewall Riots in 1969 (a powerful catalyst for equal rights movements), which celebrates LGBTQ+ history, culture and community. The month is a happy celebration of equity, diversity and inclusion and serves as a powerful reminder of how far we have come, but also how far we have yet to go. As part of Pride month, we are joined by Berkeley Wilde, CEO of The



Shane Smith

Diversity Trust in this month's committee meeting you can read more from him below on the amazing work the Trust is engaged with and how we can help.

### Shane Smith

Associate Solicitor, Slater and Gordon  
Lawyers  
Chair of EDI Network

## Supporting Inclusion in Action: How the Legal Community Can Engage with The Diversity Trust CIC

For legal professionals committed to advancing equality, diversity, equity and inclusion (EDEI), meaningful change requires more than policy statements or annual awareness campaigns. It requires collaboration with organisations that are actively working within communities, amplifying lived experience, and influencing social change at every level. One such organisation is [The Diversity Trust CIC](#) <sup>®</sup>.

Established in 2012, The Diversity Trust is a Community Interest Company (CIC) with a mission to: "influence social change to create a fairer and safer society." Through training, consultancy, research, advocacy, community engagement and

empowerment, the Trust works across the UK supporting organisations, professionals and communities to build more inclusive cultures and practices.

What makes The Diversity Trust distinctive is its equalities-led approach. The organisation is led by people from marginalised and minoritised communities, with expertise spanning race equality, disability, neurodiversity, LGBTQ+ inclusion, gender identity, mental health and social justice. This emphasis on lived experience ensures that its work is not only evidence-based, but grounded in authenticity, empathy and practical understanding.

The Trust delivers a wide range of programmes and services, including anti-racism training, unconscious bias workshops, LGBTQ+ awareness sessions, research projects and community initiatives. In the past year alone, the organisation reported delivering 187 events and reaching more than 5,000 people through its programmes and partnerships. Alongside professional training, the Trust also reinvests into youth and community work, including equality networks, youth activity sessions, and voice and influence projects designed to empower underrepresented communities.

For the legal sector, this work is especially relevant. Law firms and legal organisations continue to face important questions about representation, workplace culture, access to opportunity and inclusive leadership. While many organisations have developed EDEI strategies, there remains a growing recognition that real progress depends on sustained learning, accountability and engagement with diverse communities.

The Diversity Trust offers several ways for legal professionals, firms and networks to become involved and support this work.

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One of the most impactful ways to engage is through partnership. The Trust works with organisations across corporate, public and voluntary sectors to align EDEI priorities with measurable social impact. This can include tailored and bespoke training, consultancy support, collaborative awareness campaigns, inclusive recruitment guidance and long-term strategic partnerships. By partnering with The Diversity Trust, organisations are able not only to strengthen their own internal inclusion work but also contribute directly to wider community impact.



The legal profession has a unique opportunity to support initiatives that improve access, belonging and representation for people who may historically have felt excluded from professional spaces. Supporting lived experience-led organisations can help bridge the gap between aspiration and action.

Individuals can also play a valuable role. The Trust encourages supporters to engage with its growing programme of events, [open access workshops](#), [podcasts](#), [newsletters](#) and social media campaigns. These resources provide opportunities for ongoing professional development and reflection on contemporary equality issues affecting workplaces and society.

There are also opportunities to volunteer, contribute expertise or explore governance roles. During a presentation to Manchester Law Society, Chief Executive Berkeley Wilde highlights the importance of people bringing their skills, experience and networks to support sustainable social change. For

professionals with governance, legal, HR or strategic expertise, joining advisory or board structures can be an important way to contribute.

Financial support also remains crucial. As a social enterprise, The Diversity Trust reinvests profits from training and consultancy into community programmes supporting vulnerable adults, young people and marginalised groups. [Donations](#) and organisational sponsorships help sustain this work and enable the Trust to continue delivering services and

advocacy at a time when many equality-focused organisations are facing increasing pressures.

At its heart, The Diversity Trust's message is one of collective responsibility. EDEI is not a standalone initiative, but an ongoing commitment to fairness, inclusion and social justice. For the legal profession, engaging with organisations like The Diversity Trust offers an opportunity not only to strengthen professional practice, but also to contribute meaningfully to creating a fairer and more inclusive society.

