



the Messenger

September 2026

Inside this issue...

50

Cultural
Competence
in Practice



58

International
Day of Peace:
Why it matters



72

The Legal
Pause Podcast -
episode 8



Ch-ch-ch-changes!



In case you missed it, our CEO of 35 years, Fran Eccles-Bech, retired at the end of July and I have since taken over the role.

While we have spent the summer discussing and celebrating the amazing contributions Fran has made to the Society and the legal sector in general, now is the time to look to the future.

After working with Fran for over twelve years, I understand how much the Society means to our local legal community and hope to reassure our members that taking up the baton is an undertaking I do not take lightly.

Continued on page 16

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Manchester Law Society
Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871



From the President

Ian McConkey, President

After a bit of a lull in MLS activities over August, things are really ramping up in the Autumn.

There is a full calendar of events, with many of our conferences and social events happening over the next few months. Upcoming highlights include the 5-a-side football tournament and the inaugural netball tournament. My own diary is also very rapidly filling up. When I started the role as President, Fiona warned me that the later part of the year would get busy and she wasn't wrong.

As well as the local events to get involved in, there are plenty of national events as well. MLS work closely with the 4 other major law societies in Liverpool, Leeds, Bristol and Birmingham (the Joint V). It has been great working with the other Presidents and teams throughout the year. As part of that collaboration, I get invited to their annual dinners and awards most of which are coming up over the next month. I am, of course, approaching them with an open mind, but I will be very surprised if they come close to the Manchester Legal Awards as a night out.

On the national Law Society side, the MLS President receives an invite to the Opening of the Legal Year at Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. I am very much looking forward to the event which promises to be a really interesting day out.

“

There is a full calendar of events, with many of our conferences and social events happening over the next few months

By way of contrast, I am off at the weekend to see Ireland's (self-proclaimed) premier Bruce Springsteen tribute act.

Finally, we welcome Lauren Warburton to the MLS team, who joins as Operations Manager and say goodbye to Grace Lindsay who is joining Liverpool Football Club (in a non-playing role). Grace has been a fantastic member of the MLS team and a great asset in organising our many, and varied, events. We wish her the best of luck in the new role.

the Messenger



In this edition...

03 President's Welcome

06 News from HQ

10 Professional Development

12 Regulation Update

16 Cover Story

18 Talking Heads

20 Member News

38 Manchester Young Lawyers



16



18



Manchester Law Society

Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

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38



48



60

40 MLS Advantage

48 ED&I Update

64 Movers & Shakers

68 Management Matters

72 The Solicitors' Charity

74 Legal Costs Update



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

The Messenger is published by



Advertising enquiries:

Please contact Martyn Best:
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Design by Andy Bellis Creative



Law firms in the North West urged to sign up for Will Aid 2026

Law firms across the North West are being encouraged to join this year's Will Aid campaign, using their legal expertise to help thousands of people make a Will while raising vital funds for charities supporting vulnerable people in the UK and around the world.

Will Aid is an annual charity Will-writing campaign that takes place every November.

Participating solicitors volunteer their time to write basic Wills and, instead of charging their usual fees, invite clients to make a donation to Will Aid. Those donations help fund the work of Will Aid's partner charities, supporting a wide range of causes from providing humanitarian aid to protecting vulnerable children and tackling homelessness.

As well as making a meaningful difference through the campaign, taking part also brings wider benefits to participating firms.

It provides an opportunity to strengthen relationships with existing clients, introduce

new clients to the firm, demonstrate a commitment to corporate social responsibility, and give staff the satisfaction of using their professional skills to support good causes.

Last year's campaign saw participating solicitors write 8,375 Wills, raising a fantastic £832,000 in donations which will have an immediate impact changing lives for the better. But it also generated an estimated £3.64 million in future charitable legacy pledges for the eight partner charities. Alongside the donations, the campaign's total impact is more than £4.46 million.

Peter de Vena Franks, Campaign Director at Will Aid, said: "Every year we're inspired by the generosity of solicitors who give their time to support Will Aid. Their expertise helps thousands of people put an important legal document in place, while also raising funds that make a real difference through our partner charities.

"Taking part in Will Aid is a fantastic opportunity for firms of all sizes. It enables practices to support their local community, engage colleagues in a rewarding initiative and often build lasting relationships with new clients. We're encouraging firms across the North West to join us this November and help make this year's campaign another success."

Since its launch in 1988, Will Aid has raised more than £26 million in donations, with millions more pledged in charitable legacies thanks to the generosity of participating solicitors.

Firms interested in taking part in Will Aid 2026 can find out more and register at www.willaid.org.uk/register





MANCHESTER LAW SOCIETY

SUPPER CLUB



DATE

TUESDAY
15 SEP

18:00 PM
21:00 PM

TIME

inter-professional networking

start new collaborations.

rekindle old friendships.

connect with your fellow manchester professionals.

The Rex

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Contact for bookings: events@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk



European Circuit Conference 2026

At a time when money and communications travel around the world at the click of a mouse and we buy services online rendered within minutes or hours, (but when people moving across borders is increasingly sensitive), European and international issues increasingly affect “domestic” legal issues.

Family practitioners increasingly have to think about The Hague Convention, criminal and personal injury practitioners are more frequently confronted by migration-related issues from Europe and beyond. Employment practitioners are increasingly having to grapple with the consequence of employers recruiting employees abroad or sending staff overseas. The European Convention on Human Rights and ECtHR are still very much part of our jurisprudence. The UK Government is slowly but surely resetting our legal relationship with the European Union and strengthening ties with Europe. Issues from national security, through to the Erasmus+ and the youth

experience schemes via phyto-safety standards and the UK participation in the EU’s electricity market, as well as emissions trading systems, are all very much live issues.

Few legal practitioners in Manchester can say that international law does not touch their practice, and if it does, then it is most likely to be an issue related to our closest European neighbours.

Against that background, the European Circuit is an association of **legal professionals** across a broad definition of Europe, including the EU and all Council of Europe Member States. It began life as a “Circuit” – a group of practitioners in a geographical area — of the Bar of England and Wales, but it has grown to welcome lawyers from a wide range of European jurisdictions. (The concept of “barrister” and a dual profession exists in few European legal systems Ireland, Cyprus, Malta). The European Circuit is therefore now


THE EUROPEAN CIRCUIT
THE EUROPEAN CIRCUIT ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026
“Justice & The Rule of Law in a World That Does Not Make Sense”



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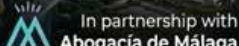
HOSTED BY ILUSTRE COLEGIO DE ABOGADOS DE MÁLAGA
24 & 25 SEPTEMBER

www.europeancircuit.com/event/conference-2026

Supported by



In partnership with



an organisation for advocates; all legal practitioners including solicitors, academic lawyers and a handful of judges. Solicitors are active on the executive committee of the European Circuit.

Members generally practise in the areas of dispute resolution and advocacy and share a common interest in European legal issues and cross-border practice. We now have active members in at least a dozen European countries and have cordial relations with the bar associations of many others.

This year, the European Circuit is delighted that we are collaborating with the Bar of Málaga - El Ilustre Colegio de Abogados de Málaga – for our annual conference which will start at around 16:00 on **Thursday 24 September 2026** and continue on **Friday 25 September 2026**, culminating with a

gala dinner at the stunning **Gran Hotel Miramar**.

You can read more about the event [here](#).

As there are many commercial and personal legal links between Manchester, the north west of England and the south of Spain (with Málaga acting as the gateway), then the conference is a unique opportunity for lawyers of whatever background to forge new professional relationships with colleagues from other European jurisdictions and also enhance their knowledge of European and international law. Any legal practitioner connected to the Manchester Law Society would be very warmly welcome in Málaga!

The perfect way to collect some CPD points and some late summer sun!

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Embracing Challenging Conversations: Avoiding Snap Judgments

Having challenging conversations is often a necessity, whether in the workplace or at home. These discussions, however, can lead to misunderstandings if we jump to conclusions. Learning to take a step back before forming judgments is vital for fostering healthy relationships.

In work, a colleague who frequently arrives late might be viewed as irresponsible or lazy. Yet, this snap judgment overlooks the complexities of individual circumstances. Perhaps that colleague is juggling family responsibilities or has health issues. By jumping to conclusions, we create an environment of blame rather than understanding. Instead, approaching the situation with empathy and curiosity can lead to a more constructive outcome. A simple question like, "I've noticed you've been arriving late, is everything okay?" can open the door to a heartfelt conversation and potential solutions.

In a similar vein, managers may find themselves frustrated when an employee fails to meet performance targets. The immediate reaction might be to assume the employee lacks commitment or skill. However, this mindset can be detrimental. Just because someone isn't hitting their numbers doesn't mean they don't care or aren't trying. There could be various factors at play, e.g. personal challenges, lack of resources, unclear expectations, or even an unsupportive work environment. Engaging in a respectful conversation about these issues not only helps identify underlying problems but also fosters a culture of trust and collaboration. By asking open-ended questions like, "What barriers are you facing in reaching your targets?" a manager can gain insights that lead to effective support and improvement.

Challenging conversations require us to embrace vulnerability rather than judgment. When we approach discussions with the intent to understand rather than to accuse, we create a space for authenticity. This goes beyond merely seeking to resolve conflicts; it's about building relationships based on trust and respect.

It's also important to remember that our perceptions can be clouded by personal biases and assumptions. The act of pausing to think critically about our initial reactions can make a significant difference. Instead of reacting based on incomplete information, taking time to reflect can lead to more thoughtful and productive conversations.

Here's a few tips that will help you to stop jumping to conclusions:

- Focus fully on the speaker, reflecting on their words without formulating your response while they talk.
- If something is unclear or if you feel judgment creeping in, seek clarification before assuming you understand the situation.
- Recognise when you're feeling defensive or angry and take a moment to breathe before responding.
- Approach every conversation with the belief that the other person has good intentions, which can reduce misunderstandings.

By adopting these strategies, we can transform challenging conversations into opportunities for connection and growth.

Do you need a hand developing your managers and leaders? Contact Mike direct for a chat at mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk



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Not the Usual Day Job

When Private Client Crosses Practice Areas



23rd

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Regulation Update & News

By **Andrea Cohen**, Compli, Weightmans



As we enter the final quarter of 2026, (how did that happen?) regulators are focusing on AI governance, emerging money laundering risks, litigation funding arrangements and compliance oversight, whilst recent disciplinary decisions continue to demonstrate the importance of integrity, transparency and supervision.

Recent developments from the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), Legal Services Board (LSB) and Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal (SDT) suggest a continued shift towards earlier intervention, greater accountability and increased scrutiny. For law firms, the message is straightforward: effective compliance is no longer simply about having policies and procedures in place. The key is to be able to demonstrate that those arrangements are effective in practice.

Compliance Officers under the spotlight

A significant development is the approval by the Legal Services Board of SRA rule changes affecting COLP and COFA arrangements, despite opposition and concerns being raised by practitioners, Law Societies etc in response to the SRA consultation on the proposals. The reforms will require certain firms to separate management and compliance responsibilities where key decision-making powers are concentrated in the same individuals. Implementation is expected to be phased from 2027, with larger firms likely to be affected first. Exemptions will apply to firms where the maximum annual turnover is £600,000 and maximum client money total £2m. In sole owner-manager firms which operate beneath the thresholds, the sole owner-manager can be the COLP but not the COFA.

The SRA says the changes are intended to strengthen governance arrangements and improve the independence of compliance functions, and arise directly from lessons learned following high-profile regulatory failures, including Axiom Ince and SSB, where questions arose regarding governance, risk escalation and oversight arrangements.

Although implementation will be phased from 2027, firms should begin considering whether current arrangements provide sufficient independence, authority and challenge. Boards, COLPs and COFAs may wish to consider:

- Reporting lines.
- Escalation procedures.
- Governance frameworks.
- Risk management structures.
- The ability of compliance officers to challenge decisions effectively.

For some firms, this may represent the most significant governance review since the introduction of the COLP and COFA regime.

The LSB also approved new SRA rules requiring law firms to submit annual accountants' reports whether they are qualified or not or face fixed financial penalties.



AI moves up the risk agenda

The SRA has published a [warning notice](#) on the use of artificial intelligence. The SRA revealed that it received 42 reports of potential AI-related misconduct between July 2025 and July 2026 and is investigating concerns including fabricated legal authorities, inaccurate legal research, failures of supervision and confidentiality breaches arising from the use of public AI tools.

The warning notice follows growing judicial and regulatory concern about AI-generated content being used without adequate verification. The SRA has highlighted particular risks arising from fabricated case citations, inaccurate legal analysis, disclosure of confidential information and overreliance on technology without proper human oversight. Crucially, the regulator has emphasised that responsibility always remains with the solicitor. The use of AI does not alter obligations relating to competence, integrity, supervision or confidentiality.

While the SRA has not produced a guidance note alongside the warning notice, firms are referred to resources from other regulators and professional bodies, including the [Law Society](#) and the [Bar Standards Board](#).

For many firms, AI governance is rapidly becoming a standing board-level risk issue rather than simply an IT consideration. We suggest that you review AI governance arrangements, update risk assessments to include AI-specific risks, train staff on verification and supervision requirements, review confidentiality and data protection controls and ensure AI usage policies are documented and regularly reviewed.

Emerging AML and sanctions risks

Anti-money laundering compliance remains a core priority for the SRA. The updated [Sectoral Risk Assessment](#) contains several notable additions reflecting the changing nature of economic crime. Particular emphasis has been placed on AI-enabled fraud, deepfake technology, technology-enabled impersonation, sanctions circumvention, complex ownership structures, company formation activity and increasingly sophisticated attempts to disguise the true source of funds and wealth.

