

August 2024

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MERSEYSIDE AND THE NORTH WEST



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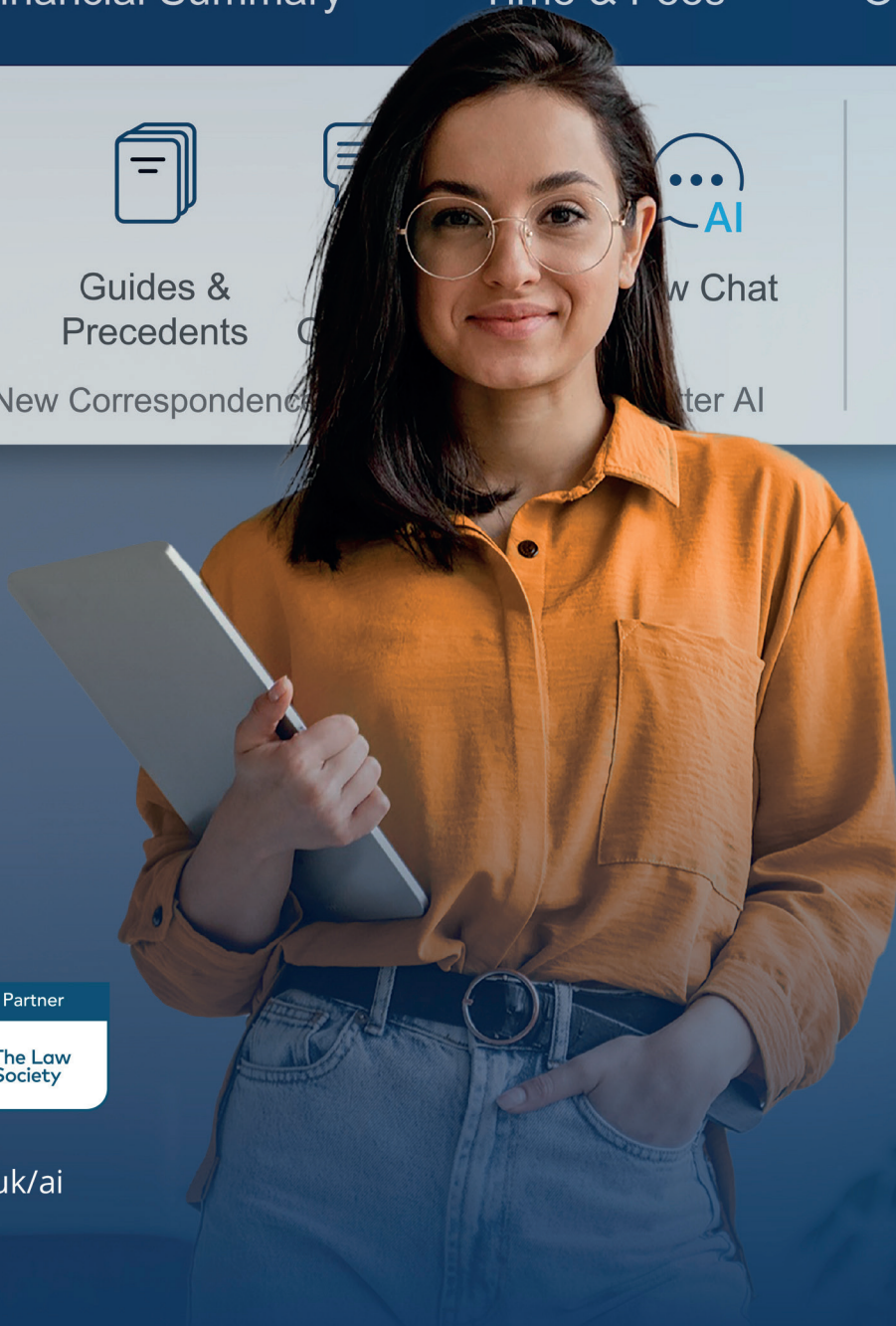
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August 2024

CONTENTS



4	The latest from the Editor, Jennifer Powell
4	Welcome to new members
5	From the President
6	LLS Meetings & events
6	Consultation Papers
7	Spotlight on: Nicola Walker
8	More Legal Qualification Success at Donoghue Solicitors
10	Leading Ladies: Law Firm Announces Dynamic New Partners
11	Solicitor who owns niche Law firm is a finalist in this year's Enterprise and Vision awards
11	Help for solicitors
12	Donna Scully named Merseyside Woman of the Year 2024
14	Dutton Gregory celebrates Legal LinkedInfluencer status
14	Legal Apprentice Society awarded Society of the Year by Law Students Union
15	Maria Fogg Family Law Wins Outstanding Client Care Award at the Private Client Modern Law Awards 2024
16	Weightmans report most successful year to date
18	University of Liverpool Law Clinic expands to assist at Birkenhead County Court
19	Law Firms Join Forces to Celebrate SWACA's 50 Years
20	2024 Summer Drinks At The Athenaeum
22	Valedictory: His Honour Judge David Aubrey KC
23	Passing of Keith Berman
23	Obituary - Ivor Bennett, 1937-2024
24	Leaders in Law: Brian Noon
25	Employment Law Practitioners sought for Society's specialist committee
26	Weightmans is Proud!
28	Carpenters Group - marching for Liverpool Pride
30	Merseyside Law Centre
32	Understanding vicarious trauma in the legal workplace
33	New children category added in tenth Merseyside Independent Business Awards
34	The Solicitors' Charity
35	Access to Justice Committee
35	Braving the heights for healing hearts
36	EAEL
38	Regulation Update
40	A bona fide game changer for financial services
41	Culture and heritage take centre stage on Liverpool's streets
42	Detailed Assessment – 4 Top Tips from the front line
44	Charity Spotlight: The OPAL Centre
46	Hostage taking and mediation – what's the difference?
48	Forthcoming Courses
52	Legal software: To swap or not to swap?
54	Legal Tech Adoption: A Football Team Strategy
56	Social Media Highlights

DEADLINES

Tues, 27.08.24

Tues, 24.09.24

Tues, 22.10.24

Tues, 26.11.24



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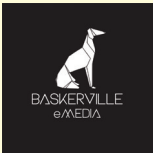
Liverpool Law Society Magazine is produced by and for Liverpool Law Society Members. This is our opportunity to share our news, events and celebrations with our friends in the legal community.

All members' contributions to Liverpool Law are warmly welcomed. Please send your article (and photo captions where possible) or request for further information, or assistance to the editor at editor@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk

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Editorial Committee Dates 2024

Meetings start at 01.00 pm on a Tuesday, except where noted.

17.09.24
15.10.24
19.11.24

Welcome to the August edition of Liverpool Law



What an edition we have for you this month, almost 60 pages!

It is lovely to see your regular contributions and what you and your firms are getting up to. We are also seeing new contributors each month from both new and long standing members, who may not have taken advantage of publishing in the magazine yet, so please do keep them coming. As always if you have any queries or need any assistance with putting something in the magazine our editorial team can help, please contact us at editor@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk

Our social media platforms are really taking off with some great numbers this month so thank you from us for engaging on those. Please continue to like/follow/share and if you have any suggestions please send them in.

I continue to be amazed at the movers and shakers section of our magazine and all the wonderful awards our legal community are rightly receiving. Special mention and congratulations from me to **Donna Scully** on winning Merseyside Woman of the Year 2024! Donna has been a great support in the past and has put many worthwhile charities in touch with us to feature in the magazine. It is wonderful to hear how the features can really help those charities.

The deadline is fast approaching for our own Annual Dinner and Legal Awards, midday on Friday 6 September, so there is still time to get your nominations in and to get your tickets for the event itself.

At the time of writing we have just had Pride weekend in Liverpool which looks like it was a great event. We had a hive of activity to celebrate here at Weightmans and my lovely friend **Josh Suffield** has put a piece together for us. We have our EDI committee here at LLS so again please do reach out with your suggestions or get in touch if you would like to be involved.

Until next month.

Jennifer Powell, Editor
Weightmans
editor@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk

Welcome to new members

We would like to give a warm welcome to our new members who were approved for membership at July's General Committee meeting. There were 12 individuals from the following organisations:

- Butler & Co
- Copious Law
- DPP
- ET Law
- Fletchers Group
- Guy Williams Layton
- MJP Solicitors
- St John's Buildings Chambers
- Taylor Wessing

Liverpool Law Society's membership now exceeds 2,415 individuals from 195 law firms, barristers' chambers, and other organisations with legal professionals in the Liverpool City Region and beyond.

From the President

The latest from the President, Gaynor Williams

We have had a change of Government since my last column. Only 4 days after the General Election, Our CEO, Sarah Poblete, Alum Ullah, Joint Honorary Secretary, and I, were invited to attend a conversation with Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor of Liverpool City Region, about the future outlook post-election business. The event was very well organised by Liverpool Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with Professional Liverpool and the Liverpool Place Partnership.

Steve Rotheram provided a very positive and enthusiastic outlook for the Liverpool City Region. He explained that he is one of twelve Metro Mayors, each of them pitching to the Government for funding to progress plans to innovate and boost growth in business and create jobs and wealth. Planning reform was a popular topic with the construction representatives in the audience, and plans were discussed to free up local authorities to expedite building projects. Mona Hassan and Remi Smith from the Future Impact Network collated and asked questions, and this was followed by questions from the audience. A lot of topics were discussed including digital and AI opportunities for the region, pilot AI projects in schools, housing issues, NHS and health, schools and education. I look forward to seeing and hearing more about the plans for our city region as the year progresses.

On 19 July 2024 Sarah Mansfield, Deputy Vice President, attended QEII Law Courts for a valediction for HHJ Aubrey KC, who has been a valued and respected Northern Circuit Judge since 2005. Thank you to Sarah for attending this event in my absence.

I am looking forward to the Joint V Law Societies meeting on 3 September 2024 in Manchester. The Joint V consists of Manchester, Leeds, Bristol, Birmingham, and LLS, being the five largest law societies. It is at these meetings that we update each other about what we have been doing for our members, raise any issues or queries that our members have fed through to us, and discuss matters including Court delays, regulatory issues, legal aid and lobbying. If anyone wishes to raise something with the Joint V please email me and I will look to include it on the agenda.

Next year is The Law Society's bicentenary and in 2027 it is our 200th year. This is going to be an exciting year, and a chance to celebrate the past and the future. We are already putting foundations in place for 2027, and we will be inviting our members to join in with preparations.

Although it does not feel like we have had much of a summer this year, and I don't wish winter to be here too soon, I am excited about the Annual Dinner and Legal Awards on 14 November 2024.

Nominations are now open, so get your applications prepared and lodged before the deadline of 6 September 2024. Lady Hale



is our guest speaker, and we have lots of final planning to do over the next month or so.

August is a month when a lot of us will look to try and recharge our batteries. It is important for everyone, especially in the field of law and law related work, to take some time out for themselves. I am probably one of the worst culprits for never switching off and reading work emails on holiday, but I do feel the difference when I have some 'me' time. I hope everyone has a chance to enjoy a break this month, whether it is a holiday abroad, a break in UK, or a walk in the fresh air at the weekend.

With mental health in mind, in July I had a meeting with Nick O Neil, Director of Oriel Chambers and the chair of Merseyside Men's Legal Wellbeing Group. It is so important to talk when you are feeling overwhelmed, and I am sure that everyone has felt the stresses and strains of practicing law. If anyone is interested there is information about the group here, and I would urge you to sign up. <https://www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk/news/merseyside-mens-legal-wellbeing-group-a-place-to-talk/>

September will soon be upon us and the countdown, dare I say it, to Christmas. Who knows, we might get an Indian summer!

Gaynor Williams

President

president@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk

LLS Meetings & events – Aug/Sept 2024

Start Time	Meeting/Event
27/08/2024 12:30	Finance & Policy Sub-Committee
03/09/2024 12:00	Joint V - hosted by Manchester
05/09/2024 13:00	Access to Justice Sub-Committee
09/09/2024 13:00	Regulatory Sub-Committee
10/09/2024 12:30	General Committee
11/09/2024 13:00	Civil Litigation Sub-Committee
11/09/2024 16:00	Family Business Sub-Committee
12/09/2024 13:00	In-House Lawyers Sub-Committee
12/09/2024 13:00	Editorial Sub-Committee

Liverpool Law Society has a number of committees covering specialist areas of law which meet regularly throughout the year allowing members of Liverpool Law Society to discuss common issues, respond to consultation papers and contribute ideas towards the Society's comprehensive legal training programme.

Our committees are: Access to Justice; Civil Litigation; Criminal Practice; Employment Law; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion; Editorial; Family Business; In-House Lawyers; Non-Contentious Business and Regulatory committees, which are open to members of Liverpool Law Society. To enquire about your membership status and/or being co-opted onto one of the above committees, please email committees@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk

Consultation Papers

Papers referred to committees:

The following sub-committees of Liverpool Law Society are considering responding to these consultation papers. If any member would like to send in a comment for consideration by the relevant committee, please do so to committees@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk

Committee	Consultation Paper title	Closing date
Criminal Practice	Non-fatal strangulation and suffocation offences – consultation	12.08.24
Regulatory	Financial Penalties: further developing our framework	20.09.24

Spotlight on: Nicola Walker



Nicola Walker, Campus manager at the University of Law, Liverpool and Chester has been elected as a Director for Liverpool Law Society 2024.

Nicola grew up on the Wirral and attended Upton Hall school. She enjoyed her time there, working hard at her studies and representing the school in hockey which she also played at a local level representing Wirral.

After completing her 'A' levels, Nicola won a place at Birmingham University to study English. After finishing her degree, Nicola did a TEFAL (teaching English as a foreign language) qualification and taught in Moscow for a year where she taught English to both children and adults.

On her return, Nicola went back to university completing a PGCE in English & History at Leeds University. After qualifying, she taught English, firstly at King James Comprehensive school and later at Bradford Girls Grammar school.

Nicola really enjoyed teaching

but had always wanted to have a career in Law and after four years teaching English, decided to pursue her dream of becoming a solicitor. After researching her opportunities, including attending a Law Fair in Birmingham, Nicola applied to the College of Law in Chester (now the University of Law) to do a PGDL (Post Graduate Diploma in Law) and also successfully gained a training contract with Weightmans, who not only sponsored her through her PGDL but also her LPC.

After working at Weightmans for a few years, Nicola specialised in Commercial Property at Hill Dickinson before moving to Leeds to join Gordons Solicitors where she stayed for two years. It was during this period that Nicola began to miss the teaching aspect of her previous career and looked to combine both teaching and law for her future career. As a result, she began a new chapter teaching Law initially at St John Rigby College in Wigan and then Carmel sixth form College in St Helens. In addition to teaching at this time, Nicola also held management positions as Head of Student Progression and Head of Critical Thinking and also helped students in the mock trial competitions.

After a happy period back in teaching, Nicola again found herself looking for a new challenge and this is how she ended up in her current position where she has been campus Manager for four years. She also teaches on the conversion courses at the Liverpool campus.

She really enjoys training the lawyers of the future and this includes future barristers. There have been students she taught at Carmel College coming through to take post-graduate courses at Liverpool, so Nicola is able to see the full progression of students she taught at different stages progress to full qualification and how she has been part of their journey. Every day is different in her job and she loves working between Liverpool and Chester and being involved in the local legal communities.

Nicola has been involved with LLS for around three years, representing the University of Law at the Committee meetings. Nicola is also a member of Chester and North Wales Law Society and recently organised the joint Legal Walk to Hilbre Island.