To learn more about The Diversity Trust, explore partnership opportunities, or support its work, visit [www.diversitytrust.org.uk](http://www.diversitytrust.org.uk) or follow @DiversityTrust on social media.

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**Berkeley Wilde**  
CEO The Diversity Trust



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## Brabners welcomes new Head of Corporate for next phase of team growth

**Brabners** <sup>®</sup> has appointed corporate partner Ruth Hargreaves as its new Head of Corporate, following a strong 12 months for the team, during which it advised on more than £762m worth of deals.

Ruth's planned succession of Mark Rathbone in the role follows year-on-year growth for Brabners' 76-strong corporate team, which she will head as it continues to build on its sector-led investment and the firm's expanding national platform.

In the 12 months from May 2025 to the end of April 2026, Brabners' corporate team advised on transactions with a combined value of £762.3m, up from £465.1m in the previous 12-month period.

Ruth trained at Brabners before moving in-house as senior legal counsel at global technology company TomTom. She returned

to the firm in 2017 as a senior associate and has since spent almost nine years with Brabners, during which time she has been promoted to partner.

It also follows a period of wider momentum for Brabners, which is opening a new London office. For FY2024-25, the firm reported annual revenues of £60.2m and pre-tax profits of £20.3m, marking an eighth consecutive year of profitable growth. It has also recently secured B Corp recertification and set out a roadmap to reach net zero by 2040.

Brabners' corporate team has continued to invest in specialist expertise across key markets and sectors, including private equity, technology, sport and tax. Recent strategic appointments include tax partner Euri Yoon, strengthening the firm's ability to provide full-service support to clients across the lifecycle

## Olliers Solicitors strengthens serious crime offering with appointment of John Davies

**Olliers Solicitors** <sup>®</sup> has further strengthened its Business Crime and Regulatory team with the appointment of Senior Associate Solicitor John Davies.

John joins Olliers from MSB Solicitors, where he specialised in serious crime and regulatory matters. He brings more than 20 years of criminal defence experience, having acted in a broad range of complex and high-profile cases across the Magistrate's Court, Crown Court and appellate jurisdictions.

Prior to joining MSB, John held key roles at Irwin Mitchell, Radar and Cartwright King

Solicitors, building a reputation as a highly experienced advocate in serious criminal matters, regulatory investigations and complex litigation.

At Olliers, John will support the firm's nationally recognised serious crime practice, advising clients facing allegations ranging from serious violence and organised crime through to fraud, bribery, tax investigations, financial crime and complex regulatory enforcement proceedings. His appointment further strengthens the firm's ability to deliver strategic legal advice at all stages of a criminal investigation, including pre-charge engagement.

of a transaction, and corporate partner Stuart Hatcher, who joined from Forsters to help anchor the firm's new London platform.

Ruth Hargreaves, Head of Corporate at Brabners, said: "It's a privilege to take on the role of Head of Corporate at such an exciting point in the team's development.

"We're operating in a challenging environment, but there's still capital in the market and a clear appetite among ambitious businesses and investors to pursue the right opportunities. We're seeing signs of cautious optimism, with continued activity across private equity, owner-managed businesses and key sectors including technology, sport and healthcare. The issue for many now is confidence – having the conviction to invest or exit at the right time and with the right support around them.

"In recent years at Brabners, we've invested in the sectors and markets where we know we can make the greatest difference for clients, and that approach has stood us in



Ruth Hargreaves

good stead. We're able to continue to invest in our people, deepen our sector expertise and support all types of companies through every stage of their growth journey."

Nik White, Managing Partner at Brabners, added: "Ruth's appointment is a landmark moment for Brabners and our corporate team. She's a trusted adviser to clients and a hugely respected colleague who embodies the culture and ambition of the firm. Her breadth of experience makes her exceptionally well placed to lead the team through its next phase of growth.

"Our corporate team is one of the largest and most active in the north, and Ruth's leadership will ensure we continue to build on its success while staying true to Brabners' distinctive identity."



John Davies

Matthew Cloughton, Managing Director of Olliers Solicitors, said: "John is an exceptional addition to the team. He brings significant expertise in business crime, fraud and regulatory investigations, which complements our growing financial crime practice and broadens the support we can offer both individual and corporate clients.

