

December 2024

Liverpool Law

Liverpool  Law Society

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE LEGAL SECTOR IN
MERSEYSIDE AND THE NORTH WEST



Lady Hale VISITS ADLA!

Full list of Award Winners on pp. 24-29



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December 2024

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Word Count Guidelines: Notes for Contributors

We receive many enquiries about submitting articles for LLS News and one of the questions that comes up every time is 'how long should it be?' While we don't (in theory) restrict the number of pages you can write, there are a few guidelines that you need to follow, like how many words fit on a page, how photographs, affect the word count etc.

With this in mind, the following is a rough approximation of how we calculate word counts for articles:

A full page of text is around 750 words without images, and 400 for a half page. The amount of text space an image takes up depends entirely on how it relates to the text (e.g. a by-line photo will take up less room than something illustrating the main theme of the article). So, we would suggest the following:

Full page with one small* image: 690 words
 Full page with two small* images or one medium** image: 480 words
 Full page with one large*** image: 480 words
 Half page with one small image: 330 words

The word counts do not include the main heading or secondary headings, but do include sub-headings.

* Spanning a single column
 ** Spanning two columns
 *** Spanning three columns



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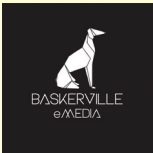
Liverpool Law Society Magazine is produced by and for Liverpool Law Society Members. This is our opportunity to share our news, events and celebrations with our friends in the legal community.

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

Photographs should be provided in the highest resolution possible to ensure a good reproduction. Photographs must not be subject to copyright.

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Editorial Committee Dates 2025

Meetings start at 1.00 pm

- Wed, 15 Jan 25*
- Mon, 17 Feb 25*
- Tue, 18 Mar 25*
- Mon, 14 Apr 25*
- Tue, 20 May 25*
- Tue, 17 Jun 25*
- Tue, 15 Jul 25*
- Tue, 19 Aug 25*
- Tue, 16 Sep 25*
- Wed, 15 Oct 25*
- Tue, 18 Nov 25*

Welcome to the December edition of Liverpool Law



What an edition we have for you! Starting with the main event- the Annual Dinner and Legal Awards- which you will see from the photographs was a lovely night. It is always great to see everyone in their black tie and letting their hair down. We have a few words from each of the winners and some of the Judges comments for you, aswell as some thanks from firms who may not have had an opportunity to speak on the jam-packed night. Lady Hale was the guest speaker and she didn't disappoint. For someone who has gone on to achieve such amazing things and a true trailblazer in our field, she was so humble and down to Earth. Congratulations to the winners as well as those shortlisted and even nominated, it is a great recognition of all we have to offer in the Liverpool City Region.

This month marks the last article from President **Gaynor Williams** as she prepares to hand over the mantle to **James Mannouch**. It has been a pleasure working with Gaynor over the past year and seeing all she has achieved during her Presidency, so a personal thanks to her from me and best of luck on her next endeavours, including the impending opening of a law centre on the Wirral. Having listened to James at the General Committee but more recently at the ADLA and our editorial committee meeting with his dry wit, I am looking forward to working with him in 2025.

I've avoided use of the word 'Christmas' as much as possible in previous editions, but now it is finally here. I hope all our readers get an opportunity to enjoy time with family and friends over the festive period and manage to truly switch off from work. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Many thanks

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 November's General Committee meeting. There were 36 individuals from the following organisations:

- Bell Lamb & Joynson
- Bond Turner
- Broudie Jackson Canter
- CEL Solicitors
- Donoghue Solicitors
- Fletchers Group
- Freeths
- Hill Dickinson
- In-House Legal Solutions
- Jackson Lees Group
- Liverpool John Moores University
- Quinn Barrow
- Taylor Wessing
- Weightmans

Liverpool Law Society's membership now exceeds 2,450 individuals from 225 law firms, barristers' chambers, and other organisations with legal professionals in the Liverpool City Region and beyond.

From the President

The final report from President Gaynor Williams

I enjoyed the Liverpool Architectural Society dinner in Municipal Hotel Liverpool on 1 November 2024. The River of Light was attracting a large crowd to the city, and it took me quite a while to get through the traffic that evening. There was a good mixture of people at the dinner, from different professions including architects, accountants, insurance and finance and a common discussion was how much our professions overlap.

The following day, and thanks to Past President **Donal Bannon** speaking to **Gary Miller**, I was invited to The Royal British Legion Gala Dinner on 2 November 2024 at St George's Hall. It was an honour to sit with the very friendly and hard-working Trustees of St George's Hall, and to catch up with Lord Mayor of Liverpool **Richard Kemp** and **Steve Rotheram** the Metro Mayor of Liverpool. St George's Hall is an iconic building, and it is linked to LLS because it was not only created for people to hear music, lectures and readings, it was also the only criminal court until 1984. It really is a magnificent venue, and the inaugural event was a huge success, the food, entertainment and the chorus of bagpipes was excellent.

The following week I travelled down south to the Bristol Law Society's Annual Dinner and awards, on 7 November 2024, at Delta Marriott, Bristol. It was a well organised evening and **John Hyde**, journalist from The Law Society Gazette, was an excellent compere. I sat with friends from the Joint V law societies, President of Bristol, and host for the evening, **Stuart Henry**, **Matt O'Brien** from Birmingham, **David Anderson** from Manchester, and **Nigel Brook** from Leeds. I have very much enjoyed spending time with the Officers from the Joint V, it was always reassuring to hunt down the people wearing medals in a room and seeing that there would be at least one person I know in the circle. We have a very strong bond, and I know that **James Mannouch** will enjoy their company just as much as I have.

A week later, we held our Annual Dinner and Legal Awards in the Titanic Hotel, and it was a great success. I am sure that you will agree that having **Lady Hale** attend as guest was a huge honour. I watched in awe, as I am sure we all did, while she delivered an inspiring, entertaining and very interesting speech, that included details of her amazing career, and the importance of equality and the rule of law. **Lady Hale** was very kind and accommodating at the end of the evening, taking time to speak to lots of people and allowing multiple pictures to be taken. Eating dinner in the company of **Lady Hale** and my distinguished guests is a memory that I will cherish.

Lady Hale's charity, Freedom from Torture, raised over £5,000 at last count, a very impressive amount raised in one evening.

Southport and Ormskirk Law Society had their Dinner on 22 November 2024, it is always good to visit other law societies, especially when we are so close by, and I was made very welcome by the President **Fiona Swarbrick**.