Her aims as Director for this year are to help to raise the profile of the Society within the Liverpool region and to promote the fantastic work the society does. Nicola also wants to get more people involved in the Annual Legal Walk in October and promote the Access to Justice Foundation.

Outside of work, Nicola enjoys mountain walking in the Lake District and has also climbed Kilimanjaro. She finds that being in the great outdoors really helps her to switch off. Nicola has a Border Collie called Tess, who loves mountain walking with her and her husband.

We wish Nicola every success in her role for this year.

More Legal Qualification Success at Donoghue Solicitors



Above: Kevin Donoghue, solicitor (centre), with colleagues and Chartered Legal Executives Daniel Fitzsimmons (first row left), Jack Hudson (first row right), Kemmi Alfa (second row left), and Chloe Cuthbert (second row right).

Liverpool city centre-based Donoghue Solicitors is proud to announce that another of the firm's lawyers has achieved Fellowship at the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives.

Chloe Cuthbert, LLB (Hons), MSc, FCILEX is the fourth member of the firm's niche actions against the police team to achieve qualified lawyer status. By doing so, she fulfils both her own ambitions and a long-term aim of Kevin Donoghue, the firm's founder.

Chloe's route to CILEX qualification began by earning a 2:1 law degree at UCLAN. Thereafter, she studied

for her LPC and Master of Science in Law, Business, and Management at the University of Law, earning a commendation. Miss Cuthbert became a Chartered Legal Executive after amassing more than 2,300 hours of qualifying experience, of which at least one year was spent as a CILEX Member- Advanced Paralegal.

Reflecting on her journey, Chloe said: "I have always wanted to be a lawyer, but my route to qualification was not 'set in stone'. What made CILEX qualification attractive was the ability to combine work and study. I found that my 'on the job' training supplemented and enhanced my years of academic studies. It means that I am well equipped to provide the best possible legal service to my firm's clients."

For firm Principal **Kevin Donoghue**, Chloe's qualification is the culmination

of a long-standing commitment to the next generation of Liverpool lawyers. He explained: "I know Chloe's route to qualification well. I, too, qualified as a Chartered Legal Executive before becoming a solicitor. When I founded Donoghue Solicitors, I was determined to use my position, combined with financial, practical, and moral support, to help others who sought a career in the law. Chloe is the fourth member of our dedicated actions against the police team to roll off our qualified lawyer "production line", following my fellow Director Daniel Fitzsimmons, Kemmi Alfa, and Jack Hudson. I am immensely proud of all of them for what they have achieved and look forward to helping more aspiring lawyers fulfil their ambitions."

For more information about Donoghue Solicitors, visit: www.donoghue-solicitors.co.uk.



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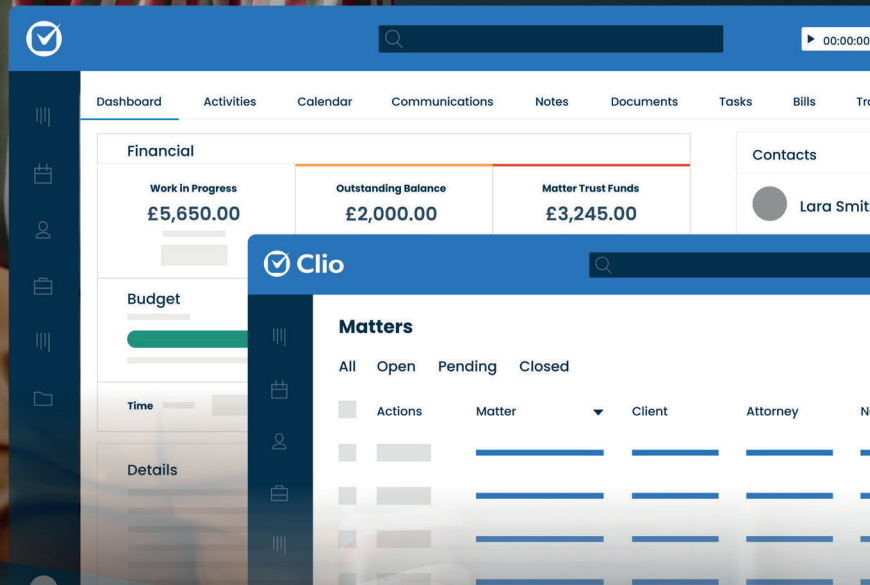


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Leading Ladies: Law Firm Announces Dynamic New Partners



Jessica Flaherty and Rachael McClean

Bell Lamb & Joynson, a leading law firm known for its commitment to excellence and client service, is pleased to announce the promotion of two outstanding lawyers.

Jessica Flaherty and Rachael McClean have both made significant contributions to the firm's success and will now play pivotal roles in shaping its future as they step up to their new positions as equity partners.

The promotion of Jessica and Rachael underscores Bell Lamb & Joynson's commitment to recognising and advancing talent within the firm. Their invitation to join the partnership also highlights the firm's dedication to fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce, where exceptional women in law can thrive and lead the way. This promotion moves the needle, creating

a partnership which is 62% female, and the senior leadership team becomes 66% female.

Commenting on the news, which follows the law firm's successful year end, Managing Partner, **Mike Leeman** said: *"Jessica and Rachael exemplify the qualities we value most as a firm; excellence, dedication to client service and a positive attitude to support those around them. We are proud to welcome them as Partners and know that they will continue to make a positive impact on the firm, taking us to new heights in 2024/25 and beyond."*

Jessica Flaherty joined Bell Lamb & Joynson in 2022 to head up the Private Client department. Jessica has been instrumental in developing and growing the department. By introducing new

technologies, new ways of working and investing in training for the team, Jessica has grown the department by 459% and has increased the turnover significantly. Jessica was shortlisted for the Lawyer of the Year – Wills & Probate award at the Modern Law Awards on 4 July.

"I am absolutely thrilled to join the partnership at Bell Lamb & Joynson. This promotion is not just a personal achievement, but a reflection of the hard work and dedication of the entire private client team. I am excited to step into this new role and continue to build on our success." Commented Jessica Flaherty, Partner, Solicitor and Head of Private Client.

Rachael McClean has consistently been one of the firm's leading fee-earners with an impeccable reputation. She has a phenomenal attitude and approach to client care, earning herself 180 5-star client reviews on Review Solicitors in just over 2 years of being with the firm. Rachael has headed up the new Maghull office since it opened in April 2023 and has transformed it into a successful community hub, surpassing the vision that was set out to achieve. Rachael was awarded 'highly commended' for the Conveyancer of the Year award at the Modern Law Conveyancing awards earlier this year.

"I am deeply honoured to be promoted to Partner. This milestone is a reflection of the support, incredible mentorship and encouragement that I have received during my time at the firm. I am thrilled to take on this new challenge and continue to drive Bell Lamb & Joynson forward as a leading, award-winning law firm who value and elevate their people." Commented Rachael McClean, Partner and Residential Property Solicitor.

The firm are delighted to celebrate the end of a successful financial year, topped off with the promotion of two leading ladies who have each made their own personal impacts on the firm.

Solicitor who owns niche Law firm is a finalist in this year's Enterprise and Vision awards



Alison McCormack

Alison McCormack, a Director at Alison McCormack Solicitors is a finalist in this year's national Enterprise and vision awards. Alison, who specialises in advocating for innocent victims of violent crime has a passion for helping survivors of Domestic Violence and sexual assault.

Alison, who was nominated by another female led law Liverpool law firm was initially nominated in 3 categories,

Professional Services, Customer Service and New Business. However, after Judges reviewed Alison's application, they were so impressed that they decided to put her in a brand-new category, newly created this year; "One to Watch,"

The founder of the EVA awards said: "After much deliberation, we decided to introduce an exciting new category, the 'One to Watch,' to feature the rising stars in the business world."



Alison recently discovered that she was one of 12 entrepreneurs from the

Liverpool city region on this year's shortlist. Alison said "I am honoured to be a finalist amongst so many inspirational women and I'm particularly proud to be one of 12 from Merseyside."

Held annually, the EVAs celebrate female businesses from across the UK and now claim to be the biggest awards of their kind in the country. This year there are an amazing 161 women on the final shortlist. The Winners will be announced at a ceremony on Friday, September 27, at the Empress Ballroom, Winter Gardens in Blackpool where all finalists are encouraging to wear "more sequins than Strictly!"

Alison whose ultimate ambition is to set up a CIC that creates a nurturing and safe environment for women who have been through Domestic violence and sexual assault said "Although it would be amazing to win on the night, it really is all about making connections and collaborating with other likeminded women. I look forward to learning from all the other finalists who have a wealth of experience and knowledge."

Help for solicitors

Liverpool Law Society wishes to remind solicitors and their families of the existence of the Pritt Fund. The Pritt Fund is a charity, created in 1919, which is connected with Liverpool Law Society. It is sometimes able to offer modest help to solicitors and their families who are suffering financial hardship if they fall within the charity's area (most, but not all, of Merseyside) and its objects.

Another source of assistance for solicitors and those connected with the legal profession include the Solicitors' Charity, a national charity which is also able to offer financial support. A link to their webpage is available here- <https://thesolicitorscharity.org/> Finally, there is LawCare a national charity aimed at helping the mental health and wellbeing of legal practitioners. A link to their website is available here - <https://www.lawcare.org.uk/>

For enquiries about the Pritt Fund, please ask in confidence through the President in the first instance. Contact the President at president@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk

Donna Scully named Merseyside Woman of the Year 2024



Congratulations to Carpenters Group Owner/Director, Donna Scully, who was named Merseyside Woman of the Year at the 2024 Merseyside Women of the Year Awards.



Merseyside Women of the Year Awards is the biggest celebration of women on Merseyside and it has a unique purpose –

find those women who do not seek the limelight or push themselves to the front but get their heads down and make a huge difference to the people, sectors and communities they serve. The women who care for others and keep going, no matter what adversities they face, personally or in the course of their work.

The overall Woman of the Year award was presented to Donna at the ceremony in the Crowne Plaza in Liverpool last Friday (June 28), which was attended by more than 400 guests.

Also the winner of the Business Leader category, Donna Scully, said:

“I’m incredibly humbled to be named Merseyside Business Leader & Woman of the Year 2024. There were such amazing women alongside me in the shortlist so it was a real shock to win. As the first Irish woman to receive the award, I’m very proud of that too. I feel like a proper ‘honorary scouser’ now!”

Carpenters Group are proud and honoured that Donna has won these prestigious awards.

CONKERTON MEMORIAL LECTURE 10.10.24



BY THE HON. MR JUSTICE COBB

Justice must be seen to be done: One hundred years since *Rex v Sussex Justices* [1924]

Transparency in the courts: awareness and fairness; confidence and confidentiality: public interest in the justice system in the twenty first century.

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Dutton Gregory celebrates Legal LinkedInfluencer status



Paul Sams

Colleagues across Dutton Gregory are celebrating the firm's sector-leading social media prowess, having excelled in TBD Marketing's latest LinkedInfluencer report.

Paul Sams, who became Managing Partner in April 2024, has moved from the main table in Q1 2024 to the leaders table, securing the top spot with a power score of 5,011; a substantial rise from his Q1 2024 score of 3,698, where he ranked #25.

In addition to Paul's individual performance, Dutton Gregory proudly boasts three individuals ranked in the Top 100 of the main table: **Jonathan Whettingsteel, Alex Gregory-Chialton, and Tim Waldron.** This accomplishment places Dutton Gregory among an elite group of heavyweight legal firms, which includes Hogan Lovells, DLA Piper, Clifford Chance, A&O Shearman, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, and Mishcon de Reya.

Paul Sams, Managing Partner of Dutton Gregory, commented: "I was delighted to see Dutton Gregory recognised so prominently in TBD Marketing's LinkedInfluencer report. Our approach to LinkedIn has certainly raised our profile and given us a platform on which to stand alongside the big players in the legal profession. The collective efforts of our team on LinkedIn

- Jonathan, Alex, Tim, and many others - has been nothing short of remarkable and this recognition provides the inspiration to maintain our enthusiasm, momentum and trajectory."

Simon Marshall, founder of TBD Marketing, noted: "Dutton Gregory's impressive performance in this quarter's report sets a benchmark for others in the legal industry. Paul has led the charge by example, and this sensational achievement highlights his influence within the firm and the wider legal community. Dutton Gregory has proved how engagement through LinkedIn can prove to be a great equaliser in its profession, giving its brand the voice and opportunity of any other firm. Congratulations to the whole team! We look forward to watching the team continue to go from strength to strength."

Legal Apprentice Society awarded Society of the Year by Law Students Union



Lana Stanley

Solicitor apprentice at Morecrofts, Lana Stanley is celebrating picking up Society of the Year at the University of Law Students Union Excellence Awards.

Lana is a co-founder and co-president of the Legal Apprentice society which was formed to support and connect apprentices at the university. The apprenticeship is completed online and therefore it is rare for apprentices to meet each other outside of their own firm.

She believed it was important to change this to reduce feelings of isolation during the time on the course. Through this support the society aims to create confident apprentices and in time help them qualify into confident solicitors.

The solicitor apprenticeship at the University of Law is a six year course which incorporates a law degree and SQE. During this time you work alongside your studies gaining experience in the field.

Lana said: "It is fantastic to see a society based around apprentices being spotlighted at the university. This is the first of its kind at the university and I am so excited to have been part of its creation and seeing it grow over the short period of time that we have been active. I hope to continue to meet other apprentices through the society and help them on their journey."

Managing partner of Morecrofts, Alison Lobb, said: "We're incredibly proud of Lana and her pragmatic approach to embarking on a career in law. She's a highly valued member of our team and her foresight founding the Legal Apprentice society is more than deserving of its award. Huge well done to Lana and her colleagues for founding this society and recognising the need to support and connect with one another."

Maria Fogg Family Law Wins Outstanding Client Care Award at the Private Client Modern Law Awards 2024



The Private Client Modern Law Awards came to Liverpool on the 4th of July 2024, honouring the crème de la crème of the legal profession nationwide. Among the shortlists, nine Liverpool law practices were recognised, showcasing Liverpool as a region of legal excellence. Among the shortlisted firms was Maria Fogg Family Law,

honoured in two categories: Private Law - Family Team and Outstanding Client Care (1-25 employees).

Despite the tough competition, Maria Fogg Family Law triumphed, winning the Outstanding Client Care Award 2024. The judges sought a firm that demonstrates client care is at its core, utilises innovation to improve and maintain client care, embraces digital technologies to streamline efficiencies and meet customer expectations, and delivers exceptional assistance for customers across all touchpoints.

Director **Charlotte Fogg** commented, *“Winning the Outstanding Client Care Award reflects our firm’s unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional service and building lasting relationships with our clients. It is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and passion of our entire team, who go above and beyond to ensure our clients receive the best care. It is an honour to be recognised for our*

efforts. We will continue to meet our high standards of client care with every client we help, striving for excellence.”

This award not only highlights the exceptional service provided by Maria Fogg Family Law but also underscores the firm’s dedication to innovation and excellence in the legal field. The recognition serves as a motivation for the firm to continue exceeding client expectations and setting higher standards in client care.



Weightmans report most successful year to date

National law firm, Weightmans, has reported its most successful year to date, following the announcement of its 23/24 financial results, continuing its strong growth trajectory.



John Schorah

The firm's full 12 months' trading* produced over £140m in income (12% increase on 22/23) and an £18m net profit (up by 41.1% on the previous year) - a record for the Top 40 law firm. PEP (profit per equity partner) is £391k for the 12-month period.