"Our clients need solicitors who can combine technical excellence with strategic foresight from the earliest stage of an investigation. John's experience will be invaluable in continuing to strengthen our position as one of the country's leading criminal defence firms."

John Davies said: "Olliers' reputation for excellence in criminal defence, particularly its proactive approach to pre-charge engagement and complex serious crime cases, is second to none. This is an exciting opportunity, and I am looking forward to joining such a highly regarded team where I will be able to draw upon my experience to support clients through some of the most challenging periods of their lives."



## Manchester law firm announces 5 promotions

**Ward Hadaway** <sup>®</sup> has announced 5 promotions, including the promotion of Emma Collins to director.

They form part of a wider round of 19 across the firm. With nearly half of those promoted this year starting their legal careers with Ward Hadaway, this announcement highlights Ward Hadaway's focus on developing talent from within.

The 5 Manchester promotions span the firm's commercial, corporate, employment, housing and real estate teams.

Steven Petrie, Managing Partner at Ward Hadaway, said: "These promotions recognise the hard work, professionalism and commitment shown by colleagues across the whole business.

"It is particularly pleasing to see so many people who started their legal careers with Ward Hadaway continuing to develop and progress with the firm. Nearly half of those promoted this year trained with us, which shows the long-term career path people can build here.

"That progression reflects the culture we work hard to maintain. People are given responsibility, supported by experienced colleagues and encouraged to keep developing at every stage of their careers. It is also a reflection of the time and care that goes into training, supervision and mentoring across the firm.

"Each of those promoted has made a strong contribution to the firm, our clients and their teams. Their progression is very well deserved, and I am confident they will continue to play an important role in Ward Hadaway's growth."

The Manchester promotions are as follows:

- Catriona Thomson (Associate) in the Commercial department
- Hollie Walsh (Managing Associate) in the Corporate department
- Caroline Bagley (Associate) in the Employment department
- Rachel Garcia (Managing Associate) in the Housing department
- Emma Collins (Director) in the Real Estate department



(L-R) Caroline Bagley, Rachel Garcia, Liz Bottrill (Executive Partner in Manchester), Emma Collins

Liz Bottrill, Executive Partner in Ward Hadaway's Manchester office, said: "These promotions are an important recognition of the talent, commitment and client focus we have within our Manchester team.

"Caroline, Catriona, Emma, Hollie and Rachel have each brought real commitment and capability to their teams, and it is good to see that recognised. Their progression

reflects the quality of work being delivered in Manchester and the role the office continues to play in the firm's wider growth.

"We are focused on creating an environment where people can develop their careers, take on responsibility and contribute to the long-term success of the firm. These promotions are a clear reflection of that."

## Three barristers join 3PB's new Manchester office

Three experienced civil barristers - Fintan Molloy, Febienne Green and Michael Vora (pictured here, left to right) - have joined **3PB** (3 Paper Buildings) in its new Manchester office this month and are now based at their York Street offices in the City centre. The new arrivals take 3 Paper Buildings (3PB) to 275 barristers, including 19 silks.

Fintan Molloy is a specialist employment and discrimination barrister who represents both claimants and respondents. Fintan's busy practice covers a wide variety of employment claims, including unfair dismissal, contractual claims, discrimination and whistleblowing cases. Before coming to the Bar, Fintan worked as a litigation consultant for a multinational HR and employment law consultancy firm where he represented respondent clients in the Employment Tribunal. He also gained extensive drafting experience, including opinions, grounds of resistance, skeleton arguments, lists of issues, and witness statements. Passionate about providing pro bono work when able, Fintan was named on Lady Chief Justice Carr's Pro Bono Recognition List in 2026. Born and raised



in Greater Manchester, Fintan has strong personal and professional ties in the North West.

Febienne Green is a specialist personal injury, clinical negligence and inquest barrister. With a strong foundation gained from her pupillage at a specialist personal injury firm and experience as a clinical negligence paralegal in birth injury cases, Febienne has established a thriving

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practice in trial, appeal, and costs work, whilst also undertaking all manner of interlocutory hearings for both Claimants and Defendants, as well as acting for all interested persons in Inquests. Febienne's expertise already exceeds her peers and belies her 2022 year of call, as she has consistently undertaken more complex trial and advisory work from the outset. Febienne lives in Cheshire and worked in Manchester for many years.