As I write this, I am finalising preparations to update members at the AGM on 28 November 2024.



On 10 December 2024 I will be handing over the Presidency to **James Mannouch**, as well as the beautiful jewel that I have worn with pride over the last year.

My final formal engagement will be at the Liverpool Legal Community Carol Service at St Nicholas Church, Liverpool on 17 December 2024. I would urge everyone to come along to the service. Even if you are not yet into the Christmas spirit, it will bring a smile to your face, with interesting readings and carols to sing, what's not to love.

I am pleased to report that my chosen charity Byrne Avenue Baths, have received £1,739.80 to date from speaker donations and donations raised at the charity golf tournament. Thank you to the speakers and everyone who donated to this worthy cause.

Thank you for my year as President, I have had such a good time meeting members, and it is important that we continue to have a strong and vibrant society. If you are reading this and would like to get more involved with LLS, come along to a subcommittee meeting, a training event or a social event, and meet some new people. Being part of LLS has enabled me to learn so much about the workings of our society and how hard it works for the profession.

I hope all staff, Officers, Directors, members and friends of LLS have a safe and happy holiday season. Year 2025 looks to be just as busy, and I very much look forward to supporting **James Mannouch** throughout his Presidency.

Gaynor Williams
President
president@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk

LLS Meetings & events – Dec 2024/Jan 2025

Start Time	Meeting/Event
05/12/2024 13:00	Regulatory Sub-Committee
10/12/2024 12:30	General Committee
12/12/2024 13:00	Civil Litigation Sub-Committee
17/12/2024 18:00	Family Business Sub-Committee
23/12/2024 17:00	Newly Qualified Lawyers Celebration Event
02/01/2025 09:00	Civil Litigation Sub-Committee
09/01/2025 16:00	Criminal Practice Sub-Committee
14/01/2025 12:30	EDI Diversity Event 'Empowering Diversity: Your Path to Leadership in Law & the Judiciary'

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
Regulatory	OLC Business Plan and Budget consultation 2025/26	13.12..24
Criminal	Investigatory Powers (Amendment) Act 2024: codes of practice and notices regulations	06.01.25
Civil Litigation	Civil Justice Council consultation on litigation funding	31.01.25

Spotlight on: Michael Ward



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

My role as Managing Partner in Burd Ward Solicitors is to ensure that everything goes well when we start each working day, this can be from the reception being clean and tidy to documents going out each night on time. There is not one aspect of the firm that does not require managing if you want the clients to be happy and profits to be good.

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

The positives of being the Managing Partner are, that you get to see the real result when it goes well, happy staff, good Trust Pilot reviews and a healthy bank balance. The negative aspects of the role are that when it doesn't go well, you have to face the music, there is nobody else that you can send in your place. It is lonely being the Managing Partner as so much is done behind the scenes that nobody would even know about, or care about.

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

Covid changed the way the firm operated, with a much greater reliance and embracing of technology to make work smoother,

accessibility for clients online and speed and efficiency. Historically we would have been paper-based whereas now the majority of the departments are paperless.

As a result of Covid our new agile working policies are flexible, changing working hours, home working where requested. Equally, credit control is now a daily event.

4. What do you see as your biggest challenges?

I see the biggest challenges that Law firms on the high street face to be regulation, obligations in relation to anti money laundering and the role of the SRA. Trends in bureaucracy may lead to smaller firms being hit with heavy fines or simply finding that there is little or no profit in running the practices with the constant burden of not being up to date with current rules and regulations. I am always concerned that the profession does not have a level playing field and it often appears easier to reprimand those smaller practices.

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

I am most proud of my staff; we have been trading for 21 years and lots of the team have been with us for a very long time. We have an excellent crop of new recruits with clerks, training solicitors and young solicitors which I am looking forward to seeing progress with the firm.

6. What are the immediate short-term goals?

My immediate short-term goals are deciphering the new rules in relation to employment rights, minimum wages and employer National Insurance Contributions thereafter ensuring that we are keeping up with technology and considering how AI can assist in our provision of legal services.

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

I see myself ten years from now still working full time, I am proud of the firm, I am proud of what we do, and I want to keep doing it as long as I can. I see Burd Ward solicitors growing and opening further high street branches, I am very keen to help that along.

8. What legacy, as Managing Partner at the Liverpool office, would you like to leave the firm?

The legacy that I would like as Managing Partner, to leave the firm with is, that I always gave good honest advice.

Bell Lamb & Joynson Triumph at The ESTAS Awards 2024 with Multiple Wins



Mike Leeman, Rachel McClean and Andy Burke

Bell Lamb & Joynson Solicitors are delighted to announce their success at The ESTAS Awards 2024, having been recognised across three major categories. The firm won the coveted 'Best in County – Conveyancer' award for Merseyside, took home the 'Best Collaboration: Agent/Conveyancer/Broker (National Award)', and earned silver in the 'Conveyancing in the North-West' category.

The ESTAS Awards, which took place on Friday, 18th October at Grosvenor House Hotel in London, are the largest customer service awards in the UK property sector. Hosted by Phil Spencer, the prestigious event brought together over 1,000 professionals from across the property industry to celebrate excellence in service. Uniquely, The

ESTAS winners are determined purely by verified customer reviews, rather than judges or submission forms.

Bell Lamb & Joynson's 'Best in County – Conveyancer' for Merseyside win is a testament to the firm's outstanding reputation and service in a competitive field of top law firms across the county. The firm's 'Best Collaboration: Agent/Conveyancer/Broker' award, won alongside Adams Estate Agents and Elm Tree Mortgages, highlights their exceptional teamwork and ability to deliver smoother, faster transactions through effective communication. Their collaborative efforts, combined with cutting-edge technology, ensure client satisfaction, which is reflected in their glowing reviews.

Additionally, Bell Lamb & Joynson was proud to receive silver in the 'Conveyancing in the North-West' category, further establishing the firm's position as a leader in the region. Their focus on delivering exceptional client experiences remains a cornerstone of their success.

Mike Leeman, Managing Partner at Bell Lamb & Joynson, expressed his joy at the firm's achievements:

"We are absolutely thrilled with these wins. It is an incredible recognition of the hard work and dedication of our conveyancing team and everyone at Bell Lamb & Joynson. Our clients' feedback motivates us to continually strive for excellence, and these awards are a reflection of our commitment to delivering the best possible service."