The SRA has also highlighted the risks arising from geopolitical instability, capital flight and international sanctions developments. Firms within scope of MLR should ensure that these emerging risks are reflected within firm-wide risk assessments and matter risk assessment processes.

Lessons continue from SSB

The regulatory consequences flowing from the collapse of SSB continue to influence both regulatory policy, as referred to above, and enforcement priorities. 18 months after completing its investigation into the collapse, and 12 months after the time it said it its aim was to make decisions by (before summer 2025), the SRA has referred the firm's co-founder to the SDT in relation to allegations concerning adverse costs advice, reporting of financial difficulties and litigation practices. The allegations remain unproven.

The case reflects broader concerns around governance, management information,

Continued on page 14



From page 13

financial resilience and consumer protection, themes which have repeatedly appeared across recent regulatory reviews and consultations.

Recent disciplinary cases

Recent SDT and SRA decisions continue to show that many enforcement cases arise from familiar themes: failures to communicate effectively with clients, poor record-keeping, AML shortcomings, dishonesty, misuse of client money and attempts to conceal mistakes.

Fines for breaches of MLR

Decisions reported since our last bulletin included two firms fined £25000 for breaches going back to 2017 relating to PCPs, one fined almost £21,000 for incomplete CMRAs, a firm fined £16000 for acting for a PEP and their associated companies in 14 residential property purchase transactions, and other firms fined up to £6000.

Reprimand for partner for failing to provide adequate information to client

A partner involved in a property transfer was reprimanded after failing to provide sufficient information to the client before a transaction was completed.

The tribunal accepted that the solicitor had not acted dishonestly. However, it concluded that the client had not been given enough information about the nature and implications of the transaction to make properly informed decisions.

Struck off for asking colleague to hide file

A junior solicitor was struck off after asking

a colleague to conceal a file to cover up lack of progress. The request was reported and the firm discovered the solicitor had failed to file a first registration application with the Land Registry, and when asked about it, insisted that it had been done, and denied asking the colleague to hide the file. She later admitted that she lied.

She made an agreed outcome with the SRA that she should be struck off.

Struck off for giving client misleading information

A conveyancer was struck off after repeatedly giving misleading information to a client about the status of a transaction. The tribunal found that inaccurate explanations had been provided over an extended period and that the solicitor's communications were designed to conceal delays and other difficulties. The conduct involved repeated dishonesty rather than a single isolated incident, which was a significant factor in the decision to strike off.

Strike off for sending explicit messages to Counsel

A solicitor was struck off after sending explicit and inappropriate messages to a female barrister and to a potential employee and planning to do the same to a third person. He was aware of the SRA investigation into his conduct towards the barrister when he began communicating with the potential employee, and that he had been referred to the SDT over the barrister and was under investigation over the potential employee when he approached the third person.

He initially rejected the complaints made against him, even complaining to chambers when she complained about him, and

blamed the victims instead, but he admitted his misconduct before the tribunal.

He was struck off and ordered to pay costs of £75,000, reduced from £100,000 to take into account his means and inability to continue to practise.

Strike off for dishonest insurance claim

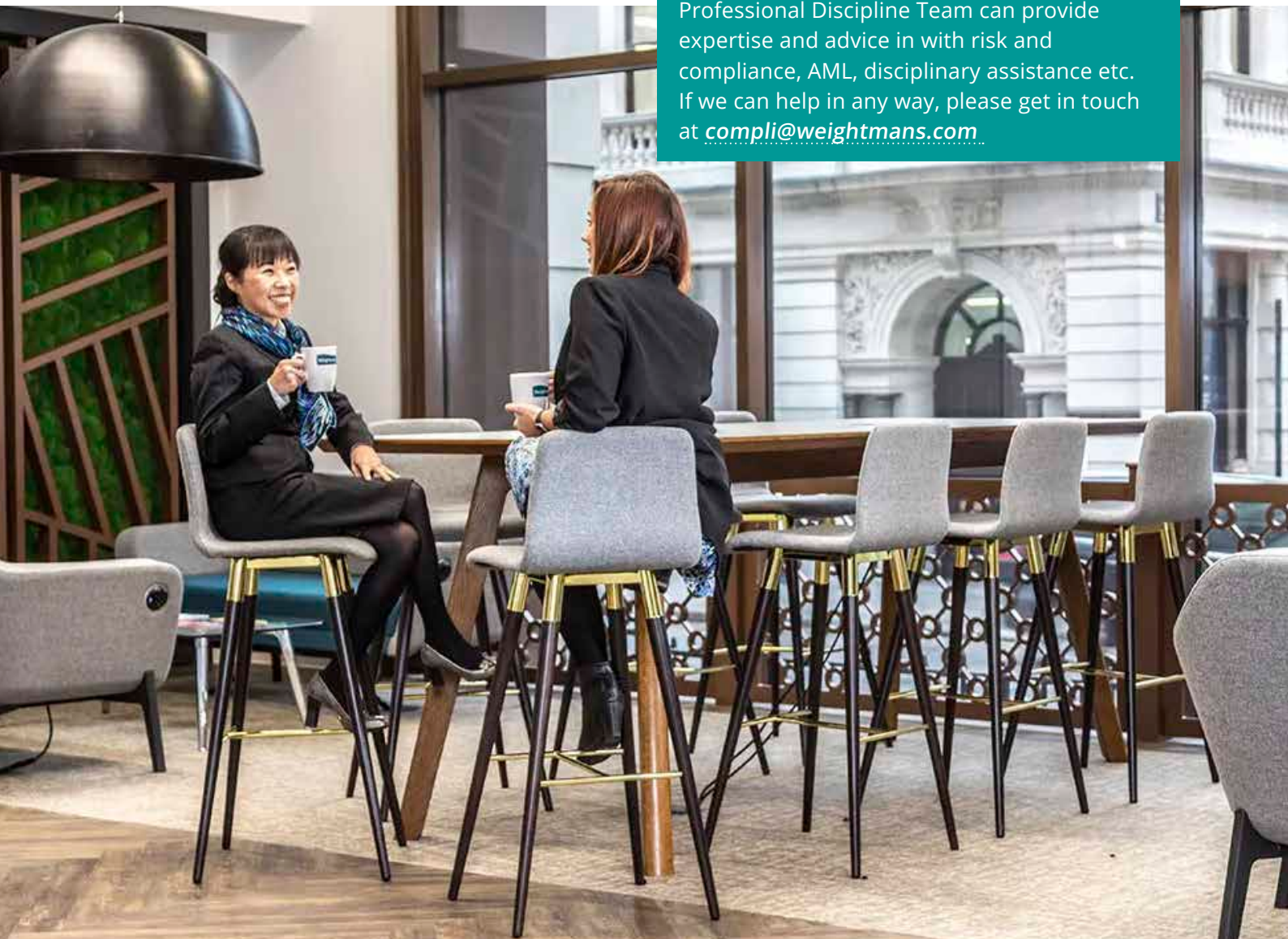
A solicitor who had been on the roll for less than two years when he made a dishonest insurance claim for a stolen bike, claiming the bike was covered after amending the policy, was struck off. The insurer accused him of a deliberate attempt to defraud. He

then requested that the claim be withdrawn as the bike was covered by a separate home insurance policy. The insurer declined and he was asked to attend an interview with a claims investigator.

The tribunal accepted he was not 'inherently dishonest' but ruled out any exceptional circumstances that might have prevented a strike-off, saying his lack of experience was not a material factor. He was also ordered to pay costs of almost £21,000.

How Compli can help...

The **Compli** Solicitor Regulatory and Professional Discipline Team can provide expertise and advice in with risk and compliance, AML, disciplinary assistance etc. If we can help in any way, please get in touch at compli@weightmans.com.





From page 1

Ch-ch-ch-changes! (continued)

I am not proposing a lot of changes, and intend to keep the core values of the Society central in everything we do – fostering a vibrant community for our local legal sector, giving a voice to our members, and promoting the highest standards of legal practice – while also actively looking at how the Society can diversify and adapt over time.

However, we do have a change in personnel and people's roles that we thought you should know about...

We are delighted to have Lauren Warburton join the MLS team as our new Operations Manager. She will take over much of my previous role and will be making sure the Society keeps running on the day to day. You may have already started to receive emails from her and see her at various meetings and events. Please do connect with her on LinkedIn [here](#) and continue to welcome her into the MLS Family!

Chandre will continue to make sure the Committees, Forums, and other meetings run smoothly while also keeping the memberships renewed and ensuring your data is up to date. She will also be checking the naughty list for any debtors, so make sure you check your emails from her!

Grace threw a spanner in the works lately as she will be leaving us at the end of September for pastures new and an exciting opportunity as a Communications Executive at her beloved Liverpool Football Club. In the meantime, she is the Events and Marketing guru and the Messenger wizard. We will miss our Gracie, but wish her nothing but excellent times in her next

“

I have long believed that a membership organisation lives and dies by the engagement of its members, so I want to make sure that we are representing our members across all levels and demographics

chapter. We are already recruiting for her replacement, so please do share the advert to any suitable candidates.

And me – most of you must know me by now. Usually, when I meet people they say “You’re the one with the emails!” so yes, if you’re reading this you’ve probably had a few emails from me over the years.

I started at MLS in 2014 as a 9 month maternity leave cover for the then Event Manager. I’d just moved up from London the previous December after about 7 years working in events at international membership organisations. I thought this job will do to pay the rent for a few months while I look for something else, but I never left!

I went from full time to a part time job share, then just me and Fran running the Society during COVID, then back full time

in 2021. Since then I've worked closely with Fran building the activities of the Society back up. We've increased our membership, expanded our Committees and Forums, and even restored our varied legal education and social events programme.

Looking to the future, I am keen to build on the diversity of the Society, in the areas of practice and the sizes of firm that we support, but also in the voices that we champion.

I have long believed that a membership organisation lives and dies by the engagement of its members, so I want to make sure that we are representing our members across all levels and demographics, and that we demystify entry and participation within the Society.

If you are eager to get more involved in the Society, perhaps join a Committee or be a mentor for our Future Stars, then please do get in touch via email at enquiries@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk

Meet our new Operations Manager – Lauren Warburton!

Hobbies: Reading, Going to Festivals/ Concerts and Travelling (I have visited 17 countries and counting!)

TV Show: True Crime Documentaries

Fun Fact: I have organised events in multiple cities across at least 8 different countries

I'm Lauren, Manchester Law Society's newest recruit! Originally from Cumbria, I started my events journey off at Sheffield Hallam University where I graduated with an Events Management degree. Whilst at university, I opted to do a placement year in London where I gained invaluable experience in the events industry and was able to apply the theory I had learned so far whilst also developing the knowledge of the practical inner workings of the industry.



Upon graduating, I moved to Manchester and continued to develop my skills in the sector, working on various different kinds of events both nationally and internationally which has now led me to my new role as Operations Manager at MLS.

If you see me at committee meetings, conferences or events, please do say hello!



This month, we've dedicated our *Talking Heads* feature to celebrate International Day of Charity (5th September) and asked our members to spotlight their favourite charity:

“Give a shoutout to a charity close to your heart. Tell us who they are and the difference they make.”



Carole Spiller
Partner and Head of Manchester office
Weightmans

“Weightmans is deeply committed to social mobility, firmly believing in the potential of all young people to achieve their ambitions. Our partnership with GMYN – which celebrates

its 20th year in 2027 - has flourished over the years, becoming a cornerstone of our community engagement in Greater Manchester. This summer, we raised almost £5k so far after my colleagues and I took on the Helvellyn challenge in the Lake District!

“Together, we have built a strong, collaborative relationship founded on trust and a shared vision for supporting the region's youth. Choosing GMYN as our office charity was a natural choice, and we are proud to contribute to its vital work empowering young people across the city region.”

You can donate to GMYN [here](#)

Ruth Peters
Business Development
Director
Olliers Solicitors



“More than 80% of children in the youth justice system are neurodivergent.

Sensory meltdowns are routinely mistaken for aggression. A lack of eye contact is misread as defiance or lack of remorse. Systemic misunderstanding is criminalising vulnerability instead of offering early intervention.

In response Olliers Solicitors has launched a landmark, three-year partnership with an incredible local charity: [Greater Manchester Youth Network \(GMYN\)](#), to deliver a life-

changing initiative: *Seen, Heard, Diverted*.

GMYN's mission is to enable young people in our region to have a positive start in life and a positive impact on their wider community.

Supported by Olliers Solicitors, GMYN will deliver a three-strand pathway producing rights-awareness toolkits for young people, creating support networks for parents and delivering de-escalation training for police, solicitors and magistrates.

Olliers is committing firm funds, mentoring time and fundraising energy to support this joint initiative. The next fundraising initiative is a team abseil on Saturday September 5 2026.”

You can donate to Olliers' fundraiser for GMYN [here](#)

Daniel Weed
Managing Director
Burton Copeland

I am proud to be a trustee of PIES and have had the privilege of visiting both of our educational centres in Eswatini, seeing first-hand the difference the charity makes. I have also helped develop several projects designed to create sustainable opportunities for local communities, including our beehive and honey-making project, which provides practical skills and the potential to generate income.

[PIES Charity](#) is dedicated to improving the lives and opportunities of children and young people in Eswatini through education, support and sustainable community projects.



Education remains at the heart of everything we do. For many children, access to school and the opportunities it provides simply would not be possible without financial support.

We are therefore always looking for individuals, families and businesses willing to sponsor a child through primary or secondary school. Every sponsorship can make a lasting difference, providing education, opportunity and hope for a brighter future.

You can learn more and donate to PIES [here](#)

Lancaster University Law Clinic seeking supervisors



Role Details: Law Clinic Supervisor (Qualified Barrister, Chartered Legal Executive or Solicitor)

Salary: £100 per case (inclusive of VAT)

Location: Remote working

Timing: Mid November 2026 to the end of March 2027.