Strong results were delivered by all the firm's seven key client segments. Six of the segments - Built Environment, Health, Individuals, Insurance, OMB and Public Bodies, all produced double digit growth in revenues to the previous year. Its Corporate segment grew by 6%.

Major financial and commercial success was reported in most service lines during the year, especially in employment, property litigation, regulatory and specialty insurance.

During the year the firm also launched CyXcel - its revolutionary new cyber consulting business which uniquely

fuses legal and technical cyber expertise. This part of the business has exceeded all strategic objectives, with rapid growth including the expansion of its operations to open in North America in June 2024.

The overall performance means that all staff will benefit from a bonus of almost £3,000 each, recognising everyone's contribution to the firm's successful year.

John Schorah, Managing Partner, said: *"I am very proud of all the hard work and contributions made by our people to make this our most successful year ever. Their talent and unwavering support for each other continues to deliver great results for our clients and places the business in a very strong position as we make progress towards being a Top 30 law firm. The merger with RadcliffesLeBrasseur in 2022 has delivered significant organic growth for the firm in the second-year post merger in those areas we have combined, as well as delivering cost saving synergies. Independently of the merger we have also seen our other core areas do well.*

"Of course, our financial figures are only part of our story, and it is great to see that our investment in our people continued to be recognised as we maintained our Top Employer status in the top 10 and our Top 75 Employer Index ranking at number 20. We are proud that this demonstrates our ongoing commitment to making law as accessible as possible through our various graduate and apprenticeship schemes, and intern programmes.

"The hard work has started again this year, and I am excited to see what we achieve together."

During this year of organic, sustainable growth, Weightmans promoted 15 people to the partnership - bringing the firm's total number of partners to 248

- and 12 to legal director. The firm also saw 15 lateral partners join in the year.

Elsewhere, Weightmans continued to make great strides in its long-held ambition to be one of the UK's most socially and environmentally conscious law firms. It has already carried out a considerable amount of work to meet the objectives set out in its ESG strategy. In June 2024, the firm was awarded the highest Platinum rating by EcoVadis, placing Weightmans in the UK's top 1% of professional services companies for sustainability and social responsibility. It has also reported a consistent year-on-year reduction in carbon emissions and maintained ISO14001 and ISO50001 certifications for environmental and energy management at its offices.

Earlier this year, the business also announced it had established a new ESG Advisory Group to ensure the business meets its many strategic priorities in this area, such as its commitment to becoming Net Zero by 2030.

In 23/24, Weightmans continued to invest in its people to create positive workplace environments. As a result, its commitment to apprentices was recognised at the Apprenticeship Guide Awards 2024, where Weightmans won Best Apprenticeship Programme in the Professional Services sector.

**Weightmans changed its financial reporting year to March 31, 2024, so ran to an 11-month financial period in 23/24. For that 11-month period, income increased to £128.44m and net profit was £16.49m. Either extrapolating those results for 12 months or adding the firm's actual trading performance for April 2024 gives the figures cited above. The firm also demonstrated strong cash reserves, rising from £3.4m to £6.9m for the 11-month period.*

LIVERPOOL LEGAL WALK

6PM, TUESDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2024

5k fundraising walk in aid of



REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

THE LIVERPOOL LEGAL WALK GATHERS THE LOCAL LEGAL COMMUNITY AND SUPPORTERS OF ACCESS TO JUSTICE TOGETHER TO WALK 5K AROUND LIVERPOOL CITY CENTRE TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE ADVICE SECTOR



S U P P O R T E D B Y



The money you raise goes towards the most vulnerable in society to fund access justice and legal advice. The organisations the Access to Justice Foundation supports help:

- Prevent families being made homeless
- Prevent destitution
- Allow older people gain the support to which they are entitled
- Support women and children who have been trafficked for domestic servitude or prostitution.

At the end of the 5K fundraising walk, each walker will have a chance to relax, mingle and network at our post-walk drinks reception kindly sponsored by the University of Law.

I N A I D O F T H E A C C E S S
T O J U S T I C E
F O U N D A T I O N



This is a great opportunity for colleagues from across the region to come together and take part in a relaxed event after work.



[More info](#)

University of Liverpool Law Clinic expands to assist at Birkenhead County Court



The [University of Liverpool Law Clinic](#), long recognised for its dedication to assisting families through legal challenges, continues to expand its impact. For many years, the clinic has operated a family helpdesk at FHDRA hearings in Liverpool, where a clinic solicitor and trained [University of Liverpool Law School](#) students provide invaluable advice and support. Students participate by observing hearings, taking notes and offering guidance under the supervision of legal professionals.

Since June, the Liverpool Law Clinic has piloted an information and support project at Birkenhead County Court each Tuesday morning to assist unrepresented families.

Trained law students provide information about the purpose of the hearing and help families summarise the points they would like to make to the Judge. Volunteers continue to support

families during court proceedings, documenting essential details.

Reflecting on her experience as a volunteer, University of Liverpool Law School student *Tiffany Smith* said: “I thoroughly enjoyed the independence that came with this experience and the ability to personally help clients who may have felt particularly stressed or nervous.”

The project has been well received by families who face challenges accessing legal aid or affording private solicitors. The Birkenhead County Court has welcomed the initiative, recognising its critical role in providing support where no other service is available within the family court system.

For both projects, clients can contact the clinic before their hearing to arrange support at clinic@liverpool.ac.uk.

Law Firms Join Forces to Celebrate SWACA's 50 Years: Maria Fogg Family Law and Morecrofts Solicitors Sponsor Anniversary Event, Highlighting Community Collaboration.



Sefton Women's and Children's Aid (SWACA) recently commemorated its 50th anniversary, celebrating five decades of dedicated service to those affected by domestic abuse. The landmark occasion was marked with a grand ball held at the iconic Liverpool Football Club (LFC) Stadium.

The anniversary ball was a testament to the power of collaboration and community support, being sponsored by two prominent law firms, Maria Fogg Family Law and Morecrofts Solicitors. Both firms are known for their dedication to safeguarding vulnerable individuals and their sponsorship underscored a shared mission to enhance the well-being of the community.

Commenting on the event, Partner and Domestic Abuse Team Leader **Jo-anne Lomax** of Morecrofts Solicitors said:

"For many years our team has worked in partnership with organisations to help support survivors of domestic abuse. SWACA have become so well established and the work they do is incredible, although it's a shame the service is needed more than ever. I am so proud that we have firms like our own and Marie Fogg Family Law with great people to support those in need."

Charlotte Fogg, Director of Maria Fogg Family Law, echoed these sentiments, stating, *"Our firm has always been dedicated to advocating for the rights and safety of vulnerable individuals, and it is a privilege to stand alongside SWACA in their mission. This event is a testament to the incredible work SWACA has done over the past fifty years. We are proud to collaborate with Morecrofts Solicitors in supporting such a vital cause. Together, we can continue to make a difference and*



safeguard the futures of those affected by domestic abuse."

The evening was a resounding success, attended by supporters, community leaders, and advocates who gathered to celebrate SWACA's achievements and renew their commitment to supporting survivors of domestic abuse.

SWACA's dedicated team continues to offer crucial services, providing survivors with the resources and support needed to overcome the impacts of domestic abuse. As they look ahead to the next fifty years, SWACA remains steadfast in their mission to empower and protect the most vulnerable members of the community.

The collaboration between Maria Fogg Family Law and Morecrofts Solicitors serves as a powerful reminder of the positive impact that can be achieved when organisations unite for a common cause.

2024 Summer Drinks At The Athenaeum



Alum Ullah, HHJ Cadwallader, and HHJ Hodge KC

I was delighted to be able to attend the Liverpool Business and Property Court Forum (LBPCF) summer drinks at the Athenaeum in Liverpool on Thursday 18th July 2024, as a representative of the Liverpool Law Society and Bond Turner solicitors.

The event was hosted by **His Honour Judge Cadwallader**, the local specialist Business and Property Court Judge.

Practitioners from local and national firms attended including solicitors from Hill Dickinson, DWF, Escalate Law, Joanna Connolly Solicitors, Irwin Mitchell, CEL Solicitors, Ed Turner Ltd, Morecrofts, Ashfords, Weightmans, Bond Turner, and Bermans.

As well as representatives from Exchange Chambers, Oriel Chambers, and Atlantic Chambers.

It was also a pleasure to meet **Dr. John Tribe** from the University of Liverpool for a drink and a catch up, to which I must express thanks for obtaining permission for the images from the event, to be published.

His Honour Judge Cadwallader welcomed LBPCF guests with an

entertaining speech of welcome in which he focused on the increased business before the Liverpool Business and Property Court.

Judge Cadwallader was also joined by **His Honour Judge Hodge KC**, a fellow BPC judge.

Regrettably, **Mr Justice Fancourt** was not able to attend the event, but **Judge Cadwallader** read out the following message:

(In relation to the event and the Liverpool Business and Property Court the Vice-Chancellor of the County Palatine of Lancaster)

“Judge Cadwallader and I have been monitoring the figures for the issue of cases in the BPC in Liverpool and we are encouraged that there seems to have been a significant increase in cases issued. Whether that is a blip or a longer-term trend remains to be seen.

It would be good to see more cases from the North Wales, Cheshire, Merseyside and West Lancashire areas being issued here, rather than in Manchester. I have directed the District Judges in Manchester to look out for claims with stronger

connections to Liverpool and transfer them to be dealt with in Liverpool. Although Manchester is a much bigger BPC centre, you have excellent local judges here in Liverpool, whose resources are supplemented as required by some of the Manchester judges, by me, and by other High Court Judges to deal with cases that are very substantial or complex and deserve to be tried by a HCJ.

I feel that it is important for the civic pride of Liverpool and the local economy that all local cases, however complex, are dealt with here in Liverpool, if they possibly can be.

I would like to express my appreciation for the hard work done by Judge Cadwallader, District Judges Deane, Johnson and Lampkin, as well as District Judge Baldwin supporting the TCC, and all visiting judges and deputy judges, and the excellent staff in the court office, principally Steve and Alex, who are now led by Alison Blunsden, to strive for and maintain the highest standards of administration and judging.”

Alum Ullah,
Joint Honorary Secretary,
Liverpool Law Society
& **Dr. John Tribe**,
University of Liverpool

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Submit your nominations before the deadline.

**Nominations close at
midday on Friday, 6 September**

For further details & to nominate, [click here](#).



The winners of the 2024 Legal Awards will be announced at the Society's Annual Dinner on 14 November 2024.

SPONSORED BY



Valedictory: His Honour Judge David Aubrey KC

I was honoured to be invited to the valedictory of His Honour Judge David Aubrey KC held on 16th July 2024 at QE11 Law Courts to represent Liverpool Law Society, alongside Mr John Ballam one of our Past Presidents. In Court 4:1 we were surrounded by the great and good of the legal world to honour Judge Aubrey. The court was packed to the rafters, with a number of our eminent criminal advocates having to make do with a seat in the dock, with prime spaces reserved for his wife Gail, his son Matty and granddaughter Juno, who behaved much better in court than many of the defendants before her.

Judge Aubrey came to Liverpool to study law in the 70s and undertook his pupillage at Oriel Chambers. Listening to the speeches, access to the bar was a lot less complicated in those days and it seems most posts were secured over a pint rather than a weekend at an assessment centre, but despite the less than stringent interview process, Judge Aubrey made a significant impact on the legal profession in Liverpool, on many defendants who appeared before him, and significantly on the people of Liverpool through his work with the Anthony Walker Foundation, with **Dr Gee Walker** present in court 4:1.

One of the many testimonials to Judge Aubrey was from Everton in the Community, recognising his love both of Liverpool and of Everton Football club, the latter presumably causing him little actual joy over the years, but shows Judge Aubrey's dedication to his those he loves. Judge Aubrey's lasting legacy, alongside his community work is the establishing of the Maddison Internship enabling those who previously found the door "very firmly shut" to access law and the judiciary and as a result the legal world will benefit from more diverse and identifiable pool of legal professionals.


The senior presiding Judge for England and Wales **Lord Justice Edis** took the time to travel up from London, to speak of Judge Aubrey as a calm, empathetic judge, despite a reputation for stiff sentencing.

Honorary Recorder of Liverpool **Judge Andrew Menary KC** paid homage to a Judge he described as outstanding, loyal, kind and truly inspirational, words used a lot but were perfect to describe Judge Aubrey and the effect he has on the judicial world and Liverpool. He was followed by **Mr Jaime Hamilton KC** Leader of the Northern Circuit and **Mr Richard Pratt** on behalf of the Bar, then by **Mr John Ballam** (Past President) on behalf of Liverpool Law Society, all providing eloquent speeches littered with memories of Judge Aubrey's 50 years as a member of the bar.


Finally Judge Aubrey spoke to thank the many people present, including his family who he paid tribute to; but fittingly he paid

a special tribute to the court staff, his long serving usher and gave a special mention of our hard-working Solicitor/Advocates, which was a lovely touch and goes some way to explain why Judge Aubrey will be so missed on his retirement. It must be noted however, that the much-heralded retirement will be short lived, as we learned Judge Aubrey is sitting in a 5 week trial at the Old Bailey a few weeks after his retirement, probably much to the relief of his wife **Gail**.

Sarah Mansfield
Deputy Vice President
Liverpool Law Society



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Passing of Keith Berman



It is with sadness that we announce that Bermans founder, Keith Berman, has passed away.

Bermans was founded in 1970 in Liverpool by Keith. By adopting from the start an effective approach which focused on achieving the Client's business objectives quickly and economically, the Firm was able to make rapid inroads on a national scale and throughout the North West.

In 1980 Keith moved to New York, qualified there and began

practising as an English solicitor, opening the Bermans office in 1982. It orchestrated litigation worldwide and provided a valuable resource for UK and European Clients with American interests (and vice versa). At that time not even the big London Firms had an operational New York office so to open in the Big Apple and make a success of it was a remarkable achievement.

Ian Munford, Senior Consultant, joined Bermans in 1978 and worked directly for Keith as a newly qualified Solicitor and even shared an office with him, he comments *"Keith was a perfectionist who liked every staple attaching documents to a letter to be at exactly 90 degrees and a Bermans "style" of writing. He was also ahead of his time in relation to office automation and IT.*

He was a flamboyant character, to say the least, and would wear a cape and a dickie bow tie to work many days. He worked very hard himself and expected no less from others including myself but he generously rewarded and promoted those who did reflect his high standards ."

"RIP Keith, you were definitely "one of a kind"

Keith carried on working even in his later years and was going to attend some of the celebrations for Bermans 50th anniversary in 2020 before Covid and ill health took over.

He was proud of the reputation the firm with his name carries today.

Obituary - Ivor Bennett, 1937-2024

A man of passion and principle who loved his wife, his family, and the law. He practiced first as a solicitor as a partner at Bell, Lamb and Joynson, then became a District Judge in the St Helens County Court, finding a true sense of meaning and purpose in both roles. A man of a thousand hobbies, he dedicated his last decade to cycling. When most men were winding down, Ivor revelled while road racing and fell walking savouring both the physical challenge and the camaraderie.

His life motto was "Stop at the top" -- always wanting to leave something while it was still at its peak, before it declined. After a full life, well lived, Ivor most certainly stopped at the top.

He leaves his loving wife, sons Nigel, Roger & Amy and eleven Grandchildren.