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Jackson Lees group invests in the next generation of lawyers



Shea Carson, Abbie Harrison, Laura Porter, Katy Smith, Georgia Drohan and Ben Dale

Law firm Jackson Lees Group has recruited solicitor Ben Dale to its growing family team alongside the awarding of training contracts to five budding lawyers across its ranks.

Ben has joined Jackson Lees, which with Broudie Jackson Canter and Farrington Law forms the Jackson Lees Group.

He began his career journey in 2016 as an adviser at the University of Liverpool's Law Clinic while studying for his degree.

Ben trained and qualified at Liverpool firm Berkson Family Law Solicitors and has developed specialisms in divorce and financial separation matters.

He said: "I am looking forward to continuing to build trust with clients and help guide them through some of their most difficult times. The opportunity to work with the wide client base and experienced team at Jackson Lees is extremely exciting."

Ben's arrival at Jackson Lees follows that of Sarah McCarthy in September. She

has now been appointed as head of the private family team.

The firm, which has offices in Liverpool and Wirral, has made a series of other recent appointments as it focuses on expansion. Among them are four new members of the court of protection team, including **Oliver Banks** and **Claire Martini** joining as its head and deputy head respectively.

The five new trainees across the Jackson Lees Group are **Katy Smith, Georgia Drohan, Abbie Harrison, Laura Porter** and **Shea Carson**.

Haley Farrell, deputy managing director at Jackson Lees Group, said "The appointment of Ben in our family team and the awarding of five training contracts demonstrate our commitment to developing the next generation of legal professionals, and highlights the firm as an excellent place for new and upcoming talent to progress their careers."

"Ben is a welcome addition to our ranks."

His experience will enable us to continue to meet the needs of our clients, ensuring they receive the highest level of service and support. We look forward to seeing him develop his career with us."

Esther Leach, managing director of Jackson Lees Group, said: "Supporting the next generation of lawyers is an integral part of who we are. Our people provide the talent and dedication, and we create an environment in which they can develop and thrive."

"We know that, by supporting them with a whole range of opportunities in routes to law, we can make a positive difference in their lives and careers and, in turn, they can make a positive difference for our clients."

Jackson Lees Group is part of MAPD Group, which was founded by **Brian Cullen** and **Joanna Kingston-Davies** in 2020 to power the growth of local law firms nationally through acquisition. The initials stand for Making a Positive Difference.

CEL Solicitors Scoops Outstanding Team Award

Photos by Ray Farley



CEL Solicitors' fraud team took home the Outstanding Team Award (Non-Contentious) in the Liverpool Law Society's recent annual dinner and awards ceremony.



The Liverpool based law firm, which employs over 100 staff at its Chapel Street offices, was commended for legal excellence in non-contentious matters.

Just four years ago, the firm launched its fraud team, focused solely on reclaiming money for victims of financial scams. Since then, the team has achieved remarkable success, settling over 6,000 fraud cases, and recovering over £100 million for UK fraud victims.

CEL Solicitors is now ranked the UK's #1 consumer solicitor firm, out of 4,720 firms, according to Review Solicitors. The firm's commitment to excellence is also reflected in its TrustPilot standing, where it holds the top spot for civil law.

Commenting on the win, **Jessica Hampson**, CEL Solicitors' Joint CEO, said: "We were ecstatic to receive this award, which is testament to the hard work and dedication of our fraud team who have worked tirelessly to get fraud victims the redress they deserve."

"We were truly honoured to be nominated, among such strong competition, and winning was a special moment we'll cherish for a long time. The legal services sector in Liverpool is incredibly strong, and we're delighted to be a part of its success."

CEL Solicitors, who were the first to market fraud and scam claims, advertises nationally, and receives thousands of enquiries each month. To handle soaring demand, without compromising on quality, the firm has recently invested heavily in new

technology, including a new phone system and a bespoke onboarding platform powered by AI.

Commenting on the growth of the firm, **Jessica** added: "Our goal is to maintain our position as the number 1 consumer law firm, without compromising on quality. Growth is not without its challenges but by investing in new technology we hope to help more people, whilst maintaining our high levels of customer care."

A regular commentator on fraud matters, CEL Solicitors' fraud team have appeared on BBC Morning Live, BBC Crime Files and Talk TV to name a few. Last year, the firm helped launch the BBC's inaugural 'Scam Safe' campaign live from its offices. This year, the firm is helping to keep fraud top of the agenda by contributing to features on BBC Morning Live and BBC Rip Off Britain.

Commenting on the future of the fraud team, **Paul Hampson**, CEL Solicitors' Joint CEO, said: "Fraud is currently the UK's number one crime, affecting more people than any other offence. With scammers getting more and more sophisticated people from across the UK are being duped out of their hard-earned cash, losing hundreds of millions of pounds to APP fraud every year."

"We're committed to continuing to invest in our fraud team and highlighting the plight of scam victims to get them the justice they deserve."



Bermans expands corporate team with healthcare sector specialists



Paul Edels, left, and Paul Rabbette

Two lawyers who specialise in advising clients in the healthcare sector have joined the corporate team at north west practice Bermans.

Partner **Paul Edels** and senior paralegal **Paul Rabbette** are based in Bermans' Liverpool office after both moved from Prosperity Law.

Paul Edels, who was head of corporate and commercial and head of healthcare at his previous firm, has acted for buyers and sellers of dental practices on more than 100 transactions across England and Wales over the past five years.

He has also advised on deals for pharmacies and children's nurseries, as well as transactions involving manufacturing, insurance, property and construction businesses.

Alongside mergers and acquisitions, he acts for healthcare providers involved in disputes and litigation matters, and carries out commercial work including shareholder agreements, articles of association and contracts.

Before Prosperity Law, Paul worked at Goodman Grant Solicitors and then Acuity Law, which acquired the practice in 2022.

Paul said: "Bermans has a great reputation in the corporate field and I think of the firm as a regional powerhouse.

"The support across the practice is crucial for the work I do. This comes from our busy and successful corporate department, along with the excellent commercial property, full-service employment and finance teams, whose expertise complements the business transactions and improves the service to my clients.

"It's an ideal time to join Bermans as the practice looks to expand its offering to the Liverpool and regional business community."

Paul said the general mood in dentistry is one of concern following last month's Budget.