Application Deadline: 5pm on Monday 14th September 2026.

Lancaster University's award-winning Law Clinic offers free legal advice to members of the public. They are seeking qualified solicitors, barristers or chartered legal executives (who hold a current practising certificate and are at least 3 years PQE) to expand the Law Clinic's areas of supervision. The university are particularly interested in receiving applications from practitioners with expertise in family law, property law, consumer rights, landlord/tenant work and/or private client work.

The Law Clinic operates during term time only

and will resume from mid **November 2026 until the end of March 2027.**

Supervisors must:

- Be a qualified Barrister, Chartered Legal Executive or a Solicitor and hold a current practising certificate (at least 3 years PQE).
- Be able to commit to supervising at least one case per week (each case will take approximately 2 hours to supervise).
- Be willing to engage in training on the Law Clinic's case management system (for which you will be remunerated).

Application is by letter and Curriculum Vitae and should be sent to Kathryn Saban (k.saban@lancaster.ac.uk) Co-Director of Lancaster University Law Clinic. The deadline to apply is: **5pm on Monday 14th September 2026.**

Informal enquiries should also be directed to Kathryn Saban.



Bexley Beaumont named one of UK's best founder-led businesses

[Bexley Beaumont](#) has been named one of the UK's best founder-led businesses in a new table of the country's most successful enterprises.

The firm, launched by Karen Bexley and Anna Beaumont six years ago, is the only legal practice included in the inaugural edition of the Founder 250 list compiled by innovation specialists Business Cloud.

The classification showcases organisations which best reflect the vision and influence of the individuals who established them.

Bexley Beaumont is one of only 42 companies featured on the list to have been set up by women.

The Business Cloud recognition is the latest evidence of how the strategy determined by Ms Bexley and Ms Beaumont continues to deliver success for Bexley Beaumont.

Earlier this year, it became one of only 30 business involved in legal services in England and Wales to be certified as a B-Corporation and also topped an influential legal industry growth study for the fourth successive year.

Ms Bexley, the firm's Chief Executive, said: "We consider it an honour to be ranked by Business Cloud alongside some terrific and very well-known entrepreneurs in so many different industries.

"When Anna and I launched Bexley Beaumont, we did so with a very definite idea of what we wanted to achieve.

"In particular, we wanted to replicate some of the things which traditional firms



do well - attracting very capable lawyers but allowing them greater autonomy, collaboration with colleagues than they might have experienced anywhere.

"We also felt that it was important to find individuals who share the same values and fit into our existing culture rather than have them determine the culture.

"A key part of the Bexley Beaumont journey was ensuring that the people within the business felt connected, looked after and sharing a common purpose, including a commitment to the communities in which we work.

"Everyone in the team continues to invest effort in creating that kind of environment.

"We have a constant, open dialogue with everyone in the business to ensure that we keep moving forward with the same sense of purpose."

By the time that Bexley Beaumont launched in 2020, both of its founders had already established considerable business credentials.

Ms Bexley had worked for more than a decade as a fee-share consultant and, prior to that, had worked as an employment solicitor in an international law firm.

Mrs Beaumont, a former corporate solicitor, has a track record of delivering growth, having previously been CEO at one of the UK's fastest growing challenger law firms.

The Business Cloud Founder 250 list is an independent assessment, compiled by a panel of judges made up of leading investors, commercial consultancies and lawyers.

Organisers explained their intention of identifying "companies [which] are truly moving the dial" and influenced by the vision of the people who had established them.

Enterprises which made the final list spanned a variety of business sectors, including technology, lifestyle, education and manufacturing, and needed to have been set up no later than 2024.

All were considered by judges to have a "clear purpose", including B Corp status or commitments to social impact initiatives were favoured by the judges.

The significant and rapid progress made by Bexley Beaumont since its launch under the guidance of Ms Bexley and Ms Beaumont meant that it met all the relevant criteria.

In January, it was named as one of a small number of domestic law firms to be given B-Corp certification.

Bexley Beaumont achieved the prestigious international sustainability standard following a rigorous two-year assessment.

The campaign to secure B-Corp accreditation was personally led by Ms Bexley and resulted in Bexley Beaumont posting one of the highest scores of any qualifying legal practice in England and Wales.

Four months later, the firm secured top billing in an influential legal industry study for the fourth successive year.

Of all the practices to have featured in the research by the legal technology and market intelligence specialist Codex Edge, Bexley Beaumont had the highest five-year Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 74.83 per cent.

It was also able to boast one of the highest lawyer retention rates for any platform firm of 95.1 per cent.

Furthermore and in an echo of the benchmark set by Business Cloud, Codex Edge concluded that Bexley Beaumont was "perhaps the best example of more focused Platform firms....executing with real clarity and purpose".

Bexley Beaumont has demonstrated its willingness to use its growing influence for the good of the community.

In September 2024, Ms Bexley explained that the unveiling of the BBFoundation initiative - designed to support charitable projects nationwide - was one of the firm's "cornerstone ventures".

The Foundation initially provided backing to three bodies - the Ocean Conservation Trust, Law Care and the Sutton Trust - and has since thrown its weight behind two more: the Macular Society and St John Ambulance.



Bromleys' charity donation carries special meaning for Louise on her cancer journey

A cheque presentation by [Bromleys Solicitors](#) to [The Christie Charity](#) took on particular significance for Louise Nolan, the firm's practice manager.

Just three months after the firm chose The Christie Charity as its charity of the year, Louise was diagnosed with breast cancer.

She underwent a double mastectomy followed by 12 gruelling rounds of chemotherapy and is now on a 12-month course of immunotherapy as part of her ongoing treatment.

Louise is sharing her story in the hope of encouraging more women to attend breast screening.

Bromleys raised £4,370 in the 12 months to May 31 and presented the cheque to John Ashley, The Christie Charity's senior corporate development manager, at the firm's offices in Ashton-under-Lyne.

The Christie Charity supports the work of The Christie NHS Foundation Trust in providing life-saving cancer treatment, pioneering research and additional care and services for patients and their families.

Bromleys raised the money through a variety of events and activities, including themed lunches and a Santa dash, while six members of staff took part in the AJ Bell Great Manchester 10k Run.

Louise, 53, who has worked at Bromleys for 20 years and is back at work full-time after completing her chemotherapy, said: "The firm really got behind The Christie Charity and has been hugely supportive of me.

"The treatment and care I've received from The Christie cannot be faulted. It's an amazing facility to have in the region and I'm so pleased that Bromleys has been able to raise funds for it, as The Christie Charity does tremendous work.

"My breast cancer was detected following my first routine mammogram since turning 50. I felt pleased and relieved that I'd gone for screening, and thankfully my cancer was found at an early stage.

"While initially I was worried when I was invited to go for further tests, I felt strangely



calm when I got the diagnosis. I just accepted the situation and got on with it.

"The chemotherapy was quite gruelling at times, but it was not as bad as I thought it might be. I'm now feeling much better as all the side effects have lifted."

Louise added: "A mammogram is offered to every woman aged over 50 and under 70 every three years, and I would urge everyone eligible to be screened. The service is ultimately there to save your life."

"I want something positive to come from my experiences, so I would encourage more women to attend for screening. It's also important to check yourself."

"The earlier you act and seek advice if you notice anything unusual, hopefully the better the outcome will be if cancer is detected."

John Ashley said: "It was a pleasure to work with Bromleys Solicitors during the period in which The Christie Charity was the firm's charity of the year."

"The enthusiasm and creativity Bromleys showed with fundraising was very impressive. Every event and activity, however small or large, contributes to the life-saving and life-changing work of the hospital."

"We're incredibly grateful for this support, which will impact patients and their families for years to come."

Chris Eaton, a solicitor in Bromleys' wills and probate team and a member of the firm's staff committee, which organises charity activities, said: "Over the course of the year, the team came together to support The Christie Charity through a variety of fundraising initiatives."

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I want something positive to come from my experiences, so I would encourage more women to attend for screening

"The amount raised was significant and reflected the enthusiasm and generosity of colleagues across the firm."

"When we chose The Christie Charity as our charity of the year, we had no idea how close to home it would become."

"Seeing the support Louise received made our fundraising efforts feel even more worthwhile, and we're proud to have supported such an important cause."

Meanwhile Bromleys has chosen Willow Wood Hospice in Ashton-under-Lyne as its new charity of the year.

Joanne Lees, the hospice's partnership development lead, said: "We are absolutely delighted that Bromleys Solicitors has chosen Willow Wood Hospice as its charity of the year."

"As two organisations with strong roots in our local community and a shared commitment to supporting local people, we're looking forward to working together over the coming year."

"The support from everyone at Bromleys will help raise vital funds and increase awareness of the specialist care and support we provide to patients and families across Tameside and Glossop. Partnerships like this make a real difference, and we are incredibly grateful to have Bromleys by our side."



Clarke Willmott strengthens commercial offering with acquisition of Manchester immigration practice

[Clarke Willmott LLP](#) has announced the acquisition of specialist UK-business immigration firm Latitude Law, further strengthening its Commercial Services division and expanding its offering to corporate and private clients.

The team at Manchester-based Latitude Law, led by Gary McIndoe, will join Clarke Willmott's Manchester office and become part of the Commercial Services division, led by Head of Manchester office Ed Foulkes. The team is expected to complete its full integration into the firm in early November.

The acquisition brings a strong team of highly regarded immigration specialists into the firm, creating a new dedicated UK immigration law capability. The boutique practice advises corporates, business owners, high net worth (HNW) individuals and exceptionally talented clients, guiding them through complex Home Office applications and compliance requirements.

Widely recognised as one of the UK's leading immigration practices, Latitude Law is ranked in Legal 500, Lexology and Chambers and Partners UK and has built an outstanding reputation for client service.

The move represents a key strategic milestone in Clarke Willmott's ambitious growth plans, broadening its practice offering in response to increasing client demand for specialist immigration advice. It also creates new opportunities to provide integrated legal services across the firm, particularly for its existing corporate and private wealth clients.



Ed Foulkes

Peter Swinburn, Clarke Willmott CEO, said: "We are delighted to announce our acquisition of Latitude Law and to welcome the team to the firm. They have an exceptional reputation in the market and are recognised for delivering first-class immigration advice to businesses and individuals alike.

"Just as importantly, they share our values and our commitment to building trusted, long-term relationships that deliver excellent outcomes for our clients, our people and the communities we serve. This acquisition represents an exciting step forward in our growth strategy and strengthens our ability to support clients with an increasingly important area of law."

Gary McIndoe, managing partner at Latitude Law, said: "When I started Latitude Law almost 20 years ago, I didn't envisage it would grow into such a widely recognised specialist firm.

"I am extremely proud of the talented and dedicated team we have built, and of the strength of service we provide to clients

across business and private wealth. Joining Clarke Willmott is an exciting and positive next step for us. We share culture, values and vision, and I'm confident that together we can offer our clients an even stronger service."

Ed Foulkes said: "Latitude Law joining us is an exciting time for the firm and the Manchester office. The acquisition

reinforces Clarke Willmott's continued investment in strategic growth and its commitment to providing clients with a comprehensive range of specialist legal services across the UK.

"It's a really positive development for the firm and another important milestone for the Manchester office."

Growth and Good Employment Charter for Trowers & Hamlins' Manchester office

[Trowers & Hamlins](#) is celebrating a period of sustained growth in its Manchester office marked by a significant round of promotions, new talent, and recognition through the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter.

Over the past year the Manchester office has continued to strengthen its capabilities and deepen its client relationships across both the public and private sectors.

This momentum is reflected by the firm welcoming 18 new joiners in various roles across the partnership and business services teams including; Annest Jones, Mayowa Ejidare, Kelly Marum, Brightmore Kunaka, Nita Mistry, Ataikor Ngerebara, James Pike and Rebecca Ridgway.

Alongside these hires, the office has also promoted nine people including; Meadow O'Connor and Andy Nicoll to Senior Associate. The office also celebrates the incoming newly qualified solicitors across Banking, Construction and Real Estate resulting in a 100% autumn retention rate for Manchester.

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Over the past year the Manchester office has continued to strengthen its capabilities and deepen its client relationships

Their arrival supports the firm's 2030 growth strategy, enhancing its offering across key practice areas including real estate, corporate, commercial, construction, finance, disputes and employment.

Trowers & Hamlins' Manchester office has also achieved accreditation under the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter, underlining its commitment to fair work policies, employee wellbeing, and inclusive and responsible employment practices. This recognition reflects the firm's continued focus on creating a positive working environment and supporting its people to thrive.

Continued on page 26



From page 25

With a team of around 150 people and a presence in the region spanning more than 50 years, the Manchester office combines strong local insight with access to the firm's national and international expertise.

Commenting on the growth, Co-Head of Manchester Katie Saunders said: "This continued growth ensures our teams are well placed to support clients on complex business matters and major development projects across the North West. Manchester continues to see strong and sustained investment across key sectors, from real estate and infrastructure through to innovation and regeneration. This creates significant opportunity for our clients, and we are well positioned to support them as they navigate this growth and deliver projects that shape the region's future."

Co-Head of Manchester Steve Dunseath added: "This is an important moment

for our Manchester office. Our latest promotions recognise the strength and depth of talent we have built across all of our teams, while our new joiners bring additional expertise that will support our continued growth. Achieving accreditation under the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter is also a proud milestone and reflects our commitment to being a responsible and inclusive employer."

This latest phase of growth is underpinned by Trowers & Hamlin's 2030 strategy to expand whilst investing in people, strengthening its regional presence, and supporting clients across key markets.

The new cohort of hires also includes; Tomisin Ogoji, Anjali Pandit, Maylia Patel-Rourke, Nicole McKenzie, Niki Manji, Retaj Elkailani, Umair Badat, Millie Canham, Gabriela Catana, Poppy Cooper.