Nigel Bennett



Leaders in Law: Brian Noon



1. Briefly describe your role as Managing Partner and the main duties of this position.

In-House Legal Solutions is managed and led by my wife Lauren and I, and so we have split certain responsibilities between us. On the business side I oversee finance, operations, marketing, and take the lead on strategy working closely with Lauren. As a senior in-house lawyer I am still heavily client facing and manage the relationships with many of our clients, and spend a large part of my time working with and mentoring our junior team. I also have the responsibility as the firms COLF and money laundering reporting officer. So a very mixed role which allows me to be involved in various different things which is what I enjoy.

2. What are the positive and negative aspects of the role?

By far and away the biggest positive of the role not only as director but also joint owner of the business is freedom – freedom to build a business in the way you want it to be shaped, and to take it in the directions that you think have the most promise of success. Deciding what success looks like is also a huge positive, as we don't have other shareholders or investors to please, so the bottom line doesn't always have to

be the main thing that matters. Our ambition with the business was to build a legal services business in a unique model and run it in a different way, and to bring opportunities to aspiring lawyers that were otherwise hard to find. That has meant focusing a lot of resources – and our personal time – on training paralegals who have eventually become trainee solicitors and then qualified with us, which has been really rewarding and satisfying to see over the seven years since we were founded. We've also been able to spend time on CSR initiatives which has included talking about law in schools, holding open days for minorities, and our team has even won national awards for its work. So the freedom to decide in which direction we head, and how we decide to get there, is certainly the one thing I enjoy the most.

On the downside – the lack of sleep! There is lots to do especially when the whole business is our own creation and inevitably our responsibility, which means everything matters to us. Learning to delegate – and building the best team around you that you can trust – can be challenging, but becomes easier over time. There is always a feeling of laying ground work for the future, from which you can build, but the idea of achieving a better balance between work and life can start to feel like a mirage in the desert. Still a work in progress.

3. What changes to the running of the firm have you implemented because of Covid?

We were luckily well placed to deal with Covid as we were a reasonably new business with all services in the cloud, and the team already worked from laptops. The main change was learning how to use Teams for the first time! Since then we have adopted hybrid working and relaxed our dress requirements with a dress for your

day approach (albeit things move so quickly it can be hard to know what the next day will look like!).

4. As a result of Covid, what are your new agile working policies and why?

The main change was to allow hybrid working in a way that gave flexibility while still trying to preserve team togetherness, learning and communication. We achieve this by having two fixed anchor days where the team is all in together, which makes sure we can all be around each other and share each others' company as a team which is personally important to us. Striking the balance between offering as much flexibility as possible but still providing an environment to learn, grow, and collaborate in the best way is one that has been discussed a lot over the last few years, and whilst the overall output of the business can be taken as being what really counts, we look at the piece more holistically.

5. What do you see as your biggest challenges?

All businesses especially in the legal industry have the same challenges of recruitment, to constantly innovate and to manage work as cost effectively as possible. These are key challenges for us also, but more profound in our situation is the challenge of building a reputation in the market for providing a service which is unique but more importantly, of real benefit. The notion of providing the services of an in-house legal team for hire is not something that the majority of in-house teams would have come across, and whilst there are a variety of legal businesses offering temporary staffing, a business that offers a range of specifically dedicated in-house legal services – from on demand contract support, high volume processing, data

protection to legal team optimisation – to in-house legal teams is totally new and refreshing. The challenge we have therefore with a set budget is to find innovative ways to communicate that effectively and widely to the market.

6. What aspects of the firm are you most proud of?

I am most proud of how we have been able to build a respected legal services business from the ground up, through using our own contacts and innovative ideas, with no outside investment. We literally pitched to our first clients from our kitchen table with just two laptops, mobile phones and a website, and were able to convince very large investment funds and pension schemes to put their trust in us. The fact that we are a small business in comparison to many firms but have large clients in the financial services sector, PLCs, and clients with operations based all over the world is real testament to the work that our dedicated team carries out day to day. We service our clients' needs not only in Europe but in the US, and Asia Pacific, and so being able to build the systems and processes and brand to enable us to do that is an achievement our whole team is proud of.

7. What are your immediate short-term goals?

In the short term we are focused on building a strong management and operations team which will give us the platform to allow rapid growth in the next three years. A business like ours needs to constantly reinvent how it does things as it grows, steps into new markets and areas, and takes on more staff, and without a strong function operations and admin side to the business the team cannot reach its full potential. Investments also in AI where we have partnered with one of the largest providers of legal AI solutions and in our own IT tools which we build ourselves in house including our client portal are key to increasing productivity and improving the client experience. Finally, growth in our client base is always a key short term goal and we hope to continue and potentially accelerate our year on year growth that we have experienced so far.

8. Where do you see the firm ten years from now?

It depends which crystal ball I have in front of me at the time! Our

mission is to provide the most trusted, reliable, value for money in-house legal solutions in the UK and beyond, and I hope that in ten years we have grown to be a respected provider of in-house legal solutions and potentially the leader in our field, and have grown our presence internationally. I would also like to see us continue to develop and nurture aspiring legal talent and offer careers in in-house law but via our outsourced model, which can provide the support, training and opportunities that in-house roles can lack.

9. What legacy, as Director and Co-Founder, would you like to leave the firm?

It seems strange to think of ever leaving the business, however there will come a point when Lauren and I either step back or step away to perhaps focus on other things. I hope at that point that Lauren and I leave a legacy of what hard work, bravery, determination and above all the desire to – as far as possible – do the right thing by our people and our clients, can achieve.

Employment Law Practitioners sought for Society's specialist committee

The aim of our Employment Law Committee is to engage with local employment law practitioners, both in-house and in private practice, in big firms and in small, to keep them up to date with the latest exciting developments in this ever-changing field of the law.

We seek to influence bodies including

the Employment Lawyers Association, the Employment Tribunals and ACAS to take into account the interests of our members when deciding on the policies and procedures which affect our practice on a daily basis. We are actively involved in responding to consultation documents on key changes to the law. In conjunction with the Society's Training team, we arrange employment law seminars and

an annual Conference. We act as a lively forum for sharing ideas, concerns and experiences in practising employment law.

For further details and to apply to join the committee, see

<https://www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk/about/committees/specialist/employment-law-committee/>



Weightmans is Proud!

Weightmans LLP recently took part in and hosted a number of exciting LGBTQ+ events to welcome in Liverpool Pride weekend 2024.



Josh Suffield

Celebrations commenced on Thursday 25 July 2024 with the launch event for the firm's new LGBTQ+ network, Proud2Be. Proud2Be has been initiated as a network for those who identify as LGBTQ+ and straight allies around the firm to socialise in a safe space, support each other and socialise across the office.

Hosted by Diversity & Inclusion Champion and Liverpool's Proud2Be network lead, **Josh Suffield**, the launch event saw attendance from some of the firm's senior partners including Managing Partner, **John Schorah**.

The launch of Weightmans' LGBTQ+ network marks a significant step for queer visibility in the legal industry. Weightmans has been fully invested in their flourishing Diversity & Inclusion initiative for many years now, having launched its Diversity & Inclusion

action plan in 2018. With the launch of Proud2Be, Weightmans are continuing the work to achieve the full value of diversity, by ensuring that the firm is inclusive, enabling employees to be themselves.

The celebrations continued into Friday 26 July 2024, where members of Proud2Be attended the In Club Liverpool's LGBTQ+ networking event. The In Club is Liverpool's newest LGBTQ+ business network for businesses to come together and access valuable insights that promote diversity and inclusivity in the workplace. Amongst the speakers at Friday's event were In Club's founders: Media Manager **Melissa Kenny** of Smooth Commercial Law Limited and Property Lawyer **Alex Gregory-Chialton** of Dutton Gregory Solicitors who, along with Guest Speaker **John Hyalnd** of Moore Media, spoke of what Pride meant to them, discussing



their personal journeys including navigating the legal industry as members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Saturday 27 July 2024 saw the return of Pride in Liverpool along with March with Pride and Pride in Liverpool Fringe Festival, organised by Liverpool City Region's LGBTQ+ charity, LCR Pride Foundation. As per the Weightmans tradition over the last five years, colleagues at the firm, along with their friends, families and even a couple of pets met up for a pre-Pride celebratory brunch. The day continued into Weightmans taking place in the annual tradition of March with Pride which saw attendance from many other Liverpool-based law firms amongst the over 20,000 attendees.

In an industry historically dominated by straight men, visibility of LGBTQ+ role models in senior positions is crucial to ensure that young and/or aspiring LGBTQ+ lawyers are made to feel that they will be given equal opportunities to develop their careers. Events such as those referred to above serve as an important reminder that having role models in the workplace that represent who you are is crucial to good wellbeing for individuals in any sector and success as a business.

Josh Suffield,
Weightmans



Carpenters Group - marching for Liverpool Pride



At Carpenters Group, we're excited to march for and have a stand at Liverpool Pride 2024.

Liverpool Pride is not just about rainbow flags and marching; it's an ongoing reminder of the fight for inclusion, equity and respect.

Carpenters Group supports LGBTQ+ colleagues and

communities wholeheartedly.

Pride in Liverpool is organised by the LCR Pride Foundation, which champions the rights of LGBTQ+ people. Although Pride has led to progress there is still a long way to go before we are a truly inclusive society. We are trying the best we can to make sure that our workplace is a safe and supportive environment where people can be wholly themselves.



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Chaired by

Nina Sahu, Legal Director at Hill Dickinson

Panel Members:

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- DJ Sheren Guirguis, Family District Judge, Liverpool County Court
- John Owens, Partner, MSB Solicitors
- Nama Zarroug, Solicitor & Higher Court Advocate at Astraea Linskills

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Closing date for applications: See job description for specific details for each post.

Interviews will take place: See job description for details for each post.

Welcome to New MLC Staff

We are pleased to announce that our new CEO, **Liz Reed**, will be taking up her role in August. Liz joins us from the LATAN network, and we are delighted to welcome her on board.

We have also welcomed a new legal assistant to the team this month, **Anthony Akalon**. Anthony started with MLC as a volunteer a few years ago and we are so pleased to now welcome him as a full-time member of staff. Anthony will be mainly assisting the housing team at our Dovecot and Toxteth offices and at Liverpool Civil and Family court, providing assistance at the Court Duty scheme and at our free drop-in sessions.

A New Dawn

A new era of politics is upon us, and we are optimistic that with this change there will be a renewed focus on funding law centres and building legal aid provisions back up to adequate levels. The 75th anniversary of the Legal Aid and Advice Act was on 30th July and with this act initially being brought in by a Labour led government, we hope the current Labour

administration remembers the importance of sustaining of such pivotal legislation. We will be meeting with local politicians in the upcoming weeks and months when our new CEO takes up her role, to open up conversations on how they can help us to sustain and grow our services.



Work experience at MLC

We had the pleasure of hosting a group of students supported by **Kuumba Imani's** community development work for a couple of days of work experience this month. We gave the students an introduction to our work and social welfare law and an insight into what every day life is like at a Law Centre. It was inspiring to meet such focused and passionate young people and we hope from this experience, they may be inspired to join the access to justice movement in the future.

Holistic Approaches and Life Changing Outcomes

An example of our holistic approach, and our work to ensure access to justice in Liverpool, is the case of a vulnerable veteran suffering from severe PTSD who attended our drop-in at Dovecot earlier this year. Our client was in a very distressed state having just received an eviction notice from his landlord because of unpaid rent. His marriage had broken down related to his illness, but his 4 children visited him each weekend. This was the most important thing in his life, but if he was made homeless the visits would stop. He told our Housing Solicitor that if he could not see his children, he would end his life. She realised this was not an idle threat. It was established that the reason for the rent arrears was because he had been sanctioned by the DWP. The priority was to avoid the looming eviction, so our Solicitor contacted

our Debt Worker, who with the assistance of Raise Advice, arranged a Debt Breathing Space. This enabled the case to be adjourned, giving time for our Welfare Benefits advisor to appeal the DWP sanction and apply for PIP, which she believed the client was entitled to. Our Housing Solicitor arranged for £100 to be given to the client from our hardship fund, as it was clear our client had not eaten for several days. Foodbank tickets were arranged as the case progressed. A Discretionary Housing Payment was applied for, which helped with the rent arrears until the DWP issue was sorted out. Our client was awarded a PIP payment of £2364 arrears and £7228 annually. These were life changing amounts and allowed our Housing Solicitor to negotiate further with the landlord. At court, she managed to get the landlord to withdraw the eviction notice. For our client, this stabilised his housing situation and personal finances and enabled his children to visit him regularly. It even allowed him to buy them small birthday presents, which he had not been able to do for a long time.

Thanks to the experience and dedication of our staff, we were able to identify that this client's issues were linked and provide a comprehensive service for him that assisted in several areas of his life where he was experiencing hardship. This service and representation has been absolutely life changing for this client.

Volunteer & Donation Opportunities

Volunteers are the backbone of Merseyside Law Centre. We are looking for like-minded individuals and organisations to get involved with the valuable work we do in the Merseyside City Region.

We would also love to hear from you if you are an organisation that would like to get involved or contribute to our work. We would really like to hear from fellow legal professionals who may be able to contribute their expertise or legal firms who may want to financially support the work we do.

Whatever your skills or experience, please do not hesitate to get in touch if you want to make a difference to the lives of people in your community and have a passion for social justice.

To download our Volunteer Application Pack, please visit www.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk/get-involved and e-mail the completed form to enquiries@merseysidelawcentre.co.uk

With the current cost-of-living crisis, our services are now needed more than ever. If you could consider donating to Merseyside Law Centre, it could make a massive difference to many people's lives in Merseyside. Our donation details are up on our website www.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk/donate

As always, our current contact details and drop in session details are below so please do pass these onto anyone you think may benefit from or require our services. If you are unable to attend a drop-in session, there is an online enquiry form on our website. <https://www.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk/online-enquiry-form>

Twitter: @MerseyLawCentre

Facebook: Merseyside Law Centre

Instagram: @merseysidelawcentre



Merseyside Law Centre

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS JUNE '24

Financial Gains for Clients	£71,213.83
Work Completed	15,918 minutes
Current number of cases open	316



Merseyside Law Centre

Facebook: @Merseyside Law Centre
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Instagram: @merseysidelawcentre

LET US BE YOUR HELPING HAND

www.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk

Providing the fifth emergency service for the most vulnerable in society

WHAT WE DO?

We provide free legal advice, assistance and representation for **housing matters**, mainly early legal advice to avoid court action and legal aid matters, across the Liverpool City Region. Also, **welfare benefits, debt, immigration and asylum advice** for residents of Liverpool.

OUR SERVICES

FREE Drop In Sessions

<p>Advice Drop In</p> <p>Every Monday & Thursday 10am-12pm No appointment required.</p> <p>Dovecot Multi Activity Centre, Back Dovecot Place, Liverpool L14 9BA</p>	<p>Housing Advice Drop In</p> <p>Every Wednesday & Friday 11am-1pm No appointment required.</p> <p>Liverpool Civil and Family Court 35 Vernon Street, L2 2BX</p>
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Debt Advice Drop In

in partnership with Raise Advice Appointment Only. Check website on info how to book.

Every Thursday
1pm-4pm
Appointment only.

Dovecot Multi Activity Centre,
Back Dovecot Place,
Liverpool L14 9BA

If you are unable to attend a drop in, please fill in the enquiry form on our website. Links below.

www.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk/enquiryform



Understanding vicarious trauma in the legal workplace

Vicarious trauma occurs when people are indirectly exposed to trauma through their work with those who have experienced traumatic events.

In the legal sector this can happen to anyone who works with clients who have experienced trauma such as domestic or other violence, child abuse, sexual assault, torture, fleeing their homeland as a refugee, personal injury, clinical negligence or a family break up.