Michael Vora enjoys a successful practice nationally advising on all types of property and estates disputes, including contractual disputes, contentious property matters, building regulatory work and professional negligence claims. A former solicitor and accredited mediator, Michael was called to the bar in March 2019 and joined our Birmingham office earlier this year. Michael gained considerable experience working in three international law firms in various areas of commercial litigation and

## IMD Solicitors strengthens award-winning Family Team with new leadership appointment

**IMD Solicitors** is proud to announce the promotion of James Legg to Head of Family Department, marking another significant milestone in what has already been an exceptional year for the firm's Family Law team.

The announcement follows IMD's success at the Modern Law Awards 2026, where the firm won Family Team of the Year, alongside receiving a total of seven nominations across multiple categories, a reflection of the firm's continued growth, innovation, and reputation within the legal sector.

While boutique in size, IMD Solicitors has established itself as a nationally recognised practice with particular expertise in complex international and cross-border family matters. The Family Department has become known for handling cases involving multiple jurisdictions, international child arrangements disputes, cross-border divorce, relocation matters, enforcement proceedings, and cases requiring coordination with overseas lawyers and courts.

For the team, international work is more than a niche, it is a genuine passion.

"Our cross-border work is one of the aspects of family law that energises the department," says Iwona Durlak, Co-founder and Partner at IMD Solicitors. "These cases are intellectually challenging, culturally diverse, deeply significant for the families involved. We are proud to have built a team that combines technical expertise with empathy and strategic thinking."

James Legg's appointment reflects both the department's continued expansion and IMD's commitment to developing leadership from within. James joined IMD Solicitors after working as in-house counsel for a large London firm, seeking an environment where he could continue to grow professionally while remaining aligned with values that place people first.

"Like many lawyers in our profession, James was looking for a culture where high-quality legal work and career progression can

transactional work including most recently, DWF LLP. A passionate Manchester United season ticket holder, Michael grew up in Manchester and is looking forward to returning to his family roots.

3PB's Head of Chambers, Liz McGrath KC, said: "This recruitment underscores our determination to deliver breadth and depth of expertise from Manchester in handling complex and smaller disputes. We are now welcoming applications from experienced

barristers who work in the region or are wanting to relocate and want to receive a comprehensive package of support."

Fintan Molloy said: "Joining 3PB in Manchester is a hugely exciting move for Febienne, Michael and me and we are enormously looking forward to working more closely with its very experienced and talented team of barristers, clerks and management professionals."



exist alongside balance, collaboration, and genuine wellbeing," says the firm. "Those values are deeply important to our IMD Team"

Since joining the firm, James has become an integral part of the Family team, recognised for his technical expertise, calm leadership style, and commitment to client care. His promotion, announced in May, comes at a time of significant momentum for the department, which continues to grow in both size and profile.

The Family team's recent success has also been driven by its collaborative culture and specialist focus. IMD Solicitors has continued to invest heavily in innovation, training, and modern working practices, creating an environment where lawyers are

encouraged to contribute ideas, develop expertise, and build sustainable careers in family law.

The firm believes this combination of specialist expertise, innovation, and strong internal culture is what allows a boutique practice to compete successfully with much larger national firms.

"Our ambition has never been to be the biggest," adds Iwona Durlak. "Our ambition is to deliver exceptional work, attract exceptional people, and create a team that clients trust with the most important issues in their lives. The recognition we have received this year suggests we are moving in the right direction."

With continued growth, national recognition, and a strengthened leadership team, IMD Solicitors' Family Department is focused on becoming the first choice for clients whose lives, families, and businesses do not fit neatly within borders. By combining specialist international expertise with a genuinely people-focused approach, the team aims to continue building a practice recognised not only for legal excellence, but for understanding the realities of modern international family life.



## Venus Legal strengthens UK expansion with key hire as demand grows in specialist claims

**Venus Legal** <sup>®</sup> has announced the appointment of Wren Blackwood as Paralegal, as the firm continues to expand its UK-wide operations.

Based in the North West, Venus Legal specialises in large scale group litigation and class action claims, representing individuals whose health and wellbeing have been impacted by their work, as well as those who have suffered loss or harm.

The appointment follows news of the firm's recent expansion into military claims, strengthening its ability to support current and former members of the Armed Forces who have suffered serious injury or abuse during service.