Fletchers Solicitors celebrates trio of lawyers achieving APIL Senior Litigator accreditation

[Fletchers Solicitors](#) is proud to announce that three of its senior lawyers, Ruth Thomas, Samantha Labor and Francesca Paul, have been awarded Senior Litigator accreditation by the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL), recognising their expertise, experience and commitment to representing people injured through clinical negligence.

The APIL accreditation scheme is designed to help members of the public identify lawyers with proven knowledge and experience in personal injury and clinical negligence law. To achieve Senior Litigator status, solicitors must demonstrate a high level of technical expertise, extensive practical experience and a commitment to ongoing professional development.

The recognition reflects the strength and depth of expertise across Fletchers' clinical negligence and serious injury teams.



Ruth Thomas

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The recognition reflects the strength and depth of expertise across Fletchers' clinical negligence and serious injury teams

Ruth Thomas, who qualified as a solicitor in 2016, has developed particular expertise in birth injuries.

Alongside her legal practice, Ruth has made a significant contribution to the wider legal profession. As Chair of Manchester Young Solicitors Group (now Manchester Young Lawyers) from 2022 to 2024, she helped grow the organisation's membership to more than 1,000 members while leading the delivery of 27 events for junior lawyers in the area, focused on education, mentoring, networking, collaboration, and health and wellbeing.

Samantha Labor qualified as a solicitor in 1999 and has specialised in litigation since 2002. With more than two decades of experience handling catastrophic personal injury and serious clinical negligence claims, Samantha has recovered millions of pounds in compensation for clients throughout her career.

Having joined Fletchers Solicitors in 2019, Samantha became a Partner in 2022.

Commenting on the accreditations, APIL Chief Executive Mike Benner said: "APIL

Continued on page 28



From page 27

members who are awarded accredited status must demonstrate expertise and experience and be up-to-date with the latest legal training and developments in the law.

“As an organisation we are committed to driving excellence in the personal injury sector and fighting for prompt and fair redress for victims of negligence. APIL has been doing this for over thirty years and is the trusted voice of injured people. Negligence can happen to anyone, so it is worth remembering that an APIL accreditation logo is the one to look for if you are ever injured and believe it could and should have been prevented.”

Speaking about the importance of APIL accreditation, Mike Benner also said: “Being injured through negligence is never planned for and many victims feel vulnerable and uncertain about the future. The APIL accreditation logo lets injured people and

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As an organisation we are committed to driving excellence in the personal injury sector

their families know that they are in the very safest hands and that their lawyers are dedicated to getting their lives back on track.”

Andrew Clark, Director of Learning & Development at Fletchers Solicitors, said: “We’re incredibly proud to see Ruth, Samantha and Francesca achieve APIL Senior Litigator accreditation. This is a significant professional milestone and a testament not only to their exceptional legal expertise but also to their unwavering commitment to delivering the highest standards of client care.

At Fletchers, we’re passionate about investing in the development of our people and supporting them to achieve recognised accreditations that reflect the quality of the work they do every day. These achievements demonstrate the depth of talent across our clinical negligence, serious injury and group litigation teams, and reinforce our commitment to ensuring clients receive outstanding representation from some of the most experienced and knowledgeable lawyers in the field.”

The latest accreditations further strengthen Fletchers Solicitors’ nationally recognised expertise in clinical negligence, serious injury and group litigation, reinforcing the firm’s commitment to delivering exceptional legal representation and life-changing outcomes for people affected by negligence.

Samantha Labor





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Mills & Reeve announces another year of record turnover as Manchester office sees 14% growth

Mills & Reeve has broken through the £200 million turnover barrier for the first time after announcing 13.9% growth on the previous year. This took the firm's turnover to a record £206.9 million for the 2025/26 financial year.

The firm's Manchester office has seen turnover increase by 14% for the 2025/26 financial year, almost doubling fee income since 2022.

Firmwide, Mills & Reeve has also announced an employee profit share pool of more than £3.25 million, meaning most employees will receive an award of at least £2,300. The employee profit share award directly links to the firm's financial performance and forms part of Mills & Reeve's long-standing commitment to ensuring its people share in the success they help create.

Alongside the employee profit share award, Mills & Reeve has also significantly increased investment in discretionary performance-related bonuses across the business, reflecting the firm's continued focus on recognising exceptional contribution and high performance.

The firm's latest results were delivered against a backdrop of continued economic uncertainty and geopolitical disruption. Despite these challenges, Mills & Reeve continued to push ahead with its ambitious 2030 strategy, including growing international work through its M&R Global network to 30% of total revenue, building out a completely new C-suite, and continuing its Fearless Feedback client listening programme, which has now interviewed more than 5,000 clients to gain vital insights to help build long term relationships.



Chris Ross

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The firm's Manchester office has seen turnover increase by 14% for the 2025/26 financial year

In the North West, the firm has also achieved several significant milestones and embarked on a range of exciting projects. These include:

- Continued investment in the growth of its people, with a stream of high-quality lateral hires and promotions in the region. This includes bolstering its North West construction team with the appointment of six industry specialist, with Ian Hardman and Jody Kite joining

as partners; the appointment of Danielle Ingham as partner in the employment team; and the promotion of 16 people at the firm's Manchester office.

- Expanding the firm's Manchester office creating capacity for 30 more people, demonstrating the North West team's rapid growth.
- Strengthening its position in the higher education sector, following the firm's reappointment to the University of Manchester legal framework.
- Ongoing support in the regional community, including partnerships with local charities, such as FortAlice – the Manchester office's chosen charity – as well as Factory International, Girls Out Loud and IntoUniversity, which the team has also volunteered with.
- Launching a new social mobility programme, Broadening Horizons, in partnership with the Social Mobility Business Partnership, with the scheme kicking off a 12-month pilot in the North West.
- Further investment in the firm's technology and operational capabilities. This includes AI and other technology initiatives which are already helping people work more efficiently, collaborate more effectively, and deliver even greater value for clients.

Chris Ross, partner at Mills & Reeve and head of the North West office, said: "These results demonstrate the strength of our strategy, the quality of our people and the trust our clients continue to place in us. Growing turnover by more than 11% in what remains a challenging economic

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These results demonstrate the strength of our strategy, the quality of our people and the trust our clients continue to place in us

environment is a significant achievement. We have continued to invest in the future of the firm while maintaining strong financial discipline and delivering outstanding service for our clients.

"One of the things that makes Mills & Reeve special is our belief that success should be shared. The award of more than £3.25 million through our employee profit share this year is testament to that commitment, helping to make sure colleagues across the business benefit directly from the firm's performance.

"Looking ahead, we're continuing to focus on delivering our 2030 strategy through our client experience, investment in our people, technology and market-leading sector expertise, while maintaining the culture and collaborative approach that differentiate us. The North West team will play a vital role in bringing that ambition forward, as we continue to support dynamic and exciting regional businesses, whether that's through our leading M&A team, our award-winning health and care team, or through our standout commercial and private client work."



From a Small Niche Firm to Medium Law Firm of the Year

By **Marcin** and **Iwona Durlak**, Joint Founders and Managing Partners, IMD Solicitors LLP

Being named **Medium Law Firm of the Year** at the Manchester Legal Awards was one of those rare moments that made us stop and reflect.

Like many business owners, we tend to move quickly from one goal to the next. There is always another challenge to solve, another idea to explore and another milestone to pursue.

This time felt different.

Not because of the trophy itself, but because of what it represents.

Ten years ago, we founded IMD Solicitors with a clear ambition to build a different kind of law firm.

We didn't have decades of history behind us or an established reputation in the market. We started as a small niche practice, primarily supporting the Polish community, with a simple belief that exceptional client care, technical excellence and genuinely caring about people would ultimately matter more than size or history.

Over the years, the firm evolved. First into a multilingual practice, then into a recognised cross-border firm and, today, into an international law firm helping global families and businesses navigate complex legal issues across borders.

Looking back, perhaps the biggest achievement isn't simply winning an award.

It's the journey.

Six years ago, submitting our very first Manchester Legal Awards entry and being shortlisted for **Small Law Firm of the Year** felt like a huge achievement. Three years ago, winning **Small Law Firm of the Year** was an unforgettable milestone.

Being recognised this year as **Medium Law Firm of the Year** feels different again.

It feels like we've broken through—not simply by growing in size, but by earning our place alongside the established firms we admired for so many years. For us, that is probably the greatest significance of this award.

Continued on page 34





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Sara Duxbury

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Learn how **confidence, performance, and environment** intersect — and why this matters more than you might think.



MORE INFO:

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From page 32

Over the last decade, we've become increasingly convinced that long-term success isn't built by pursuing growth alone.

At IMD, we describe our philosophy as **Sustainable Excellence**.

It is built on two foundations.

The first is **Excellence**—delivering outstanding legal advice, exceptional client care and continually raising professional standards across every area of the firm.

The second is **Sustainability**—creating an environment where people can build long-term careers, supported by trust, flexibility, wellbeing and continuous development.

These are often presented as competing priorities.

Our experience has been the opposite.

When talented people are trusted, supported and able to do their best work, they deliver better outcomes for clients. Better outcomes build stronger relationships, attract increasingly sophisticated instructions and create sustainable long-term growth.

Growth becomes the outcome, not the objective.

That philosophy has shaped many of the decisions we've made over recent years, from introducing a firm-wide four-day working week at 100% salary and fully flexible remote working to continually investing in our people, technology and client experience.

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Over the last decade, we've become increasingly convinced that long-term success isn't built by pursuing growth alone.

Independent recognition has followed, including winning **Family Team of the Year** at the **Modern Law Awards 2026** and being recognised as one of **The Sunday Times Best Places to Work** for the third consecutive year.

While those achievements are hugely appreciated, they have never been the destination.

They simply provide reassurance that we are moving in the right direction.

As joint founders, we are incredibly proud of how far IMD has come over the last ten years.

More importantly, we are grateful to every member of our team who has contributed to that journey, as well as to our clients, professional contacts and everyone who has placed their trust in us.

Looking back, what once felt almost unimaginable has gradually become reality.

Looking ahead, we genuinely believe we're only just getting started.

[Click for more info](#)



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JMW achieves profit increase and invests £10m in new flagship Manchester offices, 125 Deansgate

[JMW](#) has announced its financial results for the year 2025/26: the firm achieved a 4% uplift in revenues, with turnover up from £94m in 2024/25 to £98m in the year to 30 April 2026.

The firm, which has offices in Manchester, London and Liverpool, achieved £18m net profit, up from £17m of 2024-25. Chris Sutton, Managing Partner, said the increase reflected the excellent standard of work delivered to the firm's clients, maintaining year-on-year financial growth even as the firm made a £10m investment in its new flagship Manchester offices, 125 Deansgate.

JMW signed a 15-year lease with Worthington Mancap LLP and now occupies the top four floors of the Grade A landmark Manchester building - which counts No 10 North as a close neighbour - uniting its Manchester workforce, previously split across two separate buildings, in the 42,260 sq. ft. Category A fit-out offices.

During the last financial year, many departments across the firm saw an increase in revenue, and a new offering, JMW Signature, was launched, a bespoke service reflective of the growing amount of work the firm has been doing in the Family Offices and high net worth space, spanning both corporate and private client activities.

JMW's Corporate team enjoyed a stand-out year, with the average size of transactions growing significantly, resulting in an overall deal value of circa £600m. The IP and Commercial team brought in a significant number of high profile clients, including Manchester City Football Club, Whitehouse Leisure, Warwickshire County Cricket Club, The Energy Desk and Home Instead. The firm's Real Estate Commercial team further cemented its reputation as one of the region's most in-demand teams, advising on the acquisition, for £19.5M, of Manchester Business Park, and advising on the £120m Durham city centre project, Milburngate.



Chris Sutton

Chris said: "Across all three of our offices we have not only retained our valued clients but attracted many new ones, which is testament to the depth and breadth of talent within the firm. Our people remain our greatest asset and the driving force behind our outstanding record of growth."

Solicitors take on Peak District's highest abseil for Greater Manchester youth charity

[Olliers Solicitors](#) is preparing to take on a 100ft charity abseil in support of Greater Manchester Youth Network (GMYN).

Olliers is fundraising for the charity as part of a landmark three-year partnership aimed at keeping neurodivergent young people out of the criminal justice system.

Olliers' managing director Matthew Cloughton will lead his team and partners from GMYN in free-hanging 100 ft above a gorge at Millers Dale Viaduct in the Peak District on September 5. The Manchester-headquartered criminal defence specialists are taking on one of the country's most dramatic abseils to raise funds for the [Seen, Heard, Diverted campaign](#).

The campaign, launched in partnership with GMYN, aims to raise £30,000 over three years to build a prevention pathway for neurodivergent children who come into contact with the youth justice system. Research shows that around 80% of children cautioned or sentenced in UK courts are neurodivergent, despite neurodivergent people making up only 15% of the general population.

Matthew Cloughton said: "Every day, our team sees vulnerable young people fall foul of a system that simply doesn't understand them - sensory meltdowns mistaken for aggression, difficulty with eye contact read as defiance rather than what it actually is.

"This isn't a youth crime wave. It's a systemic failure to understand neurodivergence, and it's criminalising vulnerability instead of addressing it.

"The abseil is a small thing compared to



(L-R) Matthew Cloughton, Ruth Peters and Stacey Mabrouk

what these young people go through, but every pound raised gets us closer to building something that actually changes their outcomes."

Seen, Heard, Diverted will fund a three-strand delivery model across all 10 Greater Manchester local authorities, providing rights-awareness training and safe activity spaces for young people, support toolkits and coaching for parents and carers, and training for police officers, solicitors and magistrates to help prevent behaviour being misread and de-escalate crisis points before they lead to criminalisation.