LawCare hears from people across the legal sector who are experiencing vicarious trauma, some without realising it. They share stories like these:

- Struggling to switch off after viewing disturbing material.
- Encounters with suicide in their work.
- Seeking counselling after distressing news about a client.
- Work triggering past personal trauma.
- Feeling suicidal due to work-related trauma.

This article will help you understand and recognise vicarious trauma in yourself, your colleagues, and the people you manage. It also explores the crucial role legal workplaces play in reducing this risk.

Recognising the signs

Continuous exposure to other people's trauma can cause emotional exhaustion and decreased empathy in legal professionals. They might start to feel numb or disconnected from their work and clients, much like the trauma survivors themselves. Additional psychological symptoms may include anxiety, depression, and intrusive thoughts about clients' cases, impacting both personal and professional life. Vicarious trauma can also strain relationships and contribute to feelings of isolation outside work as well.

Spotting the signs of vicarious trauma is

crucial, common symptoms include:

- Feelings of sadness, anxiety, or hopelessness, along with increased irritability or anger.
- Difficulty concentrating, memory problems, and pervasive thoughts about clients' trauma.
- Physical symptoms, such as fatigue and headaches.
- Behavioural symptoms: withdrawing from social interactions, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, and increased use of alcohol or drugs.

Vicarious trauma can also cause burnout, reduce job performance, and force people to pass cases to colleagues or leave their role entirely.

Reducing the risk of vicarious trauma

If you're in a role that involves helping others through trauma, taking care of yourself is essential to provide the best support. There are ways to minimise the risk of vicarious trauma, even when working closely with clients facing challenging situations.

Discover what works best for you.

Everyone is different and has varying levels of resilience and coping strategies that may change over time. Here are a few suggestions.

1. Set boundaries: Don't bring traumatic work home. If you must, set limits. Don't review upsetting material in the evenings; store it away and unwind with activities like going for a walk.
2. Be realistic about your role with clients. Don't take responsibility for their whole life; guide them to the right resources and support.
3. Make sure you know how to recognise the signs of vicarious trauma and reach out for support when necessary. This can range from talking to a colleague to seeking support from a mental health professional.



LawCare
Supporting the Legal Community

Supporting your colleagues

If you're concerned that a colleague may be struggling with vicarious trauma don't be afraid to talk to them. They might not recognise what is happening or may feel they should handle their work and emotions alone. Let them know you've noticed changes in their behaviour and that you're there to support them. Then listen and give them space to talk about what they're experiencing. Consider directing them to additional support, such as LawCare, their GP, or counselling services provided your employer.

The role of legal workplaces

Legal workplaces are crucial in reducing the risk of vicarious trauma for employees. Robust strategies are needed to create a supportive and resilient work environment. Here are some suggested steps to achieve this:

1. Provide training to help employees recognise signs of vicarious trauma and understand its impact.
2. Train managers to recognise the signs of vicarious trauma in their teams and how to provide and signpost to appropriate support.
3. Provide confidential counselling services when necessary.
4. Encourage a healthy work-life balance that ensure reasonable work hours, breaks, and opportunities for employees to take a break from work.
5. Foster open communication, where employees feel safe sharing their experiences and emotions without stigma. Team meetings and peer support groups provide platforms for processing difficult cases, helping to reduce feelings of isolation and stress.

Seeking support from LawCare

LawCare offers free and confidential emotional support for people in the legal sector. You can contact LawCare if you're experiencing vicarious trauma or if you just need someone to talk to about personal or work-related matters. You can

also get in touch with LawCare if you are worried about someone you work with. Call LawCare on 0800 279 6888, email support@lawcare.org.uk or visit www.lawcare.org.uk to get in touch using the live online chat. There are also resources about vicarious trauma on the LawCare website.

Let's talk about vicarious trauma webinar On Thursday 5 September, from 12.30 to 1.30pm, join LawCare for a webinar about the impact of vicarious trauma on people working in the legal sector. The webinar offers an opportunity for you to enhance

your understanding of vicarious trauma and its impact on mental health. Sign up for the webinar here - <https://lawcare.beaconforms.com/form/8545ad9e>

Vicarious trauma online training

LawCare also offers a one-hour online training session on vicarious trauma and the next session is on Wednesday 2 October, 12 to 1pm.

This specialist training is delivered by counsellor and former solicitor Mary Jackson, who has extensive experience in facilitating vicarious trauma training.

It is aimed at people in the legal sector who work with vulnerable clients or are exposed to traumatic images or experiences, such as in immigration, criminal, personal injury/clinical negligence, or family work. This training aims to introduce and develop an understanding of the concept of vicarious trauma and its potential emotional impact. Suggestions for recognising and managing vicarious trauma will also be provided.

Book your place on the training - <https://lawcare.beaconforms.com/form/47bdfec2>

New children category added in tenth Merseyside Independent Business Awards



Nominations are now open for the Merseyside Independent Business Awards 2024.

This year's competition, founded and hosted by Morecrofts Solicitors, includes a new category for Children-Focussed Business of the Year, which aims to recognise businesses in a range of sectors including childcare providers, activity clubs, visitor attractions and retailers.

Other categories include Digital & Technology, Professional Services, Trades & Manufacturing and Employer of the Year, with one of the individual category winners also claiming the overall title of Merseyside Independent Business of the Year.

Businesses wishing to enter or to nominate their peers are able to do so via a recorded video submission, while a more traditional online nomination form is also available. Entries close in August and the winners will be announced at a glittering ceremony at the Rum Warehouse in Liverpool on Thursday 17 October.

This will be the tenth instalment of the MIB Awards and they are once again headline sponsored by Liverpool BID Company.

Alison Lobb, managing partner at Morecrofts Solicitors, said: "When we first devised the Merseyside Independent Business Awards, we wanted to highlight the enormous and irreplaceable contribution

that our independent sector makes to the city region economy.

"It is incredible to think that we are now approaching our tenth event, despite a two-year hiatus caused by the pandemic, and the awards are arguably more relevant and necessary than ever before.

"Our judging panels of local business leaders take real joy in hearing about all of the various success stories happening across our SME community and we look forward to receiving nominations in the coming weeks."

Bill Addy, chief executive of Liverpool BID Company, added: "The fact that the MIB Awards has endured and thrived to reach its tenth event signifies the important role it plays in recognising the work of the local independent business community.

"We are thrilled to continue our long-term support of the awards and it will be a pleasure to join our business owners and their inspirational teams at the awards ceremony in October."

To enter the Merseyside Independent Business Awards 2024 or for further information, visit www.mibawards.co.uk.



The Big Report 2024 highlights The Solicitors' Charity's key role in supporting the profession



- 33% increase in number of solicitors supported by The Solicitors' Charity
- Wellbeing support to clients totalled £972,064
- Rising demand for wellbeing support led to more funded referrals
- Disproportionately high demand from diverse ethnicities

“The support we offer is a real lifeline to the solicitors we help in times of hardship or crisis – it really validates The Solicitors' Charity as a key safety net for the profession,” says a Case Manager from the Wellbeing & Grants Team.

The Big Report 2024 reflects this – with 33 per cent more solicitors being helped by the charity in 2023, compared with previous year, together with an increase in the overall awards made to clients.

A total of £972,064 of wellbeing support was given to solicitors in need last year or paid to partners to provide services.

The rise in demand for the charity's support with emotional, physical, professional, and financial wellbeing in 2023 led to more funded referrals for all the charity's partners – LawCare, Onebright, Renovo, Citizens Advice Manchester, and AdviceWorks.

The demographic breakdown also revealed that demand for services was high from those with diverse ethnic backgrounds. Industry data shows that

this figure usually represents 18-19% of the solicitor workforce. However, the Solicitors' Charity reports double this proportion of new clients from different ethnicities.

The Solicitors' Charity CEO, **Nick Gallagher**, said: *“We are proud to publish such a positive Big Report this year, reflecting the financial support we have provided over the past year to more than a third more solicitors facing challenges.*

“The Big Report shows there is a real demand for our wellbeing services in all four wellbeing pillars – emotional, professional, physical and financial – and we are providing more support than ever before.

“Our clients came from a wide demographic across England and Wales – 66% identified as having some type of disability and over 60% were aged between 30 and 50. This demonstrates that we are helping a large proportion of people in mid-career or when their professional lives are (or should be) in full flow. The biggest stress factors were identified as time pressures, high workload and client demands and the charity has provided wellbeing support to help solicitors with tackling these.

“Now, more than ever, the growing demand for wellbeing support from solicitors and the increase in awards we have made over the past year demonstrates

that The Solicitors' Charity plays a key role in providing all our clients with the help they need to achieve a healthy work-life balance.”

The Solicitors' Charity funded 324 clients to receive wellbeing support from LawCare, which was almost double the previous year's number of solicitors, seeking help with bullying and harassment concerns. Onebright was funded to provide mental health assessments and therapy referrals to 28 solicitors and their dependants.

Career transition counselling was provided to 19 clients by Renovo, with 40% already having secured a new job and others actively searching for work after receiving this targeted support. A further 37 solicitors were helped with money management advice by AdviceWorks and 32 received welfare benefit or debt advice from Citizens Advice Manchester, all with The Solicitors' Charity funding.

The charity also supported solicitors (and former solicitors) with their physical wellbeing, including funding a specially adapted car for wheelchair transport.

If you would like more information about The Solicitors' Charity services or to make a donation to support the charity, visit thesolicitorscharity.org.

Read the Big Report 2024 at thesolicitorscharity.org/big-report

THE SOLICITORS' CHARITY.
Supporting you, since 1858

Access to Justice Committee



James Mannouch

The Access to Justice Committee met in early July. It was a well-attended meeting that welcomed two new solicitors to its membership.

The Committee is working hard to improve the provision of housing advice within the city and progress is being made in this regard. A round-table meeting will be held between solicitors and third sector advice agencies with the aim of identifying referral efficiencies. In the same token, the Committee will be looking to deepen relations with local MPs and representatives from the Liverpool City Region, lobbying on behalf of the local profession. This work will accelerate following the general election.

The Committee has been looking at ways to improve the provision of legal aid within certain legal sectors. This has the potential to include judicial review. It is vital that any claim is properly evidenced. Committee members have therefore begun the process of quantifying matters declined due to

a lack of capacity. This work shall continue.

The Committee reflected on a recent symposium it facilitated in conjunction with Liverpool City Council, the University of Law and the University of Liverpool. The symposium addressed the issue of violence against women and girls from immigrant communities. One of its aims was to identify shortfalls in the provision of legal advice within this area. Liverpool City Council are in the process of following up on findings, and Committee members will continue to work to make improvements.

The Committee shall meet again in September. Anyone wishing to join is most welcome. Please email james.mannouch@law.ac.uk for further details. James Mannouch - Chair

Braving the heights for healing hearts



Alison McCormack, Director of Alison McCormack Solicitors recently took a leap into the unknown when she set up her own niche practice but now, she's taken it a step further and has leapt out of a plane for charity.



Alison McCormack

Alison, who specialises in helping victims of Crime to access compensation is raising funds for a local charity who support bereaved families who have lost children. Love Jasmine offer one to one support to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents and provide a safe space where families can come together and share their grief.

The skydive took place on 23rd June and Alison whose target was £450 has managed to raise £1000. Alison recently chose Love Jasmine as her charity of the year and has already supported their recent Blind wine tasting event at Waterloo Rugby Club and hopes to be involved in other events.

Alison said "Love Jasmine are a really special charity that support so many bereaved families across Merseyside. Rob and Kathy have used their experience of grief and loss to help others and what they have created is amazing."

For more information about the amazing work that Love Jasmine do check out their website.

[Love Jasmine – Supporting bereaved families following the loss of a child](#)

To sponsor Alison please click on her JustGiving link

https://www.justgiving.com/page/alison-mccormacksolicitors-1706816393246?utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=page%2Falison-mccormacksolicitors-1706816393246&utm_source=copyLink&utm_campaign=pfp-share



At the Equality and Employment Law Centre, our mission is to champion the rights of individuals who have faced discrimination, whether in the workplace or as consumers. Discrimination can manifest in various forms, such as a bank failing to communicate in large font for the partially sighted, Housing Associations not recognizing the need for reasonable adjustments for disabled tenants, or employers and educators neglecting their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

Our clients are often among the most vulnerable in society, making our legal advice and assistance crucial. Ensuring early access to justice for as many people as possible is vital for our community. Recently, in one week alone, we settled five discrimination cases, resulting in a total of £120,000 in compensation, which is life-changing for our clients.

One of our clients said, “I have no doubt that she (our solicitor) has saved our livelihoods, achieving justice against a public body that would have otherwise continued to use all its resources to defend its wrongdoings. I cannot reiterate enough how you have saved the livelihood of my mum, a vulnerable person and alleviated the further decline of her health during an incredibly difficult time.”

Changes Afoot for Access to Justice

At the recent Law Centre Network conference in Birmingham, themed “Unleashing the Power of the Network,” we discussed plans to become better known for our vital work and to be at the forefront when individuals face social injustice. We have plans in place to collaborate more effectively to make our centres integral to ensuring everyone in society has access to justice.

We recently hosted Labour MP **Justin Madders** at our Law Centre, who

discussed proposed employment reforms and listened to our experiences. We are excited about the impact of the proposed government’s New Deal for Working People. Strengthening employees’ rights through legislation will help law centres support vulnerable clients and prevent their exploitation. With more stable and predictable employment conditions, clients will be better positioned to assert their rights and engage with the legal system proactively. This will allow us to allocate resources more effectively and focus on long-term advocacy and systemic change. Businesses and organisations will need to understand the impacts and implications of the government’s business and employment legal reforms.



Kristian Khan, Legal Practice Manager, Sarah Doyle, Legal Administrator and parliamentary liaison, Katie Corless, Solicitor

Celebrations

We are proud of our hardworking and dedicated team at the Law Centre. In addition to our successes for clients, we celebrate our team’s individual and professional achievements.

- Our Supervising Solicitor, **Sarah Russell**, has been elected as the MP for Congleton. Her hard work has paid off, and we look forward to seeing her impact on her constituents and future successes.
- This month, we also celebrate two of our Solicitors, **Hannah McNulty** and **Katie Corless**, who have been qualified for two and four years, respectively.
- Our newest recruit, **Eleanor Mary Silk**, was Called to The Bar of England & Wales by The Honourable Society of the Middle Temple on 25th July. Eleanor joined us in March 2024 from private practice and plans to continue working with Law Centres fighting for justice for our clients.
- Additionally, we are delighted that our graduate solicitor apprentice **Molly Howarth** recently qualified as a solicitor. Molly graduated from Liverpool University in July 2021 and joined the law centre as a volunteer before becoming a solicitor apprentice.



Eleanor Mary Silk at Middle Temple



Julie Ehlen, CEO with Sarah Russell and the team meeting Justin Madders, MP

How Can We Help You

We provide advice and assistance to clients under our Legal Aid contract and operate an Employment Helpline offering free advice to individuals living in the Liverpool City region. We also provide HR and employment advice to not for profit organisations that require assistance with work related matters. Whether you are an employer or employee needing advice and assistance but not eligible for Legal Aid, we are here to help. Our legal professionals can also provide businesses and organisations with practical tips to help your business get prepared for the changing employment landscape.

Recruitment

Working at our Law Centre is incredibly rewarding. Our team make a significant difference for clients who could not otherwise afford solicitor fees. The work we do is complex but

very interesting, and it has a profound impact on the lives of those we help. Claimant solicitors are becoming a rare breed, and we are committed to developing the social justice solicitors of the future.