Wren joins the business with experience across complex, high-value personal injury and industrial disease claims, including work supporting union clients and individuals affected by workplace-related illness and injury. She began her career after studying Creative Writing at Manchester Metropolitan University, before discovering a passion for law and progressing into personal injury.

Lorna McGlone, Founder and CEO of Venus Legal commented: "Wren joins us at an incredibly exciting time as our activity continues to build momentum this year, and we are delighted to welcome her to the team.

"For us, growth has never been about scale alone, it's about ensuring we have the right people in place to deliver the level of service our clients need and expect from us.

"Wren brings both technical expertise and an unwavering commitment to supporting clients through what are often life-changing cases. She will play an important role as we continue to develop the business."

The firm has also invested in technology and advanced AI capabilities this year, having developed a dedicated online platform to support military clients. The platform is designed to improve accessibility, streamline case management and enhance client communication.



Wren added: "I'm excited and proud to be joining Venus Legal at such an important stage in their journey. The firm's focus on client care, alongside its ambition and collaborative culture, really stood out to me.

"I'm passionate about developing my career at Venus Legal in personal injury law and continuing to support clients through complex and often life-changing cases. I feel privileged to be part of the incredible work they do."

Lorna concluded: "Our priority, as always, is to deliver the highest quality service to our clients, which is why we continue to invest in our people."

Venus Legal remain committed to the development of their team and investment in infrastructure as they build their presence across the UK, focussing on delivering high-quality, specialist legal support in complex and sensitive cases.



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

## This Month

- Major opportunity generated by Radio 4 Money Box (Private Client)
- Major opportunity for firms and clients and prospects
- Lessons about real management – all need investigation and management – “Assumption” – So dangerous

## Private Client market scale identified and growing

Over the last 2 years I have been addressing the behaviour of law firms and their private client teams in terms of business development – needing and desiring new business plus the opportunity from Will banks for updates – often essential benefit needs for clients PLUS Revenue, Gross Profit and Asset value growth of the Will Bank. Plus satisfied and referring clients. The image of the firm is also enhanced.

From my [May article Will Bank Transition](#) has a couple of interesting views – the overall business to get the initial job done (cleansing and turning the database into a proactive CRM tool) and future carry on options in terms of planned marketing initiatives, plus a specific [focus on Valuation](#). Firms have started signing up.

It is quickly getting to be a bigger opportunity for the law firm but also clients and prospects.

Getting the Will database sorted and effective is an essential. So many individuals are missing advice.

Over the last few months I have spoken about the benefit to law firms of dealing properly with existing clients, regularly updating Wills to meet individual and

market demands and getting the Will Bank sorted for proper client communications adds a great deal to the asset value of the firm as well as its market place image and potential new clients for Wills but also for everything else.

Making sure that experienced lawyers are also reviewing all the data around a Will is so important – a full service to the client of all aspects of their lives – personal and financial

In May there was something special on the BBC ([Money Box – Radio 4 on 16th May](#)) which made some very strong points. It added a whole new perspective not just about the service from law firms but also about the domestic stress being suffered by many families. This is for people already with a Will and people who do not have one yet.

## Statements – some items covered in the programme

- There is an increasing number of disputes when people die. I am aware of folks who have died and no one knows anything about property ownership
- People can die at any time – planned, sickness, accidents
- Something like 80% of adults have not provided their families with full plans of what may happen to the multiples within the estates when a death may occur – either not knowing what the arrangements are or disliking them – fair or unfair.
- It said that 35% of adults do not have a Will – I believe it to be nearer 50% a figure that has got a little bigger over the

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last few years with deaths and failures to generate new Wills during the lock down period

- There are many considerations that need taking into account. Things are moving all the time and it means that if the Will exists it has to be kept up to date because of circumstance changes such as

- Family ages
- Family changes with old and new relationships/ex partners/new partners/ offspring
- Re-marrying and arrangements with ex partners
- Businesses in families and what the plans are on the death of the driver
- Mixed property ownership to be considered – owned or part owned
- No plans for financial arrangements like investments, savings, loans, pensions, possessions, client related work benefits

- People need to be talking to their families
- Yes – there is a great opportunity for the use of a skilled and caring lawyer for the full consideration – costs are not crazy bearing in mind the consequences and opportunities/added value. If communicated with correctly most individuals will not make a decision that is so important based on price, but on comfort and service level.
- Where advised firms should be ensuring that clients also get the advice of accountants and IFAs in conjunction with the lawyer – topics like Equity Release are

becoming more rampant and the best advice is needed

- Law firms need to be communicating with their client base in terms of the changing market and circumstances – they also need to enhance their image with regards to care, knowledge and advice
- New clients also need initially the right level of advice across the board – a Will production is not just a document processing exercise for people without the necessary skills.