The abseil follows the firm's completion of the Tatton Park 10k in July, part of a wider programme of fundraising activity Olliers has committed to over the life of the partnership, alongside firm funding and time spent mentoring young people directly.

To support the campaign, visit the JustGiving page [here](#).

Manchester Young Lawyers' Wellbeing Initiatives

At [Manchester Young Lawyers](https://manchesterlawsociety.org.uk/young-lawyers/), we're always looking for ways to create opportunities for our members to connect, develop and enjoy being part of the wider legal community. Whilst our calendar includes a range of networking, social and educational events, we also recognise the importance of making space for activities that support wellbeing alongside professional development.

Working in the legal profession can often be fast-paced, with long days and competing priorities making it easy for exercise, rest and time away from work to take a back

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A key part of Manchester Young Lawyers is creating spaces where people can build genuine connections

seat. We wanted to create an event that encourages members to step away from their usual routines, try something different and enjoy a chance to reset in a relaxed environment. Pilates is a great way to do this. It combines movement, strength, flexibility and mindfulness, making it an activity that can be enjoyed by everyone, whether you already practise regularly or are completely new to it.

As part of our Health & Wellbeing calendar, we have recently organised a Pilates morning at RESET Manchester, sponsored by CapeClarke. The event was aimed at giving members the opportunity to take some time away from the demands of busy working lives and focus on something that benefits both physical and mental wellbeing. The session provided an opportunity for our members to take part in an instructor-led mat Pilates class, before coming together afterwards for coffee and breakfast. It was a fabulous event bringing together members for something a bit different to the usual networking events, and a great way to start the day!



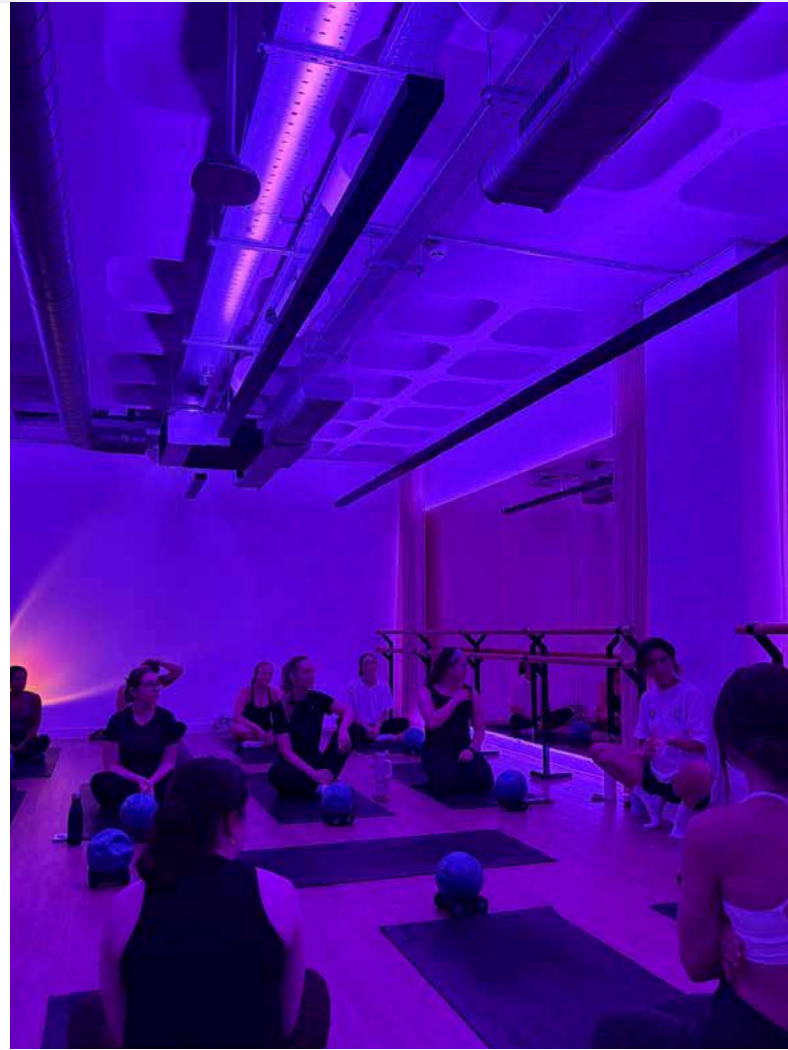


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As part of our Health & Wellbeing calendar, we have recently organised a Pilates morning at RESET Manchester

A key part of Manchester Young Lawyers is creating spaces where people can build genuine connections. While traditional networking events are a great way to meet new people, we also believe that some of the strongest relationships are built through shared experiences and spending time together outside of the usual work environment. Events like this offer a different way for members to connect, get to know each other and become more involved in the MYL community.

The Pilates session is just one part of our wider Health & Wellbeing programme, and we're looking forward to continuing to introduce initiatives that support our members in different ways throughout the year. Alongside our professional and social events, we hope to create a range of events that reflect the diverse interests of our members and provides opportunities for everyone to get involved. We're about to re-start our Run Club series, off the back of our very popular winter series sponsored by MJN Legal Recruitment. We are now bringing



this back for Summer / Autumn, making the most of out of the lovely weather and light nights.

Our Health and Well-Being directors, Beka, Matt and Kate have lots of exciting events in the pipeline including 5-a-side football, Padel and wellbeing sessions focused on de-compressing and de-stressing, something which is so important when working in this industry.

We're excited to welcome members to the session and continue building a supportive, connected and engaged community for young lawyers across Manchester.

For more information about their events, please head to their webpage [here](#) and be sure to follow them on Instagram [@mcryounglawyers](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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Continued on page 42

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International Equal Pay Day: The hidden cost of unequal pay

When lawyers think about equal pay, conversations will often start with legislation and end in litigation. Employment lawyers, naturally, focus on legal rights, compliance obligations and the prospect of a tribunal claim. Yet the greatest cost of unequal pay may never appear in a judgment: it may be found in lost talent, reduced engagement and missed opportunities.

International Equal Pay Day, observed on 18 September, highlights the continuing gap between what women and men are paid and serves as a reminder that pay inequality reflects wider issues, including opportunity, representation and caring responsibilities.

Gender pay inequality remains a persistent global issue. Women are paid less than men across all regions, with the global gap commonly estimated at around 20%. This has long-term consequences for financial independence, career progression and retirement income.

At its core, equal pay means that men and women should receive equal remuneration for the same work, or for different work that is objectively assessed as being of equal value.

The International Labour Organization emphasises that closing the pay gap requires action beyond individual pay



Photo by Mathieu Stern on Unsplash

decisions. Measures such as tackling discrimination, improving access to leadership opportunities, supporting a fairer distribution of caring responsibilities and increasing pay transparency all have a role to play.



Women are paid less than men across all regions, with the global gap commonly estimated at around 20%

While International Equal Pay Day focuses on pay equality globally, closer to home fairness around pay remains an issue for UK legal employers. Law360's 2025 *Review of Gender Pay Gap at UK Law Firms* showed an average gap of 26%. Importantly, a gender pay gap does not necessarily indicate unequal pay. It measures the difference in average earnings between all men and all women across an organisation.

The gender pay gap is typically driven by structural factors rather than a single cause. Common contributors include the under-representation of women in senior roles, occupational segregation, the impact of caring responsibilities and part-time working. Addressing the gender pay gap therefore requires organisations to consider recruitment, retention, progression, reward and workplace culture, not simply pay levels alone.

Both equal pay and the gender pay gap relate to fairness of employee remuneration and have some proposed solutions in common. Pay transparency is often regarded as one tool that can help organisations identify and address both issues. While many law firms have

made great strides on flexible working to improve employees' work-life balance, pay transparency for experienced lawyers remains limited. While many firms publicise NQ salaries, pay for more experienced lawyers often remains opaque. Yet it's typically at these stages of a career that parental and caring responsibilities may have the greatest impact on progression and remuneration. Without transparency, individuals may struggle to identify disparities and organisations may find it harder to demonstrate that pay decisions are objective and fair.

Consequences of unequal pay extend beyond balance sheets and judgments. Perceived unfairness in pay may cause a talented associate to move elsewhere or an experienced lawyer to quietly disengage. It's difficult to quantify the opportunities lost when talented people feel that their contribution is not recognised fairly, but in a profession built on relationships and trust, those losses can be impossible to ignore. Similarly, the factors contributing to a significant gender pay gap may inform individual career decisions so these issues should be, at the very least, identified and understood by management.

Tackling unequal pay and closing the gender pay gap supports more inclusive workplaces, helps organisations make better use of talent and contributes to wider social and economic development. For law firms competing for talent and adapting to rapid change, perceptions of fairness may be among their most valuable assets.

International Equal Pay Day provides an opportunity to consider the broader impact of fairness in the workplace. As a profession that regularly advises clients on fairness, governance and risk management, the legal sector has an opportunity to lead by example when it comes to pay equity.



Cultural Competence in Practice: Working Effectively with Muslim Clients

According to the 2021 Census conducted by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) there were approximately 3.9 million Muslims in England and Wales. This represents 6.5% of the total population (up from 4.9%, 2.7 million, re 2011 Census). These figures have increased since.

As solicitors, our services extend to clients from all different backgrounds. Our quality of service across the board is not only routinely considered against, but exceeds the very highest standard of professionalism and client care. As solicitors, the SRA Code of Conduct describes the standards of professionalism that the SRA and the public expect of individuals authorised to provide legal services. This includes Rule 3.4 of the Code of Conduct where it states, *"You consider and*

take account of your client's attributes, needs and circumstances."

We live in an ethnically rich and diverse society, where many of our clients have their own distinct cultural background, religious traditions and often language. These differences are present in each one of our clients and form part of their very own unique code of values. This begs the question as to whether, our legal services and client care should incorporate a practice of respect, tolerance and understanding of our client's religious and cultural values. Demonstrating a high level of cultural competence and insight, may very well provide you with a distinctive human touch to new and prospective clients, and distinguish you from other practitioners in our highly competitive industry. We say that knowing the law is one thing, *(but most likely this is presumed or expected)* but knowing your client's core values, breeds confidence and trust in you, and that can be a unique selling point.

This article specifically focuses on some of the cultural nuances and religious beliefs relevant to dealing with Muslim clients. As a starting point, it is important to acknowledge the pressure on solicitors, to know everything. Sadly, we do not. This article aims to help provide helpful information which can help avoid making inaccurate assumptions.

Understanding what some Muslim clients may value in their legal representative

To help understand the importance of cultural competence, we have considered

Bilal Hussain



some of the matters that Muslim clients may look for when instructing solicitors:

1. *Understand Islamic principles – especially in areas like family law, wills, and finance where Sharia compliance is important.*
2. *Share cultural or religious values, which can foster trust and ease of communication.*
3. *Are familiar with Islamic legal concepts such as Mehr, Islamic wills, or Sharia-compliant mortgages*

The **Law Society** and **Bar Council** have also noted a growing number of Muslim solicitors in the UK, reflecting both demand and diversity in the profession. In addition to offering legal expertise, it would seem there is a requirement (and benefit) to demonstrating **cultural sensitivity** and **respect for religious considerations**.

For the above reasons, there is little surprise to hear that many law firms are now offering services tailored to Muslim clients including Sharia compliant legal advice.

Cultural nuances

- Avoid Assumptions

Fail to prepare, prepare to fail. Firstly, we should avoid making inaccurate assumptions based on name and ethnicity. The best way to avoid this (and a potentially awkward situation) is to ask open-ended questions.

Muslims in the UK are a diverse group and come from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. While there is a common misconception that most Muslims are Arab, the latest data shows that the majority in England and Wales are from

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Muslims in the UK are a diverse group and come from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds

South Asian communities, with significant representation from Arab, African, White, and Mixed ethnic groups. When advising clients, it is important not to make assumptions and to ask whether a client is Muslim and whether any religious practices should be considered when preparing legal advice.

- Your first client meeting

This is your first opportunity to build a rapport with your client. First impressions count. I was recently in awe of a White British colleague, who I had seen take a few minutes to Google search and practice the verbal greeting for meeting a Muslim client. This is “*Salam Alaikum*” which means “*Peace be upon you.*” He politely asked me if he was pronouncing this correctly. I was astonished by his level of respect and sincerity. I am sure his client would have felt the same way. I usually greet all of my Muslim clients with this verbal (and written) greeting, as it shows cultural understanding, which fosters trust and ease of communication.

- Ramadan

For some clients observing Ramadan, fasting may lead to fatigue or reduced energy levels, which could affect their availability or concentration. Being aware of this, and again, having open discussions

Continued on page 52



From page 51

with clients about what time of day they would like to be contacted and whether they would prefer not to be contacted can make a huge difference. Not only from a cultural perspective, but as lawyers from a due diligence perspective to ensure clients are fully able to take in any advice that is being provided. Furthermore, some clients who are observing Ramadan may prefer to avoid attending trial or giving evidence during fasting hours, depending on their individual circumstances. This can have detrimental consequences for the client if whilst observing Ramadan, they are unable to give their best evidence before the Court. It would be considered good practice to take these issues into consideration when providing the court with your trial availability and preparing your case for trial.

Again, throughout Ramadan, greetings are exchanged "*Ramadan Kareem*", "*Ramadan Mubarak*" and at the conclusion "*Eid Mubarak*". Being aware that clients may not want to receive legal emails, bills or meeting proposals during Eid is another way of ensuring the cultural understanding shines through.