We are currently recruiting for a Solicitor with at least two years of PQE and experience in Employment Law who is passionate about social justice. We are also looking for an experienced Paralegal with around three years of experience in employment, community care or housing or who has an extensive knowledge of the Equality Act 2010. This role will give the right person an exciting opportunity to work in a well-established organisation and become a qualified solicitor through a period of recognised training (training contract) or via the solicitor apprenticeship programme or SQE route. This is an excellent career opportunity with ongoing training and supervision.

Volunteers are highly valued at our Law Centre. Recently, we welcomed three new volunteers whose hard work has been greatly appreciated. **Sam** and **Ted** aged 17 from Cardinal Heenan School enjoyed their placement so much that they have stayed in as volunteers and are interested in pursuing a career in law.

We are also very interested in any retired legal professionals who want to get involved in our dynamic Law Centre, either as a volunteer or board member. Additionally, we would welcome the support of pro bono solicitors from the rich pool of talented legal professionals in the Liverpool City Region.

If you would like to get involved as a volunteer or Trustee, send over your CV, please email us at info@eael.co.uk, or call our Legal Practice Manager Kristian Khan on 0151237 2664 for an informal chat.

Join us in making a difference!

Regulation Update

August 2024

The latest Regulation news from Andrea Cohen of Weightmans LLP



Andrea Cohen

Unfortunately, at the time of writing, we are still waiting for summer to properly arrive (hopefully the sunshine for a couple of days mid-July will not have been all we are getting this year!), but we continue to provide our regular overview of what has been happening recently in the world of risk and compliance, regulatory and disciplinary decisions, and look ahead to what's on the horizon.

Increase in compensation fund levies confirmed

Following a consultation on how to ensure the compensation fund survives following recent interventions, the SRA has confirmed that the contributions paid by individual solicitors and firms to the compensation fund for 2024/25 will increase from £30 to £90 and from £660 to £2220 respectively, which will come into force from November if approved by the Legal Services Board ("LSB"). The increases are required to rebuild the fund reserves which have been depleted due to the number of recent interventions and claims, including anticipated claims of £35m arising from the Axiom Ince closure, which is the subject of a long-awaited report into the response of the SRA, which was delayed due to the General Election, but

which has not yet, at the date of writing, been published.

Responses to the consultation raised concerns about the amount of the proposed increase, how the figures were calculated and the fact that all firms, whatever their size, pay the same amount. The SRA said more detail would be included in the representation to the LSB and the issue regarding the same level of contribution by all firms will be the subject of further consultation later in the year. Practising certificate fees will remain the same as this year. The SRA also said: *"Due to the low level of responses received to the consultation and the fact that we are considering contributions as part of the consumer protection work leads us to conclude that it remains appropriate to approve the contributions as proposed."*

SRA consultation on updates to the financial penalty regime

The SRA recently launched a consultation relating to its proposals for further increases to SRA fining powers, in addition to its unlimited fining powers in cases of economic crime under ECCTA 2023.

The SRA want to introduce minimum fines for each penalty band, believing that some fines imposed now are not high enough. The new proposals include minimum fines across all fine bandings, ranging from £5,000 for firms and £2,500 for individuals whom the SRA determines have committed the least serious misconduct, to £500,000 for firms and £100,000 for individuals for the most serious misconduct. New bands are also proposed, with Band F penalties starting at 11% of a firm's annual domestic turnover and 146% of an individual's annual gross income.

Another proposed change is to the published fining guidance to make clear that once the fine levels have been determined, they can be further increased

by the amount of any financial gain that resulted from the misconduct.

Further changes outlined in the consultation include greater clarity on how the SRA will judge and take into account the impact and harm caused by the misconduct when deciding on the level of the fine and an apparent change to the SRA recent approach in relation to convictions for drink driving, where, unless there are aggravating factors or repeated incidences, a warning or rebuke will be the most likely disciplinary outcome.

The consultation closes on 20 September 2024 and we would encourage solicitors and firms to review and respond to the consultation. As noted above, in relation to compensation fund levies, a low level of responses will result in the SRA introducing the changes it is proposing.

Read more on the [financial penalties consultation](#).

AML and sanctions data requirements

The SRA has written to all COLPs telling them to get ready for the AML Data Collection exercise 2024. The questionnaire regarding AML and financial sanctions activity will be sent out at the beginning of August and failure to return it by mid-September may lead to enforcement action. The SRA have advised that all regulated firms will need to provide information on:

- work they carry out within scope of the Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations 2017;
 - any contact or involvement with the sanctions regime and any persons who are designated under it;
 - submission of suspicious activity reports to the National Crime Agency; and
 - any trust or company services
- For those firms not within scope of MLR 2017, a nil return can be submitted

in relation to that section, but the questionnaire should not be ignored. All submissions must be made via the online portal and the specimen questionnaire can be accessed here. The window for responses opens at the start of August.

The Compli team is on hand if you need any advice or assistance, so please do get in touch if we can help you.

New rules on fees in financial mis-selling work

As we have previously reported, from 26 July 2024 there are new rules in place, the SRA Claims Management Fees Rules, and supporting guidance, for firms who represent clients in relation to financial services claims, under which fees are now capped at a maximum charge, in line with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) fee cap.

SRA reports firms to Treasury for breaching sanctions

The SRA has reported two firms to the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (“OFSI”) for breaching sanctions on Russia. The law firms were allegedly facilitating transactions worth more than £300,000. In the annual report to the board, the SRA’s MLRO also reported that conveyancing remained the highest risk area, and 23 suspicious activity reports (“SARs”) were made to the National Crime Agency from April 2023 to April 2024. The majority of those reports related to conveyancing work, involving more than £75 million in suspect transactions or arrangements involving the legal profession. The first SAR linked to proliferation financing was made, involving the trading of large quantities of high-value dual-use goods. Firms not conducting any or sufficient due diligence and source of funds checks on their clients, or third parties, was a key theme, as well as firms not properly scrutinising the information provided which should have triggered concerns.

SRA Board agrees to regulate CILEX members

The SRA Board and Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (“CILEX”) Board are working together to finalise the details to make an application to the Legal Services Board for CILEX members to be regulated by the SRA. CILEX expects its board to

make a final decision whether to proceed with an application at its meeting in October. The Law Society, which opposes the proposals, would also need to approve the rule changes required for the SRA to regulate CILEX members.

New practice notes and guidance

Rather unusually, other than the guidance referred to above, there have been no new practice notes published by the SRA since our update last month. However, the Law Society has published the following practice note within the last month:

- Trust corporations: [Trust corporations | The Law Society](#)

Disciplinary and regulatory decisions

There has, once again, been a large number of decisions and judgments reported since our last update.

Notable decisions include:

Solicitor who practiced before end of suspension avoids permanent strike off

A solicitor, suspended for a year from April 2015 for breaching accounts rules and acting without integrity, practiced on and off as a solicitor from February to April 2016 and continued to work with the firm until January 2017. The SRA initially proposed an agreed outcome that he should be suspended for three years, but the tribunal disagreed, considering this not to be sufficient in view of the seriousness of the misconduct and accepted, with some reservations, a revised agreement of 5 years. He was also ordered to pay £4,000 costs.

Solicitor involved in fraudulent applications to Home Office struck off

A solicitor providing immigration advice and services despite not being qualified to do so, who made fraudulent applications to the Home Office with the intention of assisting unlawful immigration, and who sought to obtain leave to remain in the UK by telling the Home office he was married to an EEA national has been struck off, having been convicted and sentenced to eight years imprisonment.

Solicitor who admitted to being a risk to the profession struck off

A law firm director who improperly authorised transfers worth more than

£16,000 from client to office account to deal with financial difficulties has been struck off. He was found to have tried to mislead the SRA investigators. He claimed to have no judgment debts against him when there were, to have a bookkeeper, but that person had resigned, and said client accounts were reconciled monthly, when the books had not been done for over 12 months.

Firm fined for allowing client account to be used as a banking facility

A firm has been fined over £36,000 and its COFA rebuked for allowing its client account to be used as a banking facility, having self-reported that \$4.1 million was paid into and out of its client account in July 2021 on behalf of a corporate client. The SRA found that the work carried out for the client on the sale of the minority shareholding in another company did not justify the money that passed through the client account, and some of the money had been received for and paid out to a third party who was not its client.

Partner struck off for bullying

A solicitor was struck off for bullying and harassment and abusing his position of seniority and authority. The SDT found that his conduct caused colleagues harassment, alarm or distress, and he made inappropriate and unsubstantiated allegations about them. His actions included shouting aggressively, using unsuitable and homophobic language, demeaning junior colleagues and physically assaulting members of staff. The solicitor denied all the allegations. He did not appear at the SDT and was not represented. He was also ordered to pay costs of almost £42,000.

How Compli can help...

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

Andrea Cohen
Compli,
Weightmans LLP

Radical new tech development delivers seamless one stop ID verification process - a bona fide game changer for financial services

A game changing new app launched by tech developer Professional Office is set to radically change the way financial services firms verify their client identity and improve their KYC process.

As part of the company's SanctionsSearch.com© suite of tools, users can now VERIFY the identity of people from anywhere in the world holding a valid biometric passport simply by using the smart phone app, ValidateMe.

ValidateMe© takes customers through a comprehensive, sign posted journey of collecting documents, liveness facial recognition and the current 'live' status of the documents presented.

And it is all done via the applicant's smart phone.

The technology - cleverly - unlocks the NFC chip in the passport to confirm the individual is actually who they say they are. Critically, all data is then cross verified to ensure that all the information is authentic.

"Our new product is set to radically transform the way financial services and associated legal and professional services firms do business," said MD **Chris Clare**.

"There's a host of software products out there that claim to be market leaders in the verification process, by using 'liveness' and facial recognition

to match people with images on documents.

"But while none are inherently bad, most are not 100 per cent perfect," added Clare.

"The problem is, they all rely on the validity of the document, such as the included data, and - amongst other things - the photo of the person on a passport.

"If that photo or document is compromised, then any validation that comes from it is inherently flawed. And then you have a big problem," said Clare.

"Here at Professional Office, we have focused our energies over the last four years and developed our NFC (Near Field Communication) PCV (Passport Chip Verification) tool

"We believe it is the most state of the art ID verification tool available."

So, how does it work?



"The NFC chip in a passport contains an encrypted copy of all the data printed on it, including the photo of the client, which should match the one visible on the document.

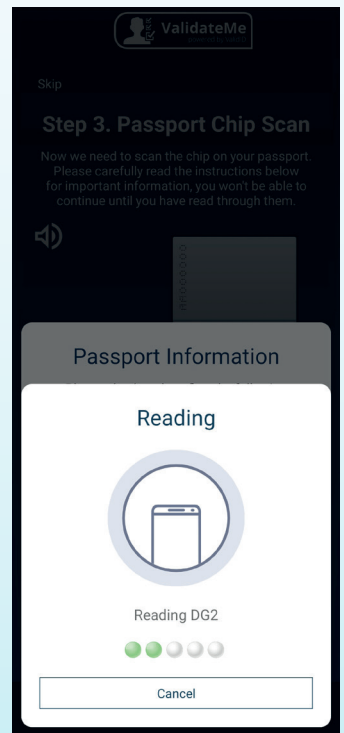
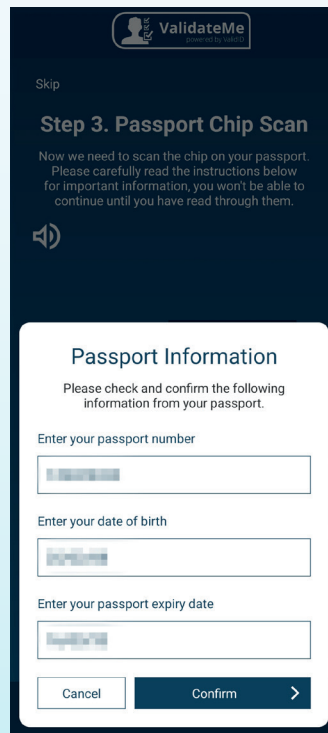
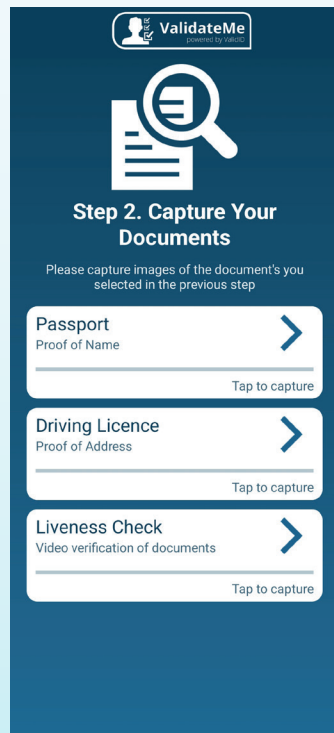
"All this data is digitally encrypted and signed with a verifiable Government - issued secure certificate.



"That government-issued encryption certificate held on the chip is verified to ensure that the data has not been tampered with, providing one of the most robust ID verifications on the market at the moment.

"All data collected by ValidateMe© is fully encrypted on the phone ensuring it is not accessible to anyone. Once it has been used it is permanently removed from the device." explained Clare.

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Culture and heritage take centre stage on Liverpool's streets

Our regular update from Julie Johnson, partner at Morecrofts Solicitors and chair of Liverpool BID Company's Commercial District BID operating board

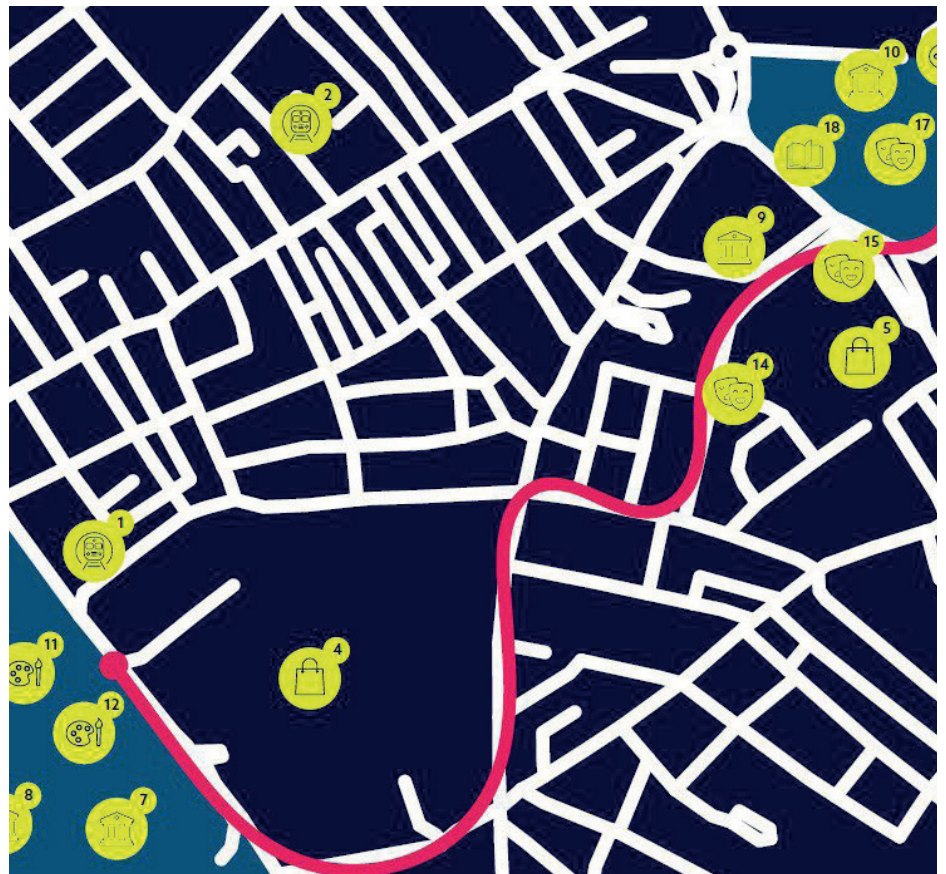


Julie Johnson

This month, a new pilot launches exploring a way of emphasising heritage, culture and the arts within Liverpool city centre.