"The sector took a battering, like all small businesses. The increases in employer's national insurance and the minimum wage will hit them hard," he said.

"Of particular concern is that the increase in employment allowance to ease the pain is not available to any business carrying out more than half of its work in the public sector, and therefore a large number of dental practices offering NHS treatments will be excluded. The government promised to help dentistry, yet this Budget has done the opposite.

"We may find more dentists move over from NHS to private work as a result, meaning NHS appointments will be even harder to find.

"The Budget will increase costs for businesses, which will affect all suppliers to the dental industry and will put further inflationary pressure on their goods and services, creating a knock-on effect for dentists.

"However, on the flip side, falling interest rates will help with finance and funding and will make purchases more affordable,

so this will likely result in more dental practice transactions."

Paul Rabbette joined Goodman Grant Solicitors in 2013 as an apprentice business administrator then switched to become a paralegal. He moved to Prosperity Law in June 2023.

During his legal career he has advised on corporate transactions across a range of sectors, including dental practices, pharmacies, construction and hospitality businesses and children's nurseries, as well as providing advice on litigation matters.

He said: *"Bermans is a well-known and highly reputable law firm with a vast wealth of lawyers who offer an excellent level of legal expertise across many sectors. I'm extremely excited to join the practice."*

Bermans is part of MAPD Group, which was founded by **Brian Cullen** and **Joanna Kingston-Davies** in 2020 to power the growth of local law firms nationally through acquisition. The initials stand for Making a Positive Difference.

Jon Davage, managing director of Bermans and the firm's head of corporate, said: *"The arrival of Paul Edels and Paul Rabbette bolsters our corporate offering in Liverpool, where we continue to work closely with the business and professional community.*

"We appreciate that clients in the area want their advisers to understand the local market. With their extensive experience and knowledge of the region, we are confident our new recruits will fit into the Bermans culture and provide the high standard of service which our clients are used to.

"We are looking forward to welcoming further significant new arrivals over the next few months as we continue to grow all of our commercial teams with the backing of the MAPD Group."

Fletchers Group hits £100m turnover milestone

Fletchers Group CFO, Alex Lynch, has heralded an outstanding year for Fletchers, after the Group met the growth milestones of £100 million of turnover and 1,000 colleagues during this financial year.

In its FY results for 2023/24, Fletchers has reported FY24 revenues increasing by 36 per cent to £58m (2023: £43m), and operating profit growing by £6.0m to £9.1 (2023: £3.1m).

Lynch also signalled an emerging opportunity for private equity investment in the legal market. She said the success of the Group, which successfully refinanced with Pemberton and NatWest earlier this year, will attract other investors to law firms looking to participate in consolidation and help firms build scale in what has historically been a disaggregated sector.

Highlights include:

- Personal Injury revenues grew by 14 per cent.
- Personal Injury case signings soared 87 per cent - underlining the additional value accruing from the Blume acquisition.
- 22 per cent increase in clinical negligence revenues, from case numbers and higher value claims. Over half of new cases have damages estimated at > £25K.
- Two acquisitions included Emsleys and Serious Injury Law (SIL). SIL's contribution won't appear in the accounts until FY2025. The next deal is due to be announced imminently.

She said: *“These results demonstrate the impressive growth and revenue opportunities that are available to firms who can invest in consolidation like Fletchers.”*

“Our approach of driving organic growth through our own marketing and recruitment, while also investing in dedicated teams to warmly welcome new colleagues that come to us through acquisition, has helped ensure we make the most of our acquisitions. Most importantly, we have been able to retain those people and ensure our existing business also benefits from the capabilities and relationships they bring with them.”

“In recent years the sector has been underweight in respect of private capital, but I believe injury law is ripe for further consolidation, and as our results indicate, there are attractive returns for investors looking to participate in the consolidation in our industry, post reform.”

“We expect to make another acquisition shortly and our pipeline is as strong as ever; many firms are looking to M&A to secure their long-term future, and their current owners want to find a good home for their current staff and of course take some value from what they've built over many years.”

Lynch explained that AI is a particular opportunity for a business like Fletchers, where a large case load – current and historic – can deliver real insights. She said that Fletchers has recruited a data science team of 10 people (including 5 PHDs) following an annual investment of £1m, and pilot projects are underway in specific

tasks such as bills of costs and the pagination of medical reports.

“Utilising AI is only possible with many cases to analyse; as Fletchers has over 14 thousand cases in progress, it is well positioned to apply this technology. Results so far are promising, and although we are early in the process, we plan to commercialise our AI propositions.”

- Alex Lynch

Commenting on the results, **Alex Wyndham**, Managing Director at Sun European Partners LLP, owner of Fletchers, agreed that the investment climate in injury law was *“as positive as I can remember.”*

“The latest results underline our view that consolidation in this field of civil law is a compelling investment strategy and I'm confident there is further headroom for profitable growth. Alex, Peter Haden (CEO) and the team have had a stellar year, and we're excited about the prospects for Fletchers in 2025.”

Brown Turner Ross Solicitors celebrate the launch of new Formby office with a reception at Sorrento



Liverpool and Southport based law firm Brown Turner Ross celebrated the opening of their new office in Formby 7th November with a reception for clients and local businesses at popular Italian restaurant Sorrento.

Over 80 guests were welcomed by Managing Director, **Sam Bushell**, and the team who gathered to learn more about the services which are being offered from the newly opened legal practice, which has seen Brown Turner Ross grow from 40 to 50 employees.

Director, **Kevin Ross**, outlined the wide range of legal services which will be available at the newly opened office, including commercial and residential property, corporate, civil litigation, divorce, wills, trusts, probate and housing disrepair.

Managing Director, **Sam Bushell** said "We are delighted to be able to provide the residents of Formby and surrounding areas with a first class, personal and professional legal service right on their doorstep. I am thrilled that so many local businesses have joined us tonight and welcomed us



so warmly to Formby. We look forward to becoming a trusted and valuable member of the wonderful community and to servicing the legal needs of local residents and the wider area."

Sam continued "We look forward to offering enhanced legal services and providing clients with access to advice and justice, with all the benefits that a local

community practice brings".

Founded in Southport in 1884, Brown Turner Ross has become one of the leading law firms in the northwest with an extensive local, national and international client base. The company also have offices on Lord Street, Southport and The Cotton Exchange in Liverpool.