- Opposite sexes

Verbal greetings and handshakes with the same sex are customary. However, where there is a meeting between men and women, who are not related, there may be specific cultural or religious boundaries to consider, depending on the individual client's beliefs and practices. For many Muslims, a large part of their religious practices and traditions, are rooted in modesty. It would be considered inappropriate to have any physical contact with non-family members and some may even keep minimal eye contact between genders. To avoid potentially causing

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Some clients who are observing Ramadan may prefer to avoid attending trial or giving evidence during fasting hours

offence, always ask open questions. If you are meeting a client at their home, check if they would be comfortable with holding a meeting between genders. Some may prefer the meeting to be held in a segregated area. Ask if a video conference call may be preferred? Ask whether your client would prefer having a chaperone / family member to support them during the client meeting.

Whilst this article does focus on Muslim clients specifically, it is important that we consider a range of faiths, cultures, backgrounds and ethnicities. As a solicitor, I strive to understand these cultural nuances both internally with my firm's own diversity group, IMRespect, and externally with guidance such as this being shared within the legal community.

-Applying a little perspective

As a spin off series to this article, I will be preparing my own perspectives and experiences of dealing with some of these cultural nuances in private practice which will follow this article.

Bilal Hussain

**Associate Solicitor – Serious Injury
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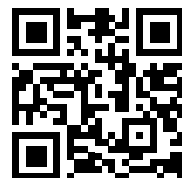
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Faith, reflection and renewal: Understanding the Jewish High Holy Days

Jewish communities around the world are preparing for one of the most significant periods in the Jewish calendar. Beginning with Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and concluding with Simchat Torah, these festivals encompass reflection, repentance, forgiveness, gratitude and celebration. Together, they form a rich tapestry of traditions that have shaped Jewish life for millennia.

For those unfamiliar with Judaism, the period provides a fascinating insight into a faith whose customs continue to influence family life, community identity and spiritual practice across generations.

Rosh Hashanah: A new beginning

This year, Rosh Hashanah begins at sunset on 11 September 2026 and marks the start of the Jewish year 5787. Its name means “Head of the Year” and it is regarded as a time of renewal, reflection and hope. Unlike New Year celebrations in the secular calendar, Rosh Hashanah is characterised by contemplation as much as festivity. Jewish tradition teaches that it is a time to reflect on the past year, recognise shortcomings, express gratitude and consider how to live more meaningfully in the year ahead.

One of the most distinctive features of the festival is the sounding of the shofar, a ram’s horn whose powerful blast serves as a spiritual call to reflection and renewal. The sound has echoed through Jewish communities for centuries and remains one of the most evocative aspects of the festival. Congregants gather in synagogues for special services, and families come together for festive meals.



Andrea Cohen

Family gatherings and celebratory meals are central to the occasion. Traditional foods are steeped in symbolism. Apples dipped in honey are eaten as an expression of hope for a sweet year ahead, whilst round challah bread symbolises the cycle of life and continuity. Pomegranates, with their many seeds, are also frequently served as a symbol of abundance and blessing.

The Ten Days of Awe

The period between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is known as the Ten Days of Awe or the Ten Days of Repentance. During this time, Jews focus on self-examination, accountability and reconciliation.

A key concept is teshuvah, often translated as repentance, but more accurately understood as a process of return and renewal. Individuals are encouraged to repair relationships, seek forgiveness where appropriate and reflect honestly on their conduct.

This emphasis on personal responsibility and continual self-improvement has given the period a significance that many find resonates beyond purely religious practice.

Yom Kippur: The Day of Atonement

Ten days after Rosh Hashanah comes Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which begins on 20 September 2026 and ends on 21 September 2026. It is widely regarded as the holiest day in the Jewish calendar.

The day is observed through prayer, reflection and a 25-hour fast. Many observant Jews spend much of the day attending synagogue services, seeking forgiveness and contemplating the year that has passed.

The fast concludes with a moving service and a final blast of the shofar, signalling the close of the period of judgement and repentance. Although solemn in nature, Yom Kippur ultimately conveys a message of hope, renewal and the possibility of positive change.

Sukkot: Celebrating gratitude

Only a few days after Yom Kippur, the atmosphere changes dramatically with the arrival of Sukkot, which begins on the evening of 25 September 2026 and continues until 2 October 2026. Often called the Festival of Booths or Tabernacles, Sukkot is one of Judaism's most joyful celebrations.

The festival commemorates the forty years during which the Israelites journeyed through the wilderness following the Exodus from Egypt. To remember this experience, families build temporary structures known as sukkot, share meals within them and some people sleep in them.

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Jewish communities around the world are preparing for one of the most significant periods in the Jewish calendar

The sukkah serves as a reminder of both human vulnerability and gratitude for life's blessings. Decorated with greenery, fruit and lights, these temporary dwellings become places of hospitality, family gatherings and celebration.

Another well-known custom is the use during prayers of the lulav and etrog, comprising palm, willow and myrtle branches together with a citron fruit. These symbols are associated with thanksgiving and the harvest season.

Shemini Atzeret: An intimate gathering

Immediately following Sukkot is Shemini Atzeret, which begins on the evening of 2 October 2026. Although often associated with Sukkot, it is regarded as a distinct festival in its own right. In Hebrew, the name means “The Eighth Day of Assembly”.

Rabbinic tradition explains Shemini Atzeret through the metaphor of a host who, after entertaining guests for several days, asks them to remain for one additional day before departing. The festival is therefore often seen as a more intimate conclusion to the celebratory week of Sukkot, providing an opportunity to pause and reflect before returning to everyday life.

Continued on page 56



From page 55

In many communities, prayers for rain are introduced during Shemini Atzeret, recognising both humanity's dependence on the natural world and the agricultural origins of many Jewish festivals. The day retains a festive character but lacks some of the distinctive physical symbols of Sukkot, such as the sukkah and the lulav, creating a notable shift in tone from outward celebration to inward reflection.

An interesting distinction exists between observance in Israel and the Jewish Diaspora. In Israel, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are celebrated together on a single day, combining the themes of assembly, reflection and rejoicing in the Torah. Outside Israel, the festivals are generally observed over two separate days, with Shemini Atzeret observed first and Simchat Torah following immediately afterwards. This distinction arose from historical differences in calendar observance but remains an important feature of contemporary Jewish practice.

Simchat Torah: Rejoicing in learning

The festival season concludes with Simchat Torah, which begins on the evening of 3 October 2026 and ends on the evening of 4 October 2026. The name means "Rejoicing in the Torah" and marks the completion of the annual cycle of readings from the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible.

What makes Simchat Torah distinctive is its joyful character. In synagogues, congregations celebrate by singing, dancing and carrying Torah scrolls in processions around the synagogue. Children often take a prominent role in the festivities, reflecting the importance Judaism places on learning and passing traditions from one generation to the next.

“

Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah create a remarkable journey through some of the central themes of Jewish thought

Uniquely, the festival not only marks the end of the annual reading cycle but also the beginning of a new one. The final section of Deuteronomy is read and, immediately afterwards, the opening verses of Genesis are recited. The symbolism is powerful: learning is never truly complete, and every ending is also a new beginning.

A season of timeless themes

Taken together, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah create a remarkable journey through some of the central themes of Jewish thought: reflection, accountability, forgiveness, gratitude, community and the pursuit of learning.

In an increasingly busy and fast-paced world, these ancient festivals offer enduring reminders of the value of pausing to reflect, appreciating what we have, strengthening our relationships and embracing opportunities for renewal. It is perhaps for that reason that their messages continue to resonate far beyond the Jewish community and remain as relevant today as they have been for centuries.

Andrea Cohen
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International Day of Peace: Why it matters and its relevance to the legal industry

Every year on 21 September, people around the world observe the International Day of Peace, a day dedicated to strengthening the ideals of peace within and among nations. Established by the United Nations in 1981 and later designated as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, the event serves as a reminder that lasting peace requires cooperation, understanding, and a commitment to justice. While peace is often associated with diplomacy and international relations, its principles extend far beyond governments and conflict zones. The legal profession, in particular, plays a critical role in promoting and preserving peaceful societies.

The International Day of Peace was created to encourage individuals, communities, organisations, and nations to reflect on the importance of harmony and mutual respect. At its core, the day recognises that peace is not simply the absence of war. Genuine peace exists when people are able to live safely, exercise their rights, access fair treatment, and resolve disputes without violence or discrimination. Achieving this type of peace requires strong institutions, respect for the rule of law, and a shared commitment to equality and justice.

The legal industry is uniquely connected to these objectives. Law provides the framework through which societies establish order, protect freedoms, and resolve disagreements. Without effective legal systems, conflicts can escalate, trust in institutions can deteriorate, and individuals may struggle to obtain fair outcomes. By ensuring that laws are applied consistently

and impartially, legal professionals help create the stability that peaceful communities depend upon.

One of the most significant contributions of the legal sector to peace is the promotion of the rule of law. The rule of law ensures that individuals, organisations, and governments are accountable under the same legal standards. When laws are transparent, fairly enforced, and accessible, people are more likely to trust public institutions and seek legal remedies rather than resorting to confrontation or unlawful behaviour. In this way, lawyers, judges, legal advisers, and compliance professionals all play a part in preventing and resolving conflict.

The legal profession also supports peace through dispute resolution. Whether dealing with commercial disagreements, employment issues, family matters, or international disputes, legal practitioners help parties find structured and constructive solutions. Alternative dispute resolution methods, such as mediation and arbitration, are increasingly important because they encourage dialogue, compromise, and mutual understanding. These approaches reflect the spirit of the International Day of Peace by emphasising cooperation over conflict and fostering outcomes that preserve relationships wherever possible.

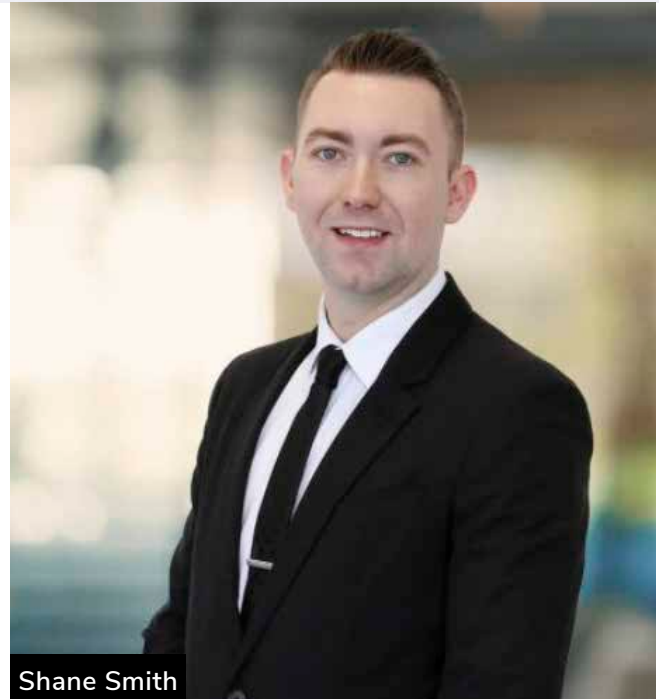
Another important connection between peace and the legal industry lies in the protection of human rights. Peaceful societies are built on the recognition and protection of fundamental rights, including

equality, freedom of expression, access to justice, and protection from discrimination. Legal professionals are often at the forefront of advocating for vulnerable individuals and ensuring that everyone has access to fair treatment under the law. By safeguarding these rights, the legal sector helps address the inequalities and injustices that can lead to social tensions and instability.

The International Day of Peace also encourages organisations to consider how they contribute to inclusive and respectful workplaces. Within the legal industry itself, fostering a culture of collaboration, diversity, and wellbeing is essential. Law firms and legal departments frequently operate in high-pressure environments where professionals must navigate complex issues and conflicting interests. Promoting respectful communication, ethical decision-making, and psychological safety can strengthen workplace relationships and support a more positive professional culture. These principles align closely with the broader objectives of peace, understanding, and mutual respect.

For those operating within the legal sector, the International Day of Peace provides an opportunity to reflect on their wider social impact. Firms may choose to support pro bono initiatives, community outreach programmes, access-to-justice projects, or educational activities that promote legal awareness. Such efforts can help reduce barriers to justice and strengthen community resilience. Even small actions, such as facilitating discussions about diversity, inclusion, and conflict resolution, can reinforce the values that underpin peaceful societies.

Ultimately, the International Day of Peace serves as a powerful reminder that peace is everyone's responsibility.



Shane Smith

While governments and international organisations play a crucial role, meaningful progress depends on the contributions of individuals and professionals across all sectors. For the legal industry, the pursuit of peace is deeply intertwined with the pursuit of justice. Through upholding the rule of law, protecting human rights, resolving disputes, and fostering trust in institutions, legal professionals help create environments where people can live and work safely and fairly.

As we mark the International Day of Peace, it is worth recognising that the legal profession's impact extends beyond courtrooms and our offices. Every effort to ensure fairness, accountability, and equal access to justice contributes to a more peaceful society. In this sense, the legal industry is not only a guardian of the law but also a vital partner in building a more stable, inclusive, and peaceful world for future generations.

Shane Smith

Associate Solicitor, Slater and Gordon Lawyers

Chair of MLS's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee



National Inclusion Week 2026

Jonathan Fogerty, senior associate at CFG (Cheadle) shares with us his thoughts on National Inclusion Week 2026 and what we can all do to increase inclusivity in the workplace.

This year National Inclusion Week 2026 will take place from 14 to 20 September.

This annual campaign is organised by Inclusive Employers, and it encourages workplaces and communities across the United Kingdom to celebrate inclusion and turn positive intentions into meaningful action. The theme for 2026 is *"Build Trust. Navigate Change."*

So, let's take a moment to step back, and think, what does 'inclusion' mean because surely only by understanding that will we make real change.

To me, inclusion means creating an environment where everyone feels respected, valued and able to participate. It involves recognising that people have different skills, backgrounds, identities, abilities, experiences and ways of thinking.