Liverpool Culture Mile pilot is a potential new walking route linking St George's Plateau with the Royal Albert Dock Liverpool. At a launch event this week, civic leaders joined business and cultural activity to explore the proposed route, with artistic interventions along the way.

It is part of a project driven by Liverpool BID Company called Liverpool Cultural Threads Initiative, exploring Liverpool's culture through its streets. It is helping to find ways to tell the story of the city's history, its modern culture, like music or contemporary art through key locations. On this first mile long walk this includes, the oldest laid out square in the city centre Williamson Square, and its potential for reinvention through animation, Bluecoat, the oldest building in the city centre and the UK's oldest arts centre, Hanover Street and Paradise Street, role in the city's maritime and wayfaring past and place in modern Liverpool, Royal Albert Dock Liverpool.



Building on an international model of cultural districts and cultural routes, Liverpool's Cultural Threads Initiative is an innovative and creative approach to urban regeneration. Routes rich with history and culture, brimming with art and commercial interest side by side, these areas have the power to bring communities together, to enhance the public realm and cultivate local identity. It inspires pride in art and artists, reflecting the importance of today's generation of creatives as they rub shoulders with those of the past. Underused spaces are given purpose and attention, stories are given a wider spotlight and are tied together to give greater meaning, businesses can benefit from the growth in footfall and character. It is a sustainable and active model for

revitalising modern, liveable cities, like Liverpool.

Instead of having a top down approach to regeneration it is about exploring ways as a city that we can repurpose and redefine areas. Making the city a place for everyone here, whatever their role in the city. I am excited to see this project launch and for the conversation to begin.

This initiative is showcasing the city's heritage and public spaces. Especially our cultural offer and how it is linked with the heritage is truly an international model of cultural routes to continue to develop growth within the city. It encourages a deeper understanding of the cultural treasures that have shaped Liverpool into the dynamic city it is today.

Detailed Assessment – 4 Top Tips from the front line



Kris Kilsby

A detailed assessment hearing is the last resort when it comes to attempting to negotiate costs between the parties at the conclusion of the case. In most circumstances a detailed assessment hearing is required when there is a fundamental disagreement between the parties in respect of the costs which cannot be compromised or resolved through negotiation. By the time a detailed assessment is to be requested both parties will know where they stand through the service of points of dispute and replies, therefore, the request can be made when both parties are clear on what the issues are that need to be resolved by the Court.

Below are 4 top tips that can help you strengthen your prospects at a Detailed Assessment Hearing.

1. Keep contemporaneous file notes

Where costs are to be assessed on the standard basis the burden of proof is placed on the receiving party to demonstrate that the costs claimed have been reasonably incurred and are reasonable and proportionate in amount (CPR 44.3(2)(a)). Furthermore, when considering the items challenged the Court will resolve any doubt it may have in the paying party's favour (CPR 44.3(2)(b)).

The best way of rebutting this presumption is to have clear contemporaneous records of what work was done and why it was done. It is therefore essential that the file of papers that is submitted to the Court contains all file notes and correspondence to support the costs claimed within the bill to rebut any presumed doubt.

2. Remain civil in correspondence

It goes without saying that litigation can be fraught with tense exchanges between parties, with each attempting to put forward their client's arguments robustly. However, it is worth bearing in mind that if the matter proceeds to a detailed assessment then the correspondence may well end up being read by a Judge.

When assessing whether costs are reasonable and proportionate they will refer to *'any additional work generated by the conduct of the paying party'* (CPR 44.3(5)(d)) and *'the conduct of all the parties...before as well as during the proceedings and the efforts made... in order to try to resolve the dispute'* CPR 44.4(3)(a).

So it is always important to maintain a reasonable and professional tone throughout because it could have a detrimental impact on the arguments you attempt to put forward at the Detailed Assessment Hearing.

3. Prepare clear instructions to Counsel

Counsel's fees can often account for a significant sum and the involvement or reliance upon Counsel is regularly challenged by paying parties. The first section of documents required to be included within the detailed assessment bundle are *'instructions and briefs to counsel arranged in chronological order together with all advices, opinions and drafts received and response to such instructions'* (CPR 47PD para 13.12(i)).

In the matter of *Allseas Group SA, R (On the Application of) v Sultana* [2023] EWHC 2731 (SCCO) Counsel's fees were heavily challenged. This judgment flowed from a costs assessment following a private prosecution, and as such, technically is under similar but slightly different rules. However, the conclusions reached by Costs Judge Leonard should be considered to be a pre-emptive warning to any civil litigators going to a detailed assessment under the CPR.

When considering the challenges made to leading and junior counsel's fees in this matter, Costs Judge Leonard stated that *'where a substantial conference takes place between solicitors and counsel I would normally expect to see a detailed record of the conference itself. Without such a record an element of doubt inevitably arises'*.

As mentioned above, where doubt arises it will ultimately be resolved in favour of the paying party. As such, clear instructions should be provided to Counsel setting out the issues to be addressed within the advice or at the forthcoming conference. If this can be provided to the judge at the detailed assessment hearing then the major part of the battle is already won.

4. Be proactive when preparing to submit the file ahead of the Detailed Assessment Hearing

It should also be noted that the detailed assessment bundle (containing the file of papers) has a strict window to be submitted, namely, no more than 14 days and no less than 7 days before the listed hearing (CPR 47 PD para 13.11).

From personal experience I can confirm that having an easily navigable file of papers can place you firmly in the Judge's good books and supports the perception that the bill is accurate and that the work undertaken was reasonable and proportionate. Failure to be able to do this is likely to waste valuable court time looking for specific entries and will likely try the Judge's patience ultimately leading to the presumption being relied upon too readily leading to items being disallowed in their entirety.

Kris Kilsby is a Costs Lawyer at Paramount Legal Costs and a Council member of the Association of Costs Lawyers. For any further questions or queries about costs and solicitor/own client assessments please get in touch at Kristopher.Kilsby@paramountlegalcosts.co.uk



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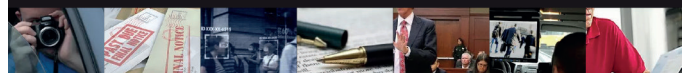
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Charity Spotlight: The OPAL Centre - Nurturing Special Needs Children & Young Adults Through Play



OPAL (Opportunity for Play Adventure and Learning Centre) are a Wirral-based charity who run a centre to nurture special needs children and young adults through play.



OPAL was founded by Helen Panteli and Lynnette Bonner in response to the closure of Wirral Play Council, who had been providing free play opportunities for Children since 1974, but closed in October 2020 due to financial implications caused by the Covid pandemic.

The new centre was opened in March 2023 to support children and their families with special needs and provides a haven for children and young adults aged 6-25, enabling them to thrive.

The aim of the centre is to provide a safe and inclusive space for the children, with personalised play schemes that allow them the freedom to choose the best activities which will foster each individual child's emotional, social, intellectual, linguistic, and creative development.

The key opportunities the centre offers include:

Sensory Play:

- Activities that support sensory processing.
- Communication Development to enhance communication skills.

Life Skills:

- Practical activities like cookery.
- Team Participation:
- Group activities promoting teamwork.

Creative Play:

- Arts, crafts, and imaginative play.

The OPAL centre is committed to social inclusion and provides opportunities for all positions regardless of ability, ethnicity, gender, cultural background or language.

Staff members are very committed to caring for all children at the centre and are highly trained in the skills required to support the children's unique needs.

The centre also supports the children's families by offering respite care. The safe, engaging environment where fun and activities are readily available means they can rest assured their child is in good hands and can really relax and recharge their batteries.

The highly experienced and dedicated staff are trained to understand and support each child's development through carefully planned activities best suited to them.

The charitable purpose of OPAL is to promote social inclusion of children and young adults with special needs improving their ability to interact through play and activities, thus improving their social and communication skills. In addition, the centre is very committed



to supporting their families and working closely with them to provide the best possible support for their children.

Opening hours

Monday 6pm-8.30pm (age 14-25)

Tuesday 6pm-8pm (age 6-14)

Thursday 6pm-8.30pm (age 14-25)

Friday 6pm-8pm (age 6-14)

Saturday 9.30am-12.30pm (age 6-14)

The centre is also open through the school holidays, offering respite for the families whilst schools are closed

We have introduced a charge of £9.50 per hour due to rent, staff etc.

By offering a safe, inclusive and enriching environment where children with special needs can develop their abilities through activities they enjoy, the OPAL Centre can be seen very much as a lifeline for both the parents and children.

How to support us

Support the OPAL Centre through donations, volunteering, fundraising, and spreading the word. Your contributions help maintain and expand our programs, making a significant difference in the lives of children with special needs.

Please email OPALcentre@outlook.com

O.P.A.L. CENTRE, 1 Berner Street, Birkenhead CH41 4YJ



Hostage taking and mediation – what’s the difference?



Chris Makin

You may be tempted to reverse the question and ask what are the similarities between the two. Surely there can’t be any? But read on.

I recently attended the advanced mediation training course run by the Association of Northern Mediators up near Malham Tarn, in the rugged but beautiful North Yorkshire. It’s been run for 23 years, I have attended all but a couple of them, and we get some amazing speakers.

This time we had Phil and Damien, who had recently retired from the Metropolitan Police as negotiators with hostage takers. What a job! Remember the Balcolme Street siege? The Spaghetti House restaurant siege? How about the Iranian Embassy, where WPC Yvonne Fletcher was murdered? If you are old enough, you will undoubtedly remember watching the action on live TV where the SAS belayed down from the roof, threw stun grenades through the windows and retook the premises.

Well, this was not a failure in negotiation, since some situations are intractable and violence has to be used, but our guys are the ones who talk to the hostage takers (or those threatening suicide) to defuse the situation, make them appreciate their position is hopeless, and persuade them to surrender whilst releasing the hostages unharmed. Many of these situations we don’t even hear about.

How is it done? By active listening. Let me digress for a moment.

When I was taking advanced driving lessons, I was taught that many skills are remembered through mnemonics. For example, the things you have to check before driving away are POWER: that’s Petrol, Oil, Water, Electrics and Rubber (tyres). Similarly, with negotiation the mnemonic is MORE PIES. And, remarkably, this is where mediation comes in, because the effectiveness of active listening is *identical* in hostage taking as in mediation. It’s remarkable, but true. So let’s look at active listening in detail.

With hostage taking, there will usually be a telephone line between the leader of the hostage takers and the police negotiator, who will have a team working silently to help him. With mediation, we have had the joint session at the start, and when I see the parties separately in their rooms, when I feel I have their confidence (it may be in the first meeting or a later one) I ask the magic question: “*What do you seek to achieve today that you don’t have right now?*” And the reply is usually surprising, and nothing to do with the formal case. These, then, are the techniques which the mediator (and the hostage negotiator) must use to find out what the other party really wants:

M = minimal encouragers. Make short noises (hmmm, ahh, I see, go on) or smile and nod. I remember giving a couple of interviews for BBC’s File on Four (about rogue landlords and then the British National Party, since you ask) and I talk too much and too fast. The interviewer actually conducted me with her eyebrows, and I make a much better job of it.

O = open questions. A closed question invites only a yes or no answer; you don’t learn much. But with an open question, you encourage a full answer: Tell me, then what happened, etc.

R = reflection. Repeat some of the words they use, to show that you understand, and to encourage them to say more.

E = emotional labelling. Hear the emotion and express it back. Closely allied with reflection. Don’t worry if you express it wrongly; they will correct you and this all helps to build empathy.

P = paraphrasing. Hear their words and give back the same, but more briefly. Again, this builds empathy because, whether or not you agree with them (and who would agree with a hostage taker or a party in mediation with a hopeless case?) they will tell you their true needs.

I = I-messages. “You” is accusatory; “I” allows you to say the same thing in a less provocative way. For instance, if you suggest the person is lying, don’t say “You are a liar” which is likely to end the conversation, but say “I am confused; you said before X but now I’m hearing you say Y. How is that?”

E = effective pause or silence. When they stop talking, perhaps to think or because they don’t want to say any more, don’t be tempted to fill that silence with your own words. Silences are unnatural, so wait silently and they will be tempted to speak, and perhaps to reveal something really valuable.

S = summarising. Summarise what has been said, at more length than with paraphrasing. Use some of their words; they will see that you have understood what they were trying to tell you.

So this gives you an insight into what goes on in those private rooms in a mediation. Hostage negotiators bear huge responsibility in life or death situations, and I admit that mediation is seldom a matter of life or death. But it is hugely important to the parties, so the mediator carries huge responsibilities too. We are not just having a cosy chat

with your clients; we are highly trained (well, most of us are!) and we have tools we can use to help them.

As **May LJ** said in *Egan –v- Motor Services (Bath) Ltd* [2007] EWCA Civ 1002:

“Mediation is a perfectly proper adjunct to litigation. The skills are now well developed. The results are astonishingly good.

“Try it more often.”

Biog: *Chris Makin has practised as a forensic accountant and expert witness for 30 years, latterly as Head of Litigation Support at a national firm. He has given expert evidence about 100 times. He also performs expert determinations.*

Chris is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants where he has served on the Forensic Committee, and as an ethical counsellor; he is a fellow of the Chartered Management Institute, a fellow of the Academy of Experts where he serves on the Investigations Committee, and a mediator accredited by the Chartered Arbitrators. He practises as a mediator, from his home in West Yorkshire and his rooms at 3 Gray’s Inn Square, London WC1R 5AH, telephone 020 7430 0333. He has mediated 100+ cases so far, on a huge range of subjects, with a settlement rate to date of 80%. For more see his website with videos:

www.chrismakin.co.uk

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Forthcoming Courses

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER
11/09/2024	Private Child Law Conference	Various
13/09/2024	Writing for the Press and the Net	John Trimbos
17/09/2024	RegTech, SupTech and LegalTech	Alan Wilkinson
18/09/2024	Residential Property Conference	Various
20/09/2024	Private Child Law Update	Safda Mahmood
20/09/2024	Public Child Law Update	Safda Mahmood
24/09/2024	Introduction to Consumer Credit Act	Alan Wilkinson
25/09/2024	Family Finance Conference	Various
27/09/2024	Diversity – Managing Across Cultures	John Trimbos
01/10/2024	Conveyancing; Recent Statutory Changes	Richard Snape
02/10/2024	Employment Law Conference	Various
04/10/2024	Is it enforceable? - Making Agreements Stick	Chris Beanland
08/10/2024	SRA Accounts Rules Update	Linda Lambert
09/10/2024	Clinical Negligence Conference	Various
11/10/2024	Commerical Property: Essential Update 2024	Hannah MacKinlay
15/10/2024	Personal Branding for Black Lawyers	Jannette Brimm
18/10/2024	A Tricky Business: BPR and APR Explained	Rebecca Roscoe
30/10/2024	Acting as a Professional Deputy- the need to know in practice	Helen Forster

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**** Training events open to legal professionals nationwide ****

For full details or to book any of the above courses (& more!) please visit: www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk


2024 Private Child Conference
Wednesday 11th September | 9.30am - 3pm
 Hybrid - Attend in-person or online

Private Law Local Initiatives
DJ O'Neill & Gemma Baker, CAFCASS




Internal relocation within the UK: When moving on means moving away
Kirsty Leedam, Weightmans


Communicating Safely & Securely Online
Katie Deans, OurFamilyWizard

The Lundy Model of Child Participation and Direct Child Consultation
Helen Pittard, 174 Family Law

Domestic Abuse in Private Children Proceedings
Margaret Parr, 7 Harrington Street

The Top 10 Cases of the last 12mths: things to note
Tom Hynes, Oriel Chambers

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Writing for the Press and the Net
 with John Trimbos
 'Live' on Friday 13th September, 10am - 1pm

This online session will provide delegates with best practice guidance on writing articles, blogs & anything else in the public domain.