CG appoints Brand Ambassador as it strengthens presence across the North West



Andrew Dunn, Marc Gordon and Louise Myers

Leading Law Firm CG appoints Brand Ambassador to drive regional growth and client engagement in Liverpool, and wider North West.

CG, a rapidly expanding North West law firm renowned for its client-centric approach, has appointed **Marc Gordon** as its new Brand Ambassador.

In his new role, **Marc** will focus on expanding CG's reach and enhancing client relations across the Liverpool City Region and North West, working closely with CG's Client Relationship Director, **Andrew Dunn**.

With an impressive background in business development and regional leadership, Marc brings over 12 years of experience in driving growth strategies for various organisations. Most recently, he served as Regional Director for Liverpool, Cheshire, and North Wales at The CFO Centre, where he successfully built and led a team of fractional CFOs. His work centered on guiding SMEs through critical growth and exit strategies, including mergers and acquisitions, business sales, investment

raises, and strategic financial modeling.

Marc said: "Having collaborated with CG as an intermediary partner in the past, I witnessed firsthand the impactful work they deliver to clients and the unique way of working.

"I'm excited to support Andy and the CG team in strengthening our relationships with current and potential clients across the North West. CG's dedication to reshaping legal services with a client-first approach is really inspiring and different. It's that off the clock service and support that they offer that's different to any other law firm and I can't wait to leverage my network to amplify that message and help drive our growth in the region."

Marc's experience spans not only the UK but also internationally, having led The CFO Centre's operations in Western Australia. Now, as CG's Brand Ambassador, he is eager to build meaningful connections with CG's intermediary partners, clients, and local communities, driving a more personalised and results-oriented approach to legal services.

Andrew Dunn, Client Relationship Director at CG, said: "We are delighted to have Marc on board. His expertise and extensive network are a perfect match for CG's mission to challenge traditional legal models and provide bespoke solutions that cater to a wide range of sector needs."

As a law firm known for its innovative approach, CG consistently challenges and reinvents the way legal services are delivered, working to ensure every client's needs are at the forefront. This commitment to collaboration and client-first service has earned CG a distinguished reputation both regionally and nationally.

Managing Partner **Louise Myers** said: "Marc's extensive background in business development and his commitment to client success align seamlessly with our vision at CG. We're excited to have him champion our brand, drive regional expansion, and further solidify CG as a trusted partner in the North West. Marc's role marks another milestone in our journey to redefine legal services for our clients and community."

Expansion for Excello Law in Liverpool

Leading fee-share law firm Excello Law has strengthened its Liverpool team with four experienced lawyers joining the firm.

Property litigation specialist **Sarah Mansfield**, litigator **Fraser Griffiths**, and real estate experts **Claire Morris** and **Joe Johnston** have all joined Excello Law as partners based in Liverpool.

Excello Law, a national firm with offices across the UK, has seen significant growth in the North West. The team has expanded rapidly, with 75 lawyers now working in and around the firm's offices in Manchester, Liverpool, and Chester. The North West team offers a range of specialisms, including commercial dispute resolution, insolvency, construction law, real estate, and family law.

Excello Law provides an alternative to traditional law firms by allowing lawyers to work as fee-share partners or launch their own branded legal practices with the firm's support within its House of Brands.

Sarah Mansfield brings over 24 years of experience in property litigation to Excello Law. She joins from Cullimore Dutton Solicitors. Sarah is an active member of the Liverpool Law Society General Committee and Vice Chair of the Civil Litigation Sub-Committee. She was a founding member of the Law Clinic at Liverpool University, a Charitable Trustee for Merseyside Water Rescue, and a board member and recent committee member of Mosscafe St Vincent's Housing Association.

Fraser Griffiths joins Excello Law from his role as a partner at Quinn Barrow, accompanied by assistant **Jack Mallen**. Fraser has extensive experience in dispute resolution, and real estate.

Claire Morris comes to Excello Law from Bermans. Claire provides specialist advice in all areas of commercial property and has extensive experience in landlord and tenant matters, commercial and residential development, and secured lending. She also advises on the real estate aspects of corporate acquisitions and disposals.

Joe Johnston is a highly experienced commercial property solicitor and joins Excello Law from Quinn Barrow Solicitors. Joe specialises in commercial property, secured lending and land development. He has advised on a number of major developments in the North West, and across the UK.

Julie Mogan, Excello Law's Director for the North West, said: "Our Liverpool team is going from strength to strength, and I'm so pleased that Sarah, Fraser, Jack, Claire and Joe have joined us. They bring a wealth of experience and a focus on delivering exceptional service to their clients."

Jo Losty, Excello Law's COO, adds: "Excello Law's commitment to recruiting only experienced and talented lawyers, combined with our tailored support, ensures that we stand out from other fee-share firms. This dedication is why we attract high-calibre professionals like Sarah, Fraser, Jack, Joe and Claire. I'm confident they will be tremendous assets to our team in the North West."

Gregory Abrams Davidson Solicitors expands their Commercial Property team



Paula Hanlon

Gregory Abrams Davidson Solicitors announce new Head of Commercial Property within their GAD Commercial division.

Allerton based **Paula Hanlon**, is an accomplished Commercial Real Estate Solicitor with a wealth of experience spanning over two decades and is held in high esteem by her clients and within the profession.

At GAD, Paula will continue to serve her business and commercial clients in the North West, which include investors of industrial units and commercial buildings, as well as small and medium-sized developers who have relied on her expertise in site acquisitions for both commercial and residential developments.

Paula's experience also extends to the retail sector, from shops and restaurants, to sheds and offices.

Her pragmatic approach to handling 'bread and butter' matters such as lease negotiations, assignments, renewals, and agreements for sale ensures that her clients' needs are met with precision and efficiency.

Gregory Abrams, CEO adds:

"I am delighted with Paula's appointment and confident that her expertise and dedication will further enhance our firm's reputation for delivering exceptional service and achieving outstanding results for our clients".



Hope is for now!

LIVERPOOL LEGAL COMMUNITY CAROL SERVICE



Speaker HHJ Adrian Bever
and featuring the Liverpool Brass Band



TUESDAY 17 DECEMBER 2024 - 6PM ADMISSION FREE

Liverpool Parish Church, Our Lady and St Nicholas,
Old Churchyard, Chapel Street, Liverpool, L2 8TZ

Unit Chambers Wins Family Law Chambers of the Year (Regional) at the 2024 Lexis Nexis Family Law Awards



Unit Chambers is delighted to announce that they have been named *Family Law Chambers of the Year (Regional)* at the 2024 Lexis Nexis Family Law Awards. This marks their second major accolade this year, following their success at the Lexis Nexis Legal Awards, where they were honoured as *Chambers of the Year (Regional)* at the Lexis Nexis Legal Awards earlier in 2024.