A genuinely inclusive organisation does more than welcome these differences – it removes barriers and ensures that everyone has a fair opportunity to contribute and succeed.

Let me give you a real example of inclusion at its best.

Sir Ludwig Guttmann, 'Poppa' a man many of you will not have heard of, was a Jewish, German-born neurologist who transformed opportunities for people with spinal cord injuries. After fleeing Nazi Germany, before the outbreak of the second world war, he

Jonathan Fogerty



worked at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. His patients were injured men – paraplegics – from the battlefields of Europe and he believed sport could rebuild their strength, confidence, and independence.

In 1948, he organised the Stoke Mandeville Games for wheelchair using athletes, held alongside the London Olympics. The competition grew internationally, welcoming athletes from other countries in 1952. In 1960, the first official Paralympic Games were held in Rome.

Guttmann's pioneering work helped change attitudes toward disability and established a global sporting movement celebrating courage, skill, equality, and achievement for athletes around the world today. His vision proved that disability did not prevent excellence. Today, the Paralympics unite thousands of competitors, inspire millions of spectators, and promote inclusion across society. Guttmann is therefore remembered not only as a doctor, but also as the founder of one of the world's most important international sporting traditions ever. Thank you, Poppa, for a real example of inclusion!

Back to the workplace. For me, trust is at the heart of inclusion. People are more likely to share their ideas, ask questions and raise concerns when they believe they will be treated fairly. Trust also helps individuals feel comfortable being themselves instead of hiding their experiences or their identity.

However, trust only develops when leaders listen carefully, communicate honestly and respond consistently. It also depends on everyday behaviour. Inviting quieter people into conversations, respecting different perspectives, challenging discrimination and making information accessible are all practical ways to build it.

“

National Inclusion Week provides an opportunity to begin important conversations, but inclusion should continue all year round.

Trust is especially important during periods of change. New technology, changing working practices and wider social pressures can make people feel uncertain. If decisions are made without explanation or consultation, some groups may feel ignored.

Inclusive leadership means involving the people affected, listening to their concerns and explaining decisions clearly.

National Inclusion Week provides an opportunity to begin important conversations, but inclusion should continue all year round.

Why not use the week to review current practices and identify areas where improvement is needed.

Why not start discussions about belonging, inviting speakers to share different experiences and asking people what would make their environment more inclusive.

Review the accessibility of buildings, websites and communications or examine whether opportunities really are distributed fairly.

Continued on page 62

AUGUST 2026



From page 61

Listening exercises can be particularly valuable, but only if they are followed by action. People quickly lose trust if they repeatedly share concerns without seeing any response.

Above all, take practical action that creates meaningful progress.

Everyone has a role; although managers have a responsibility for creating inclusive cultures, everyone can contribute.

Inclusion is everybody's role; make simple choices: pronouncing somebody's name correctly, avoiding assumptions, respect different opinions and ensuring that nobody is regularly excluded from activities or decisions.

Being inclusive also requires a willingness to learn. People sometimes make mistakes or use language that unintentionally causes offence.

And remember, treating everyone identically does not always produce fairness. Some people may need reasonable adjustments, accessible materials, flexible arrangements or additional support to participate fully.

Providing these measures is not an unfair advantage – it just helps remove barriers that others may not face.

“

When people listen to one another, act fairly and take responsibility for removing barriers, they build environments in which more people can belong and thrive

So, what National Inclusion Week does is reminds us that inclusion is more than a one-off event. Yes, a themed week can attract attention and inspire new ideas, but lasting progress depends on what happens afterwards.

The message behind *“Build Trust. Navigate Change.”* is both timely and practical. Change is unavoidable, but exclusion is not. When people listen to one another, act fairly and take responsibility for removing barriers, they build environments in which more people can belong and thrive.

National Inclusion Week is therefore not only a celebration of diversity. It is a call to create stronger workplaces and communities - places where every person is heard, respected and given the opportunity to contribute; very much like Guttman did, don't you think?

Jonathan Fogerty is a Senior Associate at CFG; where he can be contacted at.

He is wheelchair user after a spinal cord injury as a teenager. He practises personal injury law with many of his clients sustaining catastrophic, life changing injuries. He grumbles a lot, generally to anybody who will listen and tries – and fails - to contribute regularly to social media articles of interest.



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Serious injury specialist Matt Brown says move to Hudgells is ‘perfect fit’ as he takes on national leadership role

Highly-experienced serious injury specialist Matt Brown feels [Hudgell Solicitors](#)’ dedication to ‘doing the right thing by people’ makes it a ‘perfect fit’ for him as he embarks on a new chapter in his career.

Having carved out a stellar reputation in catastrophic injury litigation over the past 29 years, he joins Hudgells as National Head of Serious Injury, working out of the firm’s Manchester office – and he says there was much that attracted him to his new employer.

“This felt right from the get-go, to be honest, a perfect fit, as Hudgells do the right thing by people,” he said.

“It reminds me of why I wanted to be a solicitor in the first place. Fighting the good fight. It might sound clichéd, but that’s what drew me to law right at the beginning.

“Another huge attraction to Hudgells for me was that they don’t dilly-dally. Because of the structure and the size, they’re able to be nimble and make quick decisions and focus on what clients need.”

Matt began his legal career when he joined a large national firm in 1997 as a trainee. Developing his expertise in the field of personal injury, he qualified in 1999, became an Associate in 2004 and a Partner in 2010.

An APIL accredited Senior Litigator, he is also a member of the Law Society Personal Injury Panel and the Training and Education Group of BABICM (the British Association of Brain Injury and Complex Case Management).

He also sits on the management committee of Headway Salford and has secured repeated high-ranking recognition in Legal 500 and Chambers and Partners, the legal sector’s leading legal guides.

‘Dealing with real people, making a genuine difference’

Matt’s caseload typically sees him representing clients in high-value head and spinal injury claims, along with complex orthopaedic injuries and amputations, and it’s a job he says he takes great satisfaction from.

“I knew from an early stage that I wasn’t the type of lawyer who’d enjoy battling over contractual disputes or acting for multi-millionaires in property transactions. I wanted to deal with real people, tackle

Matt Brown



real problems, and genuinely make a difference," he said.

"In all too many cases, the insurer's attitude to clients is that they're just a number on a ledger. In those situations, people really need someone in their corner.

"There's something about helping the underdog. The whole David and Goliath thing. Without that, there would be a segment of society who would be at real risk of being let down.

"It's about being able to make a tangible difference to people who genuinely need it. I've got friends who work in corporate practice in London who would argue what they do makes a tangible difference. And maybe it does, but not in the same way.

"The real gratification is at the end of a case when the client says, 'we wouldn't have got here without you'. That's just the best possible thing you can hear. It's another cliché, but things like that have always been my reason to keep getting out of bed on a Monday morning.

"It's the difference between someone having a really quite miserable existence and making a situation more tolerable. I've drawn a huge amount of satisfaction from being able to turn a dreadful situation into something more tolerable for the client and their family."

Appointment reflects firm's growth in serious injury

Rachel Di Clemente, Chief Executive of Hudgell Solicitors, said Matt's recruitment will support the firm's unprecedented growth in serious injury work and its commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for clients.

“

The real gratification is at the end of a case when the client says, 'we wouldn't have got here without you'

"I am fiercely proud of exceptional team of serious injury lawyers we already have at Hudgells, so any senior appointment has to add to that strength in the right way," she said.

"It's always a balance: you want to embrace positive change, but you also want to protect the strong, intimate, supportive culture that makes the team so special.

"Matt stood out straight away. After a few chats over a cup of tea, it took me a surprisingly short time to realise that Matt was exactly the kind of person we wanted to bring into the team.

"He is recognised as one of the strongest operators in the field because of his track record of securing the best possible rehabilitation and settlements for his clients.

"Many of our team know Matt well having worked with him previously. He supports his clients with compassion and approaches each and every case with complete professionalism.

"Most importantly, he is someone who shares our values: fiercely committed, down to earth and not afraid to stick his neck out to do the right thing."



North west employee-owned law firm Myerson appoints Richard Lloyd as Chief Executive

[Myerson Solicitors](#) has appointed Richard Lloyd as Chief Executive, with current CEO Carl Newton becoming non-executive Chair of the Board. The appointments mark the next stage in the evolution of Manchester's first 100% employee-owned law firm.

Richard takes up the role on 1st September after 26 years with Myerson. Having led the firm's Commercial Property team before becoming Chief Operating Officer in 2019, he has worked alongside Carl for more than two decades, helping to shape Myerson's strategy, drive operational excellence and support its transition to employee ownership.

Richard will lead the firm's strategic direction and day-to-day operations, while Carl, as Chair of the Board, will oversee governance, safeguard the purpose and integrity of Myerson's Employee Ownership

Trust (EOT) and continue to champion the firm's core values.

Today, Myerson ranks among the UK's Top 200 law firms and has established itself as one of the North West's leading independent legal practices. Founded in 1982 and based in Altrincham, the firm advises businesses and individuals across the UK and internationally. Employing around 165 people and generating annual revenues of more than £19 million, the firm's growth has been achieved entirely organically. In 2024, it became Manchester's first 100% employee-owned law firm, reinforcing its long-term commitment to independence, sustainable growth and investment in its people.

Richard Lloyd commented: "I am incredibly proud to become Chief Executive after 26 years with Myerson. Together, we have

Pannone makes raft of promotions in Manchester team

[Pannone Corporate](#) has promoted eight people across its Manchester-based team.

Stephen Mutch has been promoted to Associate Partner in the firm's employment team. Stephen joined Pannone in 2003 as a trainee solicitor and supports HR professionals across all aspects of employment law, including disciplinary and grievance matters, contractual disputes and Employment Tribunal claims.

Alongside Stephen, Gemma O'Brien and James Brandwood have been made

Directors in the dispute resolution and real estate teams respectively.

Catherine Ossai (corporate), Bradley Davies (dispute resolution), and Emily Lockwood, who is also in the firm's dispute resolution team, have all been promoted to Associates.

They are joined by Marlie Collette and Yulia Livesey, who have been made Foreign Lawyer (Associates) in the corporate and real estate teams.

Paul Jonson, senior partner at Pannone,



Left to Right: Carl Newton, Chair of the Board, Myerson; Richard Lloyd, Chief Executive, Myerson

built a successful business with exceptional people, trusted client relationships and a culture rooted in our core values.

The future is exciting. We have ambitious plans to continue growing Myerson as one of the UK's leading independent law firms. As an employee-owned business, we are free to invest for the long term, attracting the very best talent, delivering exceptional service for our clients, making a positive contribution to our communities, and creating a responsible and sustainable business for the future."

Carl Newton has served as Chief Executive since 2005, making him one of the longest serving Managing Partners in the North West legal market. During his 21-year tenure, he has led Myerson through a period of sustained organic growth, transforming the firm from a £5 million practice into a £19 million business while earning national recognition for its legal expertise and award-winning workplace culture.

Carl Newton said: "Leading Myerson over the past 21 years has been the greatest privilege of my professional career. Watching the firm grow into the business it is today has been an incredible journey.

This leadership transition reflects the strength and depth we have built over many years. I am excited to continue supporting the firm as Chair of the Board, helping to safeguard our employee-owned structure and ensuring Myerson continues to thrive for the benefit of our people, our clients and future generations."

commented: "The latest round of promotions are thoroughly deserved, with each lawyer demonstrating passion, collaboration, and a commitment to delivering a client-focused service in each of their roles.

"Our team sits at the heart of the firm, helping to bring our commercially minded and entrepreneurial approach into everything we do. We recruit based on technical excellence and emotional intelligence. As a result, we have a group of highly talented people who enjoy working together and with our broad range of clients."

The promotions follow the appointment of five lawyers across employment and real



estate earlier this year. Naomi Goldsmith, Julie Sabba, Frances Smith and Holly Spokes, all joined the employment team, alongside Zoe Tempest in real estate.

Nicola Clarke has also recently joined the employment team as a senior associate from Glaisyers.

Management Matters

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



This Month

- IT added value – includes AI that works and AI that doesn't
- Some essential added values
 - Some distressed recruitment methodologies
 - Some recent added value suggestions at the right time
 - WBT – value – asset and revenue, client satisfaction – proper service
 - Forsyte – risk assessment/compliance/regulation/money
 - Lexidesk – conversion of enquiries/value/satisfaction
- Outsourcing considerations
- Compliance consideration

Over the last few months, we have written a lot about the management of law firms with responsibilities needed to be taken by all in a firm - from performance, compliance, profitability, working capital management, risk, business development, conversion of enquiries and client satisfaction, return on investment.

Clarity of strategy, performance, recovery, and exploitation have to be owned by certainly key participants in a firm.

The management, development and acquisition of staff is also key – as that is where so much performance comes from and we need to acquire, develop and hang on to the right people.

AI is beginning to help many firms with all of the potential added value – knowledge, communication, information and so on. As you will see later, there are some key added value activities that are beginning to benefit from the right IT support.

• Distressed Recruitment Methodology

The reality is, however, an area where law firms are generally struggling is in the acquisition of new and necessary staff, as well as their development and motivation to stay of key stars. During August, there has been a lot of publicity where AI is being used and with a very negative affect. Even dismissing applications through gender, age and ethnicity definitions.

I have reviewed this with [Peter Manners](#), a very experienced consultant and recruiter within the legal sector.

He says, "The rapid integration of AI into recruitment is fuelling friction between law firms and agencies, with candidates using AI to create inflated, highly tailored CVs that mask poor skills, causing trust issues and reputational damage to recruiters. Simultaneously, firms using AI screening tools have been found to be filtering out qualified candidates through rigid algorithms and encountering severe bias as they lack the human view and client values highlighted by cases like the [The iTutorGroup EEOC Settlement](#). While not a law firm, this landmark case set the ultimate legal precedent for recruitment software. The company's automated hiring software was caught automatically rejecting female applicants over 55 and male applicants over 60. The EEOC forced a \$365,000 settlement.