Content:

- How to use the "pyramid writing" technique to create impact
- Avoiding clichés
- Using succinct, punchy language
- Using the optimum structure
- The Fog Index
- Use of graphics and page layout
- Practical exercises

Can't make the date/time or need to revisit the training? No problem, booking onto this event means you will receive a link to access a recording of the event at your leisure!

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***NEW* RegTech, SupTech & LegalTech**
 with Alan Wilkinson
 'Live' online on Tuesday 17th September, 12pm - 2pm

The entire world is changing with technology. Regardless of our reactions to technology it is here to stay. Technology that fuses with specific industries has spawned a variety of hybrids like RegTech, SupTech and LegalTech.


To enable us to service our clients we need to ensure that we understand the developments in technology and the associated regulatory issues.

Issues that will be covered include:

- An explanation of and introduction to RegTech, SupTech and LegalTech
- The benefits and challenges of RegTech, SupTech and LegalTech solutions & more...

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Laura Cartwright, Bell Lamb Joynson

Current Contentious Conveyancing Issues
Siobhan Beattie, DTM Legal

The latest updates from HM Land Registry
Keith Lloyd & Pam White, HM Land Registry

Digital Solutions for Digital Conveyancing Journeys
Lisa Edwards, InfoTrack

Building an authentic team culture - how to strike the right balance for the company and it's employees
Natalie Moore, AConveyancing

Climate Change 2024 & beyond
Luke Parsons, Landmark Information

The Renters Reform Bill - Behind the Headlines
Chris Hall, Dutton Gregory

What do I care about law? Ain't I got the power?" - Buying & Selling Property using an LPA or Deputy
John Jones, Jackson Lees Solicitors

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DIVERSITY – MANAGING ACROSS CULTURES

with John Trimpos

Friday 27th September, 10am - 1pm

This online course will teach delegates the seven building blocks of culture so that they can more effectively interact with people from other cultures.

Covering:

- Benefits of diversity in the workplace
- What constitutes culture?
- Detecting others’ cultural norms
- Flexing to accommodate others’ cultural orientations
- Group discussion – doing business in other countries, especially Switzerland and the Middle East
- Action planning



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Autumn Public Child Law Update

with Safda Mahmood

Live online: Friday 20th September, 1.30pm - 4.30pm

This online course will equip you with a rounded up update on key issues surrounding public children law, with a particular focus on changes and updates in the area.

It will be of benefit to those acting for parents, children, extended family, and local authorities.

The areas to be covered are:

- Separation under Interim Care
- Contact and Children
- Assessments and Timescales
- Public law Outline, Best Practice and Timetables
- DOLS Applications and Secure Accommodation
- Placement Applications and Adoption
- Special Guardianship and Practice
- Key Case Law Update
- Updates on Statutes and Practice Directions



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***NEW* INTRODUCTION TO CONSUMER CREDIT ACT**
with Alan Wilkinson

Tuesday 24th September, 12pm - 2pm

This online course will provide an introduction to the consumer credit regime including key provisions under the Consumer Credit Act 1974 for regulated consumer credit and hire agreements. It will also provide an update on recent developments in this area.

The areas covered will include:

- The scope of the CCA
- Determining when an agreement will be regulated by the CCA
- The approach to regulation
- Essentials of regulated credit and hire agreements
- Unfair relationship provisions: What is unfairness?
- Extortionate credit bargains and the need for reform
- S.140: The new test; Extent and exclusions
- How the unfair relationship provisions operate in practice
- Burden of proof
- Limitation
- Overview of recent case law
- Proposals for change



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2024 FAMILY FINANCE CONFERENCE

Wednesday 25th September | 9.30am - 3pm
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A must-attend training event for solicitors, barristers & other practitioners involved with family law. Providing a round-up key developments in law & practice and an opportunity to hear directly from some first-class speakers

Chairperson
DJ Sheren Guirguis

Prenups and downs: Making and breaking agreements
Max Lewis, 29 Bedford Row

Revisiting conduct in financial remedy proceedings
Tom Hynes, Oriel Chambers

NCDR and Cost Consequences: Blessed are the Peacemakers for they shall Avoid Costs Orders
Charles Hale KC, 4PB

A review of disability as a s.25 factor
Naomh Gallagher, St Johns Buildings

Family Finance Round-Up
Alexis Campbell KC, 29 Bedford Row Chambers

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Autumn Private Child Law Update
with Safda Mahmood

Live online: Friday 20th September, 10.30am - 1pm

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The areas to be covered are:

- Parental Responsibility
- Section 8 orders - Update
- Specific Issue Applications
- Contact (Child Arrangements) and Enforcement - Update
- Child Arrangements Orders
- Domestic Abuse and Child Arrangements
- Leave to Remove Applications
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Legal software: To swap or not to swap?



Setting the scene

Changing systems is a daunting task and a fairly major undertaking. The first step in any new software implementation is actually deciding whether wholesale change is necessary.

That said, if your existing practice management and legal accounts application isn't living up to expectations, switching to something new is imperative.

So, the questions are: Is it time to move? If yes, to what and how?

Let's explore these two conundrums further – review vs rollout.

Reviewing existing software

Before you throw the baby out with the bathwater, carry out a comprehensive audit of your incumbent software to ascertain possible grievances to do with:

- Lack of system development
- Bad relationship with your supplier
- Poor communication
- Insufficient training
- Staff turnover
- Changing business needs
- Rising licence fees

If left unattended, these problems feel insurmountable and the appeal of something new is too hard to resist. Jumping ship is often done without having real appreciation of what caused the issues in the first place.

Following on from this, evaluate your software's performance by asking yourself:

- Is the technology robust with minimal downtime?
- Are helpdesk and support personnel responsive?
- Are account management and service

delivery effective?

- Is there an interactive user group or collaboration forum?
- Is there a published development roadmap?
- Are products good value compared with others in the market?
- Do products have good functionality for your areas of law?
- Is the vendor stable financially with proven growth?

Mostly 'yes' = retain system.
Mostly 'no' = switch system.



Selecting new software

Best-in-class technology is crucial to your success, therefore, if going down the new system route, make sure you choose wisely by avoiding these common pitfalls:

- **Choosing the wrong PMS for your law firm.** With a marketplace awash with technology options, carefully analyse both the software and the supplier before you commit.
- **Neglecting to communicate and engage with staff.** Representatives from each department on your buying panel ensure the system works for everyone and gets buy in from the outset.
- **Failing to assign project management resources.** Appoint a project manager to sit at the helm and map out your project management processes to keep it on track.
- **Messing up the data conversion stage.** With retention of your business-critical client, matter and accounts data a priority, protect it when transferring across from old to new.
- **Gaining insufficient user acceptance and adoption.** Acceptance starts pre

implementation – so, communicate your software's benefits. Adoption happens post implementation – so, train your staff.

- **Seeing IT as a cost centre.** Unlike other capital expenditure, technology has lowered in price over the years. The more you invest in IT, the more rewards you'll reap.
- **Missing out on staff training.** There's a steep learning curve in the early days of software rollout. Secure ROI on your technology by initial and refresher training.
- **Omitting process building in your software.** If you've got workflow capabilities, build these standardised processes from the word 'go' to operate efficiently and uniformly.

Benefitting from our experience

In summary, kick off your software project by aiming your lens inward at your current software and existing skillsets. This will position you here and now. Sometimes that means resetting expectations and coaching to get to the root of the problem.

Depending upon the outcome of the above, it might become an urgent requirement to divert your lens outward to procure replacement software and instruct external expertise. This will drive your business towards its future goals.

At Jayva, our experienced team offers coaching, project management consultancy and training assistance. Reassuringly, we've supported over 1,500 law firms (and counting!) globally since 2014. Whatever your software-related challenges, we've got your back.

Reading more on this subject

If elements of this article seem familiar, that's because we've written about it previously. To access our earlier advice, check out our 'Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater when undertaking a system review', 'A no-nonsense guide to new legal software rollout' and 'Law firm technology: Five key failings with solutions' blogs at www.jayvaglobal.com/news.



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Legal Tech Adoption: A Football Team Strategy

As the Euro 2024 hangover starts to fade, we're all left with memories of a competition that promised the world but delivered more heartbreak than a soap opera finale for the home nations. While nursing our collective disappointment, we at Denovo had a lightbulb moment. Watching the drama unfold on the pitch, we couldn't help but notice the striking similarities between preparing a football team for a major tournament and adopting new technology in a law firm.

Just like a well-oiled football team needs careful planning, dedicated training, and seamless execution to triumph on the big stage, integrating new legal tech into your practice demands a similar approach. Let's break down how you can tackle this challenge head-on, football style.

Team Formation: Identifying Key Players

1. Management (Coach and Manager):

- **Role:** Strategise, plan, and oversee the adoption process.
- **Responsibility:** Ensure the legal tech aligns with the firm's goals, manage the budget, and monitor progress.
- **Key Players:** CIO, CTO, Managing Partners.

2. IT Department (Defensive Line):

- **Role:** Protect and maintain the technical infrastructure.
- **Responsibility:** Ensure data security, integrate new systems, and troubleshoot.
- **Key Players:** IT Managers, Cybersecurity Experts, Network Engineers.

3. Legal Team (Midfielders):

- **Role:** Connect the technical and operational aspects, ensuring smooth adoption.
- **Responsibility:** Train staff, provide feedback on tools, and ensure compliance.
- **Key Players:** Senior Lawyers, Associates, Paralegals.

4. Support Staff (Forwards):

- **Role:** Directly interact with the new tech, driving its practical application.
- **Responsibility:** Daily usage, reporting issues, and suggesting improvements.
- **Key Players:** Paralegals, Administrative Staff, Junior Associates.

5. Vendors/Consultants (Substitutes and External Coaches):

- **Role:** Provide external expertise and support.
- **Responsibility:** Implement, customise, and offer ongoing support.

- **Key Players:** Tech Vendors, Consultants, Trainers.

Pre-Season Training: Preparation and Planning

1. Scouting and Selection:

- **Identify Needs:** Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to understand specific challenges and opportunities.
- **Research Solutions:** Scout for the best legal tech solutions that fit the identified needs.
- **Pilot Programs:** Run pilot programs with selected tools to evaluate effectiveness and user-friendliness.

2. Formation Strategy:

- **Integration Plan:** Develop a detailed plan for integrating new tools with existing systems.
- **Budget Allocation:** Ensure proper budget allocation for purchase, implementation, and training.
- **Timeline:** Set realistic timelines for each phase of adoption.

Training Camp: Education and Onboarding

1. Kick-off Meeting:

- **Goals:** Communicate the objectives and benefits of the new technology to the entire team.
- **Roles:** Clarify individual roles and responsibilities in the adoption process.

2. Training Sessions:

- **Workshops:** Conduct hands-on workshops for different user groups.
- **Webinars:** Organise webinars for continuous learning and addressing common queries.
- **Documentation:** Provide comprehensive guides and FAQs.

Game Day: Implementation and Execution

1. Initial Deployment:

- **Soft Launch:** Start with a soft launch to a smaller group to ensure the system is running smoothly.
- **Feedback Loop:** Establish a feedback mechanism to gather user input and address issues promptly.

2. Full Rollout:

- **Monitoring:** Continuously monitor system performance and user satisfaction.
- **Support:** Ensure robust support is available, including a helpdesk and on-site assistance.

Post-Game Analysis: Review and Improvement

1. Performance Metrics:

- **KPIs:** Define key performance indicators (e.g., efficiency gains, error reduction, user

satisfaction).

- **Data Analysis:** Regularly analyse usage data and performance metrics to measure success.

2. Continuous Improvement:

- **Feedback Integration:** Incorporate user feedback for ongoing improvements.
- **Updates and Upgrades:** Keep the technology updated with the latest features and security patches.
- **Training Refreshers:** Conduct periodic training sessions to keep everyone up to date with new functionalities.

Victory Lap: Celebrating Success

1. Acknowledge Contributions:

- **Recognition:** Recognise and reward the efforts of key contributors.
- **Success Stories:** Share success stories and case studies within the firm to encourage continued adoption.

2. Future Roadmap:

- **Long-Term Goals:** Set long-term goals for further tech enhancements.
- **Innovation:** Foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.

By adopting a structured and strategic approach like a football team, law firms can effectively integrate legal tech into their practice. This ensures all team members are aligned, trained, and motivated to achieve a common goal: enhanced efficiency, accuracy, and client satisfaction.

Just as a football team meticulously prepares for every match, a law firm must diligently plan and execute its legal tech adoption strategy to score big in today's digital age. And remember, as **Bill Shankly** put it, *"At a football club, there is a holy trinity - the players, the manager, and the supporters - directors don't come into it. They are only there to sign the cheques."*

In the context of a law firm, this means that while the directors make the final decisions, the success of new technology adoption hinges on the core team – the defensive line, midfielders and forwards – buying in. The feedback on the challenges faced, the workflow desired, and the suggestions for efficiency improvements from the team members who are directly interacting with the new tech are key to decision-making and ultimately a successful implementation.

If you're ready to get out there and win with new legal technology, reach out to us by visiting denovobi.com, email info@denovobi.com or you can call us on 0141 331 5290.

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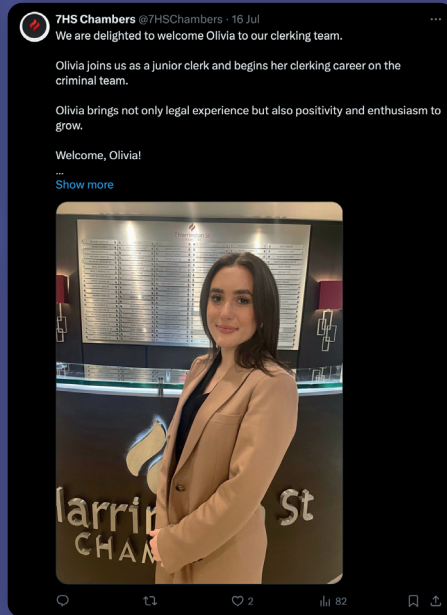
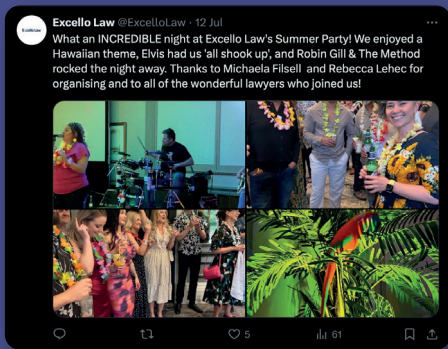
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Social Media Highlights

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