The recognition from the Family Law Awards reflects the dedication, expertise, and passion of Unit’s barristers and team. It also highlights the trust placed in them by their clients and solicitor network, whose continued support has been instrumental in their success.

The judges commended Unit Chambers as a “regional powerhouse” and highlighted their “steady growth, award nominations, and impactful reported

cases.” They also praised their strong commitment to community engagement, pro bono work, and supporting future lawyers, as well as their focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and well-being. These principles are at the heart of who Unit Chambers are, and they are proud to see them recognised on such a significant platform.

What This Means for Their Clients

For their clients, these accolades are a reflection of Unit’s ongoing commitment to delivering the highest standard of representation and support. From complex public and private law cases to financial remedy disputes and beyond, the team at Unit remain focused on achieving the best outcomes while providing compassionate, client-centred service.

As a young and dynamic chambers,

they are dedicated to creating a culture of excellence and inclusion that directly benefits the individuals, families, and professionals they serve.

A Word from Head of Chambers, Lisa Edmunds:

“It is truly humbling for Unit Chambers to be recognised once again by Lexis Nexis in 2024. Winning Family Law Chambers of the Year (Regional) is a reflection of the incredible efforts of every member of our team and the trust placed in us by our clients, solicitors, and wider network.”

At Unit Chambers, we are proud to stand out not only for our legal expertise but also for the values we champion—community, inclusion, and well-being. These awards inspire us to continue striving for excellence while remaining true to these principles.

On behalf of the entire team, I want to extend my deepest thanks to everyone who has supported us on this journey. We are committed to working even harder to serve our clients and contribute positively to the profession.”

Solicitor Advocate Succeeds at Court of Appeal



Kevin Donoghue

Kevin Donoghue, Solicitor Advocate and director at Hatton Garden-based Donoghue Solicitors, recently succeeded in overturning a High Court judgment at the Court of Appeal.

In doing so, Mr Donoghue and his client, **Edwin Afriyie**, have helped establish important principles about how the courts in England and Wales should consider the police's use of Taser firearms.

Mr Donoghue explained:

"The brief circumstances which gave rise to my client's appeal were that on 7 April 2018, a City of London Police officer fired a Taser at Edwin Afriyie, a Black motorist, during a traffic stop.

"After being told he was under arrest, Mr. Afriyie talked with a friend for more than twenty seconds, then folded his arms. A few seconds later the officer shot him in the chest. Edwin was temporarily paralysed by the firearm and sustained serious injuries after falling and hitting his head on a stone ledge."

With Kevin Donoghue's assistance, Mr. Afriyie pursued a civil action against the police, seeking damages for assault and battery, as well as misfeasance in public office.

The City of London Police denied liability, compelling Mr. Afriyie and his solicitor to pursue the case to a High Court trial that lasted five days in 2022. Unfortunately, the trial judge fell ill before delivering a judgment, necessitating a retrial over five more days in 2023.

Following the second High Court trial, **Mrs. Justice Hill DBE**, the trial judge, concluded that Mr. Afriyie did not substantiate his claims. She determined that the City of London Police officer "honestly believed" the use of the Taser was necessary and that it constituted a "necessary" and "objectively reasonable" use of force. She refused leave to appeal.

"My client was understandably despondent," explained Mr Donoghue. *"He said, 'It just doesn't feel right. How can she say it was justified to Taser me?'"*

Kevin agreed, and, with the assistance of **David Hughes**, barrister, and **Richard Clayton KC**, appealed directly to the Court of Appeal.

"Thankfully, the Court agreed to hear our appeal," Mr Donoghue continued, *"which took place at the Royal Courts of Justice on 8 October 2024 before The Lady Chief Justice Baroness Carr, and Lord Justices William Davies and Dingemans."*

Mr Afriyie's legal team argued that **Mrs Justice Hill DBE** had erred in law. The Court of Appeal agreed, finding that while:

- subjectively, the police officer may have had a genuinely held belief that he was justified in using his Taser (a decision which could not be interfered with on appeal);
- objectively, the use of a Taser was not reasonable when discharged in these circumstances.

Specifically, the Court of Appeal found that: *"the officer was not faced with or forced into a split-second decision. More to the point, the binary choice identified by the*

judge did not involve any consideration of whether using a taser per se was reasonable. Even if "further negotiation with the (appellant) would be futile", that did not mean that it was proportionate to use a taser on him. He was standing and talking to his friend. A proper objective analysis of whether using a weapon classified as a firearm was reasonable would have led the judge to conclude that it was not. Her conclusion that further negotiation would have been futile did not amount to the necessary analysis of objective reasonableness of the nature and degree of force used."

Consequently, the Court of Appeal overturned the earlier High Court ruling in favour of the police and ordered that **Mr Afriyie** receive agreed compensation and legal costs.

Mr Donoghue explained the wider significance of the Court of Appeal's ruling by saying:

"This judgment is the first of its kind in England and Wales. It expands upon already established tests of reasonableness and requires that trial judges take a step back and consider if discharging a Taser was a reasonable response to a situation when the weapon was fired.

"I hope that the clear guidance from the Court of Appeal will find its way into police officer training and professional guidance, so that others do not have to endure needless pain and suffering at the hands of the police."

The Court of Appeal's judgment can be read at: <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2024/1269.html>

Weightmans sees legal directory rankings boost for both lawyers and practice areas

- **563 Weightmans experts listed across Chambers and Legal 500**
- **22 top tier rankings**

National law firm Weightmans has capped off a hugely successful year with the news that a record number of its lawyers have been ranked in this year's leading legal directories, with 563 experts listed across the guides.

In the latest editions of the Legal 500 and Chambers & Partners UK legal directories, the firm has also been recommended as a top-tier firm in 22 practice areas across the two and is listed across 140 areas altogether.

The areas in which Weightmans ranks for the first time (eight in total), include private wealth disputes (North West), employment (Scotland), commercial litigation (Midlands), personal tax, trusts and probate (North), IT and

telecoms (London), and transport road regulatory (UK-wide), plus improved rankings for construction (North East), Local Government (UK-wide), planning and environment (North West), planning and environment (West Midlands), family (Scotland) and mental health providers (UK-wide).