Law firms and private client teams need to enhance their image in this arena

- Regular updates needed for existing clients
- Winning of new business and repeat business
- Getting the right image and brand with the current client base and prospects is key

All firms should be undertaking a full review of their Private Client activity in order to decide if they want to stay with it, grow their revenue and GP, up the asset value of the firm for future interested parties, utilise this activity as a potential for even further growth across all activities, from service levels and image – and of course providing the necessary skills and advice.

### Assumption



*“We have a COLP so all secure from a compliance perspective”*

We really made the point *last month* that too many firms and their management were



assuming that they had the appropriate management in place to ensure regulation and compliance, manage the firms asset value, follow all accounting rules for profitability and working capital (compliance again), resourcing, acquisition of new clients, safety and efficiency of IT.

Unfortunately the last month has done well confirming that for many firms this is not the case. Everyone in law firms needs to step up to the challenge and basic responsibility. Ownership of tasks is key.

[Brian Rogers](#)  has published [an article on this nightmare](#)  on LinkedIn in May.

There are so many messages in this piece – that makes one think about all other activities within the firm. This demonstrates where people in firms within roles have exploited the firms and clients mainly through multiple areas of business control e.g COLP/COFA in charge of accounts. Not enough assessment of the firm's own people is happening

- Mis-appropriation of client funds
- Adequate checks and balances are essential
- Direct cash transfers
- Fraud
- Right people in the right roles and essential monitoring
- Risk assessment

## Basics

There is no escape

Clarity around the business objectives/ strategy of the firm – timeframes

Clarity around individual accountabilities at all levels – clear job specs and objectives



Measurement and reporting methodologies – the right MI at the right time

Training and SLAs plus added value systems – getting more challenging for success and survival

- Compliance
- Accounting and working capital management
- On boarding – the right conversion methodologies
- Workflows – with appropriate SLAs especially for compliance, accounting, business development

Specifications for personal roles and appraisals and development

- Job and candidate profiles and the appropriate training and development
- Ensuring that the right skills are on board or whether consulting, part time advice or outsourcing are essential – whether we recognise it or not all activities within a firm are essential irrespective of size

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



# Legal profession facing growing and more complex pressures as demand for support triples

Solicitors across England and Wales are facing increasingly complex pressures, with many experiencing challenges that affect their wellbeing, confidence, and ability to cope.

Solicitors across England and Wales are facing growing and increasingly complex pressures, according to [The Solicitors' Charity's](#) Big Report 2025-2026.

The report shows that demand for support has now tripled since 2023, reflecting both the scale of need and the changing nature of the challenges people are experiencing.

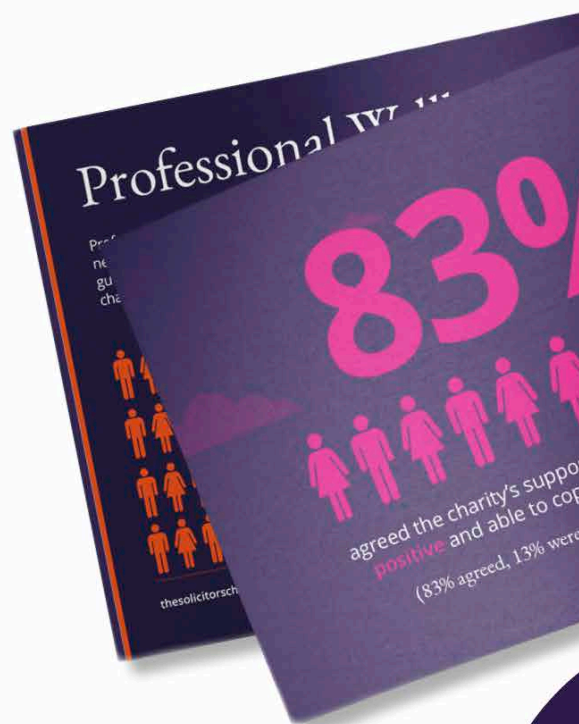
Rather than single-issue cases, many solicitors are now facing overlapping difficulties across emotional, professional, physical and financial wellbeing. These challenges can build over time, making them harder to manage without the right support in place.