As Peter says – law firms are being inundated with some AI generated CVs directly or through recruitment companies, causing a great deal of friction. Excellent candidates, some picked by good agencies, get rejected because of AI methodologies.

• The fundamental minimum

This is an area where there is a lot of merit in going back to real basics – unfortunately,



even before AI not necessarily being used by all firms as a whole or by department.

- Hopefully we have our three year business strategy being reviewed every year
- Hopefully year 1 becomes the firm's budget for the year
- This is then reviewed every month by the department so that actions about recovery or exploitation of opportunities are being made
- Staff performance is being fairly reviewed and communicated well regularly and expectations from management are clear
- Assuming performance is okay, staff retention and people development is high on the agenda. Not just dependent on the annual appraisal, but also the following development programme
- Staff believe in the firm's image
- Above all it is essential that people are interviewed across all the necessary criteria:
- Job profile (performance)
 - Candidate profile (often unfortunately forgotten). What we are looking for:
 - Personal profile – background experience
 - Communication skills
 - Intellectual skills
 - Management skills
 - Objectives and ambitions and motivation
 - Emotional factors – commitment, timing, geography

Can we check that this basic is in place and is part of annual appraisals in order to develop our staff into being key performers?

Some recent Added value options beginning to have an impact

In July and August, I have made mention of some added value options including the use of AI but also the integration with existing software.

The firm's management team would really benefit from reviewing these options.

As discussed in the [August Management Matters](#) and [July Management Matters](#), this newer technology is beginning to break through

• WBT

Certainly moving forward with more and more firms seeing the added value benefit available in their Will Bank. [WBT](#) brings client support and satisfaction, as well as added value from value of the cleansed database from asset to revenue. Plus, [ShareSmart Ltd](#) is really sorting out secure communication with clients.

[Rowlinsons](#) have signed up for the solution plus a few others – so a take-off is underway.

Another firm, [mlplaw](#), is a declared ambitious, multi-service firm that has set out to use technology as a genuine point of difference — not simply to modernise for its own sake, but to give its people more time and its clients a better experience. That ambition has shaped an evolving programme of work with WBT, spanning approach - digitisation, data and practice management systems, and digitising MLP Law's physical Wills store into a secure, accessible digital record. Also, working

Continued on page 70



From page 69

within the firm's PMS to improve the quality and usefulness of existing client data.

Objective - Secure, digital access to historic Wills, removing much of the manual burden of physical storage and retrieval. A stronger, more usable foundation of client data within PMS to support day-to-day work. Increased capacity for MLP Law's teams to focus on client service, and a clear roadmap for further technology-led improvement.

• Forsyte

Forsyte: Utilisation of the latest technology including AI, enabling the evaluation of risk potential across the firm and activities with compliance and regulation risk, as well a business performance. 40 law firms have already signed up and many more in the pipeline. One includes a new firm into Manchester [Ison Harrison Solicitors](#) with c450 staff in 20 offices – mainly Yorkshire based. It is employee owned.

Dan Kenworthy, who is the lead partner for IT Innovation, says he "would recommend Forsyte to any firm that is serious about getting a proper handle on risk and compliance."

• Lexidesk

I have for many years gone on about how important the handling of in-bound calls – many enquiries about services and from working with firms have a lot of evidence of those not taking it seriously achieving a conversion rate of only about 20% whereas those taking it seriously achieving a 65% conversion rate. If you get say 500 enquiries a month – the difference is 100 a month compared to 325 and say just £500 per file £160,000 outstripping £50,000. Over 12 months – nearly £2million compared to £600k. Certainly covering the cost of business development, generating GP and

cash and providing the right image about the firm.

Offering the latest technology support [Lexidesk](#) is with us. Achieving the conversion rates and even 70% plus conversions when the system is back to the prospect within 10 minutes. The recording of communications and data is invaluable.

Manchester, Birmingham and London based solicitors [IMD Solicitors](#) are advocates of the solution. There is even a case study, which can be read [here](#), supported by the managing partner Marcin Durlak.

Outsourcing

Going forward over the next month or so, I will be doing further research into another potential added value, and that is adding outsourced resource to businesses to maintain and enhance performance. This can include so much from skilled lawyers, part time resource for legal, financial advice from accountancy teams – profit/working capital/investment, Accounting – all or part where skills and resources are essential (whole thing or just client accounts), the right management information, business development programmes, document production, inbound calls handling and enquiry management, staff training and development, compliance and regulation.

Potential early warning for smaller firms – [Brian Rogers' post on COLP/COFA changes](#) shows the need to be alert.

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



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Former Law Society President highlights need to support solicitors to thrive in the profession

Former Law Society President Dr I. Stephanie Boyce CBE has called for greater attention to the pressures affecting solicitors from different backgrounds, after figures discussed in the latest episode of The Legal Pause showed a disproportionate number of Black solicitors seeking support from The Solicitors' Charity.

While around 3% of solicitors are Black across the profession, Black solicitors represented 15% of new people approaching The Solicitors' Charity for support in 2025.

In the episode, Dr Boyce describes the figures as concerning and says they should encourage further discussion about the

barriers affecting who enters, progresses and thrives within the profession.

She said: "We as a profession have to ask ourselves what is going on, and what we should be doing."

The comments feature in Episode 8 of The Legal Pause, titled "Breaking Barriers, Opening Doors and Supporting Wellbeing in Law."

Hosted by Nick Gallagher, CEO of The Solicitors' Charity, the episode explores Dr Boyce's journey into law, the barriers she faced, the persistence that shaped her career and the leadership lessons she learned along the way.

Legal
Pause
PODCAST



I. Stephanie
Boyce, CBE

Chair
The Solicitors' Charity

Dr Boyce made history as the first person of colour to serve as President of the Law Society of England and Wales. She held the role for 19 months during an exceptional period shaped by the pandemic, Brexit and wider international unrest.

During the episode, she reflects on the importance of listening, adaptability and humility in leadership, as well as the determination required to reach the presidency after three previous rejections.

The discussion also considers why improving access to law is only part of the challenge. Dr Boyce argues that the profession must also focus on helping people remain, progress and thrive once they are in it.

She said: "Having done so much work getting people in, it is not enough just to stop there. We need to help people be sustained in our profession and thrive in our profession."

The episode also explores redundancy and the impact of unexpected firm closures, with both Dr Boyce and Nick Gallagher reflecting on their own experiences of being made redundant.

Now Chair of The Solicitors' Charity, Dr Boyce shares her ambition for the organisation to become the "go-to" charity for everyone in the profession.

The Solicitors' Charity provides confidential, non-judgemental support across emotional, physical, professional and financial wellbeing. The episode explores how redundancy, financial pressure, career uncertainty, discrimination and mental or physical ill health can affect solicitors at different stages of legal life.

“

Having done so much work getting people in, it is not enough just to stop there. We need to help people be sustained in our profession and thrive in our profession

Nick Gallagher said: "Stephanie's experience brings together two important conversations for the profession. We need to continue removing barriers to access and progression, while also making sure that people already working in law have the support they need to stay and thrive.

"The figures discussed in this episode deserve greater attention. They raise important questions about who is seeking support and what more we can do, collectively, to ensure that help is visible, accessible and available when it is needed."

The episode concludes with a direct message to solicitors who may be reluctant to seek help. Dr Boyce emphasises that support from The Solicitors' Charity is impartial, confidential and non-judgemental, and that starting a conversation can be an important first step in resolving a problem.

The Legal Pause – Episode 8 is available now on all major streaming platforms.
[Listen 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.

The Long Vacation is three weeks old but the judgment pickings are by no means thin this month, even though the High Court is on holiday. On the last day of term, the Court of Appeal handed down an important judgment involving the Small Claims Track. In [Orton v Barclays Bank UK Plc](#) [2026] EWCA Civ 1025, the Court of Appeal dealt with the costs consequences where a mis-selling claim of payment protection insurance proceeding in the Small Claims Track, had been discontinued very shortly before trial. The bank's defence relied on limitation, absence of unfairness because of a redress payment it had made and quantum issues. But, in addition, several offers had been made for the claim to be ended on a "drop-hands" basis. Ultimately it threatened that if no notice of discontinuance was served, the bank would seek its costs including an order under CPR 27.14(2)(g) based on the appellant's unreasonable behaviour. Following the discontinuance, that threat was made good because the courts below awarded £2,138 in costs against the claimant. However, the Court of Appeal took a different view, holding that it was clear from the reference in CPR 27 to "the special procedure" for dealing with claims allocated to the small claims track, that the track was designed to be different. A key part was the "costs neutral" environment which extended to disapplying the costs consequences both of discontinuance under CPR 38 and under Part 36. Allowing the bank its costs would open the doors to enabling well-resourced

parties to correspond their way out of the costs neutral regime and thereby, to blow the scheme of the Small Claims Track to bits. The appeal was allowed!

Next, no less than four cases on costs budgeting, all a bit different! In **Fuschillo v Johnson & Johnson** [2026] EWHC 1925 (KB), the issue was whether to order budgeting in a substantial claim in which the Claimants (or where they were deceased, their estates/dependants) were seeking damages from the Defendants in negligence (contending that they had contracted malignant mesothelioma or ovarian cancer due to their exposure to mineral talc-based Baby Powder carrying Johnson & Johnson branding). It was the Defendant's case that an order for budgeting would enable the Court to retain control over the parties' costs. The Claimants' counterargument was that the suggestion for costs budgeting was premature, expensive and effectively "front-loaded" the costs. Hill J ordered budgeting because (1) costs budgets were proportionate given both the sums at stake and the level of costs likely to be incurred by the parties. (2) CPR PD 3D, paragraph 2(f) provided that an order for budgets might "...be particularly appropriate in personal injury and clinical negligence cases where the value of the claim is £10 million or more" as was the case before her. (3) The parties had been able largely to agree directions through to trial, such that there was no reason to believe that there was any greater risk of there being extensive

disputed variations than in any other piece of substantial litigation.

The second case, **ML Technology Ltd v BEAT Sam Ltd** [2026] EWHC 2142 concerned budget variation after trial and consequentials. Following a trial at which the judge concluded that no one had been the winner, he also observed that CPR 44.2(1) did not mandate the making of a costs order so as the outcome was effectively a draw, he made no order as to costs. As to costs budgeting, the judge refused a retrospective application by the claimant to increase its budget by £318,000 even though it had not been actively opposed by the defendant. However, in *Car-Wizard v Vixen Surface Treatments Ltd* [2026] EWHC 2177 (Ch), HHJ Matthews allowed an at trial increase of £19,710 for the trial phase to cover the claimant's written submissions on the question of the assessment of damages, which had not been foreseen by anyone: it was a significant development within CPR 3.15A making it mandatory to apply to vary the budget.

No such luck for the applicants in **Watford Insurance Company Europe Ltd v Bassey & Anor** [2026] EWHC 2126 (KB) however. Cavanagh J upheld the decision of the judge below that a variation under CPR 3.15A to increase the claimant's budget by £238,350 should be refused because there had been no significant developments in the litigation. The judgment runs to 92 paragraphs and covers much additional ground about budgeting, variations and significant developments than this short summary can provide.

Next, a brace of interesting decisions in the Competition Appeals Tribunal. The

decision of Bacon J in **Sciallis v Fender Musical Instruments Eurpoe Ltd Sciallis** [2026] CAT 56 is to be commended as a guide about what happens when a Class Representative has failed to obtain funding for collective proceedings for three years and was "opaque" to the CAT about that fact. The answer was costs orders for the dismissal of the proceedings with costs on the indemnity basis from the moment that the CAT should have been informed in April 2023 of the breakdown of negotiations with the funder, such conduct being unreasonable to a high degree and outside the norm of litigation practice. Meanwhile in **Global-365 v Paypoint PLC** [2026] CAT 67, the action had succeeded, but only to the extent that the claimants recovered damages of £169,334 plus interest against a claim for £113.2 million by the time of the trial being just 0.15% the award! However, the claimants were allowed 40% of their costs, on that basis (amongst others) it was open to the defendant from the outset of the litigation, to have made an offer, thereby gaining costs protection.

In **Abbott v Ministry of Defence** [2026] EWHC 2083 (KB), Garnham J and Master Brown had the task of deciding the liability for costs in proceedings for damages for noise induced hearing loss suffered by members of HM armed forces and test claims brought by two former soldiers. The Claimants sought (i) an order for 95% of their costs in respect generic issues determined by an earlier judgment, including the two test cases, and (ii) a payment on account of £6,013,822.09. The MOD contended that the outcome of the trial was genuinely mixed, that it was been the more successful party and that

Continued on page 76

AUGUST 2026

From page 75

the appropriate order was no order as to costs. The judges held that the Claimants had been largely successful on the major issues in the case, those that attracted most attention and required most work in the trial. In addition, the soldiers in the test cases had won damages. However, the MOD had been largely successful on the utility of military audiometry, latency, acceleration and cochlear synaptopathy and on loss of future earnings, in so far as that issue had been tested. It followed that the MOD was ordered to pay 60% of the claimants' common costs of the generic issues and a payment on account of £2,515,194.95.

Finally, pressure on space permits only a mention of a decision in the family court. In **Sapleton v R1** [2026] EWHC 1783 (Fam) Lieven J made a third-party costs order in favour of the Legal Aid Agency where the applicant to a committal application, had used the proceedings to coerce, control and intimidate. Its purpose was to disincentivise abusers from using the system to perpetuate their abuse of former partners, and one way of doing that was by making costs orders that had some prospect of being enforced.

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

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