In the Legal 500, 48 lawyers have been included in the elite 'leading partners' listing, with 20 being named as 'next generation partners', eight named 'hall of fame partners', and another 22 'leading associates'. In Chambers, 102 Weightmans' lawyers are ranked as 'leading partners' and 'associates to watch'.

Managing partner, **John Schorah**, said: *"Coming off the back of us reporting our most successful financial year to date in the summer, this is fantastic news, and I am thrilled and proud to see the extraordinary talent and hard*

work recognised in these latest rankings. We are among the very best law firms globally, with many of our Partners and teams regarded as leaders in their field.

"Of course, we never take our successes for granted, and the hard work continues, always striving forward and seeing the possibility in our business, in our people, and in our clients."

The Legal 500 is widely regarded 'as offering one of the most comprehensive and definitive reviews of law firms worldwide', while Chambers & Partners Guide UK is recognised as 'the most widely used directory within the legal sector'.

The announcement comes on the back of a raft of successes for the top 40 firm. Its 23/24 results saw its strongest financial results in its history with net profit up 41% on the previous year.

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- POSITIVE PUBLICITY WHICH HELPS CREATE HEIGHTENED VISIBILITY OF PRODUCTS & SERVICES.

"Liverpool Law Society has always been a pleasure to work with. The team always go above and beyond to help sponsors achieve their objectives in supporting the Society, always keeping the members at the centre of everything they do."

<https://www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk/services/sponsorship/>

ENQUIRE



CELEBRATION FOR NEW ENTRANTS TO THE LEGAL PROFESSION

LIVERPOOL LAW SOCIETY WOULD LIKE TO INVITE NEWLY QUALIFIED SOLICITORS, BARRISTERS, CHARTERED PATENT ATTORNEYS AND FELLOWS FROM CILEX FROM THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION AND SURROUNDING AREA WHO QUALIFIED DURING 2024 TO CELEBRATE THE LAUNCH OF THEIR CAREER IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

WED 29 JAN 2025	RACQUET CLUB CHAPEL STREET, LIVERPOOL
	5.30PM FOR 6PM

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

★ ARRIVAL DRINK ★ CANAPES ★ PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY ★ TRAINING VOUCHER

ALL THOSE QUALIFYING WILL BE PRESENTED WITH A CERTIFICATE OF CONGRATULATIONS FROM

HIS HONOUR JUDGE MENARY KC DL
RESIDENT JUDGE & HONORARY RECORDER OF LIVERPOOL

MEMBERS OF THE MERSEYSIDE JLD ARE ALSO INVITED TO BOOK A PLACE TO NETWORK WITH SENIOR MEMBERS OF LIVERPOOL LAW SOCIETY.

THIS EVENT IS FREE TO ATTEND BUT YOU MUST BOOK YOUR PLACE.

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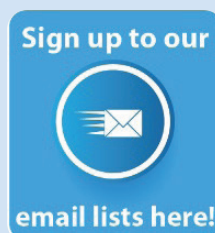
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Our training, member and general news & events emails will come from legalnews@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk and automated messages from our website (such as when making a booking for one of our courses or events) will come from enquiries@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk.

We suggest you regularly check your junk email and add both these LLS email addresses to your 'safe senders' list to ensure you receive news, events and invitations from Liverpool Law Society!

Not signed up?



The Legal Loop: Director of Impact and Development, Anita McCallum



The Solicitors' Charity is launching a new series "The Legal Loop" to show the "behind the scenes" of what it's like to be an active part of the team running the charity. To start off, The Legal Loop is putting Anita McCallum, our Director of Impact and Development, into the spotlight.

With The Legal Loop, you're getting an insight into what it's like being a core part of The Solicitors' Charity team and the things that go on in the background to keep the charity running. Anita has an empowering, strong message she would like to share to all solicitors around England and Wales.

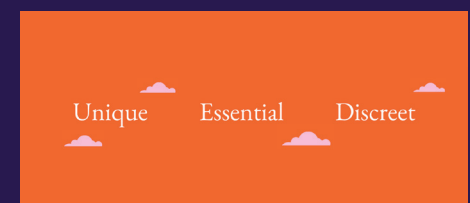
She says: "I want more solicitors (and former solicitors) to realise that they can come to us for all sorts of help and assistance to improve their wellbeing!"

My message to solicitors in England and Wales is: be assured that your wellbeing is our priority and concern whether its emotional, professional, financial, or physical. We'll handle your enquiry discreetly and non-judgementally to get you the best advice and support we can".

"The rewarding part is knowing that promoting the charity, and making sure it's highlighted within the legal community, means that people are then aware they can come to us to seek wellbeing assistance. When I'm at events, it always makes an impact on me when I see the surprise in people's eyes in learning there is a FREE, confidential, wellbeing service for solicitors, former solicitors and their dependants.

It's inspiring to be a part of this essential work, and a safety net for a profession which does so much for others at difficult times – like house moves, divorces, criminal cases, and employment issues" says Anita.

We've asked Anita about how she would describe The Solicitors' Charity in three words...



Anita's role is widely spread across marketing and communications, to developing fundraising, impact measurement and volunteering approaches. The key mission for Anita's role is to ensure that solicitors (and former solicitors) are aware of The Solicitors' Charity and can make an active contribution by donating time and/or money.

What sets this charity apart from others is that we provide a very tailored and individual response to clients in need. We are extremely flexible in our approach compared to many in the occupational support sector.

[Want to support The Solicitors' Charity?](#)



197th anniversary Annual Dinner and Legal Awards

On Thursday 14th November 2024, 480 members of the legal profession from the Liverpool City Region gathered together for Liverpool Law Society's glittering black-tie Annual Dinner and Legal Awards held at the Rum Warehouse in Liverpool. The event brought together the region's legal sector to celebrate the successes of the profession, along with civic guests, presidents and chairs of other professional bodies and senior members of the local judiciary. The event not only acknowledges professional accomplishments but also fosters networking and collaboration among peers.