## Big Report. 2025-2026

In this year's Big Report, we take a closer look at the support we've provided and the positive impact we've been able to have on the lives of solicitors and their dependants.



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In response, The Solicitors' Charity delivered:

- £1.27 million in financial awards and grants
- Over 5,600 hours of direct case manager support
- Tailored referrals across four areas of wellbeing

The report also shows that when support is accessed, it can make a meaningful difference. 83% of those supported said they felt more positive and able to cope, demonstrating the value of timely, joined-up support when people are facing difficult periods in their lives.

Nick Gallagher, CEO of The Solicitors' Charity, said: "What we are seeing is not just

“

Support was there when I needed it most, and it helped bring me back from a very dark place.”

increased demand, but more complex need. Challenges rarely exist in isolation, which means support has to help alleviate the full extent of what someone is going through.

When people are able to access the right support at the right time, it can positively change how they experience and move through those challenges.”

The findings also underline the importance of continued awareness and engagement across the profession. The Solicitors' Charity's work depends on support from firms, organisations and the wider legal community to ensure help remains visible and accessible to those who need it.

An anonymous beneficiary shared: "Support was there when I needed it most, and it helped bring me back from a very dark place.”

As demand continues to grow, the report is a reminder that supporting solicitor wellbeing is not only about responding to crisis, but about ensuring the profession continues to underpin the structures that help people recover, rebuild confidence and move forward.

The full Big Report 2025–2026 is available to read online [here](#) @.



# 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.

On Wednesday 13 May 2026, Lord Justice Lewison, Lady Justice Andrews and Lord Justice Warby sitting with Senior Costs Judge Rowley, in the Court of Appeal, heard the second appeal in yet another Solicitors Act 1974 costs case - **BDB Pitmans LLP v Barnes**. The dispute concerns whether the solicitor-client retainer constituted a "contentious business agreement" (CBA) under sections 59–61 of the 1974 Act. Barnes (represented by JG Solicitors) argued that, because the agreement was a CBA, the solicitors could not sue directly for fees and instead had to seek enforcement under section 61. Both Judge Somerville at first instance and HHJ Davies on first appeal found in favour of the solicitor firm and held that a valid CBA requires certainty as to charging arrangements. The retainer in Barnes, it was found, lacked sufficient certainty because it allowed variable fee earners, unspecified charging factors, and future rate increases. Accordingly, the agreement was not a CBA and the solicitors' Part 7 claim could proceed. On second appeal, whilst judgment was reserved, the Lords and Lady Justices did not appear convinced by the appellant's submissions, giving the strong sense that JG's appeal would be dismissed and both decisions below upheld.

Another Solicitors Act 1974 case. In **Mehta v Howard Kennedy LLP** [2026] EWHC 968 (KB), the defendant solicitors, acting for the claimant in proceedings involving a worldwide freezing order, delivered 24 invoices to him worth £3,124,674.04. If the invoices were interim statutory bills

which were subject to the time limits in s.70 Solicitors Act 1974, they could not be referred to the court for assessment. Kimblin J upheld the decision below that the invoices were statutory and did not comprise a series of interim invoices delivered as part of a bill which became 'final' with the delivery of the last invoice. The Terms of Business stated clearly that (i) "each bill issued to you is a final bill covering the total charge for the work carried out within the stated period", that (ii) "each bill has the status of a statute bill unless otherwise stated" and (iii) referred to the solicitor's right to sue, so no assessment could be ordered. Nor were there any special circumstances under CPR 70(3) such that it would be just to order an assessment. There was nothing irregular about payments being made by a third or non-chargeable party, so long as that happened with the knowledge and consent of the client, which it had. The Claimant had received regular, itemised invoices with detailed accounts of the work done and so understood his ongoing liability. An additional point about whether the retainer was a Contentious Business Agreement within the meaning of ss59 to 63 of the 1974 Act was stayed pending the outcome of the Court of Appeal appeal in **Barnes v BDP Pitmans LLP** (see above)

In **Turk v Legal Aid Agency** [2026] EWCA Civ 469 the question for the Court of Appeal was whether the High Court had jurisdiction to make a "Recovery of Defence Costs Order" ("RDCO") under the Criminal Legal Aid (Recovery of Defence Costs Orders) Regulations 2013 (the "Recovery

Regulations”), against the appellant (“Mr Turk”), who was the defendant in civil contempt proceedings and had been sentenced to 12 months’ imprisonment. He had obtained criminal legal aid in the committal proceedings, despite the civil nature of those proceedings. At the conclusion of the proceedings, the Legal Aid Agency (“LAA”) sought an RDCO. The judge below ordered Mr Turk to pay the LAA £392,823,70 being the costs of his representation before the High Court. On appeal, Mr Turk failed in his submission that the judge erred in finding that “criminal proceedings before any court other than the magistrates’ court or the Crown Court” in Regulation 2 included civil contempt proceedings. The Regulation did so, and neither the alleged anomalies in the treatment of acquitted defendants, nor the historical context of recovery of defence costs orders, provided a sufficient contrary intention to displace that plain meaning. It was perfectly coherent that someone accused of contempt of court in the High Court and facing a prison sentence of up to two years, was able to access funding at the outset to defend themselves, but on terms that they must repay it, to the extent that they could afford to do so, at the end of the proceedings, leaving them, if successful, to seek to recover their costs from the unsuccessful applicant. It followed that Mr Turk’s appeal was dismissed.

**O’Boyle v Wallis** [2026] EWHC 951 (Ch) involved an award of indemnity basis costs made against the daughter of her deceased father in proceedings in which she had been appointed under CPR 19.12 as representative of his estate. The issue for Andrew Twigger KC to decide was whether she should be liable to pay costs on the indemnity basis following the action being struck out,

including those before her appointment. The judge held that the court below had made an error of principle in having equated a representative appointed pursuant to CPR 19.12 with a Personal Representative, thereby regarding the daughter as personally liable for whatever costs were payable by the estate, as a matter of law. In addition, it did not accord with the overriding objective for her to be held personally liable for costs prior to her appointment to represent the estate in the proceedings on 14 March 2025. She was in no way the cause of those costs. It followed that she should not have been ordered to pay costs before that date. Thereafter the costs would be paid by her on the standard basis as her conduct of the proceedings had not been unreasonable to the high degree required to take it outside the “norm”.

In **Friend v Friend Media Technology Systems Ltd** [2026] EWHC 1056 (KB), Sweeting J dealt with “consequential” on a summary judgment application. On the claimant’s case, neither party obtained summary judgment or strike out, and both parties advanced competing constructions concerning Clause 19.4 of an investment Agreement, on which each had succeeded in part and failed in part, and that, in those circumstances, there should be no order as to costs. For the defendant, it was submitted that the position was straightforward: the summary judgment application had been dismissed in its entirety and none of the relief he sought, including payment of £307,641.69 claimed, so the Defendant should receive its costs pursuant to CPR 44.2. Sweeting J held although the Claimant had been unsuccessful in obtaining summary judgment, he had succeeded on an important issue of contractual construction. Whilst the Defendant was

to be regarded as the overall successful party on the application, its success was not complete. The Claimant was ordered to pay the Defendant's costs, subject to a reduction to reflect the important issue of construction and the mixed outcome more generally. To reflect that and the high level of the Defendant's costs, on a summary assessment, £89,400 was appropriate against a claim for £149,000.

Finally, another lesson in the consequences of failing to obtain authority to act for your clients. In **Sergio Andrade Cardoso v Salic (UK) Ltd** [2026] EWHC 1094 (Ch), Pogust Goodhead, solicitors, had issued proceedings on behalf of a group of people in Brazil who were affected by contamination following a ship sinking. They did so based upon the Powers of Attorney written in Portuguese.

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)

However, those Powers had merely given authority to the local Brazilian lawyers to act on their behalf in Brazil; both in court in Brazil or out of court. The Powers had not given the firm authority to commence proceedings outside Brazil. It followed, according to Bright J, that the solicitors had been correct in agreeing to the proceedings being struck out. That came at a price however: the judge ordered the solicitors to make a payment on account of £900,000 of costs to the defendant, pending detailed assessment of the balance of their costs.

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