At the Annual Dinner, members and guests were privileged to hear from The Rt Hon the **Baroness Hale of Richmond** DBE, retired President of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, about her varied career as an academic lawyer, as the first woman member of the Law Commission, and as a Judge. A guest of the President, **Gaynor Williams**, Lady Hale treated those present to a punchy, thoughtful and often humorous,

canter through her legal life. There was a collection for the guest speaker's nominated charity, Freedom From Torture, a human rights charity dedicated to the rehabilitation of refugees and asylum seekers who have survived torture. Over £5,000 was raised for the charity. Our thanks to everyone who supported it via donations or taking part in the raffle and congratulations to all the winners.

The Legal Awards ceremony followed the speeches. These celebrate excellence in the legal sector, honoring individuals and firms for their outstanding contributions. The awards recognize achievements in various categories, including litigation, corporate law, and pro bono work. Winners are selected by a panel of esteemed judges, highlighting innovation, dedication, and impact within the legal community.

The independent judging panel were impressed by the very high standard of entries and the "...range of practice specialties undertaken in Merseyside and

the leading role our region is taking in new areas and areas of national importance. It is also great to see that so many of our local law firms encourage applicants from non-traditional backgrounds and provide them with training and encouragement in their pursuit of a legal career."

The winners of Liverpool Law Society's 2024 Legal Awards are:

- Law Firm Award (50+ employees) – Jackson Lees Group
- Law Firm Award (1-49 employees) – Provenio Litigation
- Outstanding Lawyer Award – Pamela Chesterman from Irwin Mitchell
- Equality Diversity & Inclusion Award – Brabners
- Rising Star Award – Antonia Williamson from Freeths
- Outstanding Team Award (Dispute Resolution & Litigation) – Hill Dickinson
- Outstanding Team Award (Non-Contentious) – CEL Solicitors
- Outstanding Team Award (Family Law) – Maria Fogg Family Law



The President of the Society, **Gaynor Williams**, said “Our Legal Awards not only celebrate the excellent talent we have within the Legal sector, they shine a light on the individuals and firms for their outstanding contributions and achievements. These awards highlight exceptional talent, innovative practices, and dedication to the rule of law. Everyone who was nominated should be very proud of their achievements, and congratulations to the winners.”

The thanks of the Society go to all those who attended the awards dinner to make it what it was:

*Bell Lamb & Joynson Solicitors
Bennett Williams Solicitors
Bond Turner
Brabners
CEL Solicitors
CG Professional
Charterhouse Chambers
Donoghue Solicitors
Driscoll Kingston Solicitors
DWF Law
Excello Law*

*Fletchers Solicitors
Freedom from Torture
Freeths
Harvey Howell Solicitors
Hill Dickinson
In-House Legal Solutions
Irwin Mitchell
Jackson Lees Group
JMW Solicitors
Leigh Day
Liverpool John Moores University
Liverpool Law Society
Maria Fogg Family Law
Merseyside Junior Lawyers Division
Morecrofts Solicitors
MSB Solicitors
O’Connors
Past Presidents
Peter Edwards Law
Primas Law
Prosperity Law
Provenio Litigation
St John’s Buildings Chambers
Steve Cornforth Consultancy
Taylor Wessing
The University of Law
University of Liverpool
Weightmans*

Particular thanks of the Society go to the sponsors of the evening **Clio, Document Direct, Fazenda, Landmark Information, Liverpool John Moores University, Miller Insurance, ReviewSolicitors** and the **University of Law** for their support.

Further photos available to view in the online photo album here <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjBS79C>

Photography by **Ray Farley**



LLS AWARDS WINNERS 2024

Outstanding Team Award (Non-Contentious) – CEL Solicitors



Jessica Hampson, CEL Solicitors' CEO, said: "Receiving this award was the pinnacle of a wonderful year for our fraud team. Everyone has worked tirelessly to drive innovation, deliver exceptional customer service but above all make a real difference to our clients. We were delighted to celebrate among our fellow nominees and winners, and were inspired by the strength of the legal services industry here in Liverpool."

Outstanding Team Award (Dispute Resolution and Litigation) – Hill Dickinson



"We're incredibly proud to have our Commercial Dispute Resolution team recognised by the Liverpool Law Society. The Outstanding Team Award is a fantastic accolade and further reinforces our commitment to providing our clients with an exceptional service." said **Nina Ferris**, Partner and Head of Commercial Dispute Resolution at Hill Dickinson.

The judges said Hill Dickinson "...are able to shine the spotlight on the city in a national and global marketplace."

Outstanding Team Award (Family) – Maria Fogg Family Law



"Winning the Family Law Outstanding Team Award is a testament to our teams dedication, expertise, and exceptional service in supporting families during challenging times. This recognition highlights the firm's commitment to excellence." Said **Charlotte Fogg** of Maria Fogg Family Law.

Regarding this category winner, the judges felt that their application "showed the wow factor. They provide accessible services to local and disadvantaged communities. They are totally committed and are setting standards for others. They are innovative in the way they problem solve and go over and above for clients."

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Award – Brabners



"We've been on an incredible DEI journey at Brabners and although we still feel we have a huge amount we can achieve, receiving this award is welcome external validation that all of that work is worth it and crucially, recognised by our peers as such." said **Steve Appleton**, Partner and Head of Private Client at Brabners.

The judges found this the most difficult category to judge. The judging panel said "All the entrants are doing such great

work in EDI. Brabners had the edge in their innovation in recruitment and employment practices. They showed openness to look at candidates from non-traditional backgrounds by encouraging such students to apply and using contextual recruitment. Their flexible working approach to hours and bank holidays shows their thoughtful and inclusive approach to all staff.”

**Rising Star Award –
Antonia Williamson (Freeths)**



“I am honoured to have won the Rising Star award. This feels particularly poignant for me, as it is exactly 10 years since I first began my legal career in Liverpool as an apprentice. At that time, I was a complete novice to the world of law – my parents didn’t go to university, I had no connections in the legal industry, and I didn’t fully appreciate what a career in law would look like. I would not have imagined then that I would win this prestigious award in the years to come. It has been a privilege to train, qualify and now work in this city. Thank you very much to Liverpool Law Society and to the University of Law for sponsoring this category”.

The judges said “Toni demonstrates the value that can be brought to a succession of legal practices by those that enter the profession by a non-traditional route. Her recent experience shone out, including attracting many new clients. She also manages to play a major role in a number of outside organisations, so

enhancing the reputation and spread of the legal community.”

**Outstanding Lawyer Award –
Pamela Chesterman (Irwin Mitchell)**



“When I found out that I had been nominated for Outstanding Lawyer of the Year I was beyond ecstatic. To have won means the absolute world to me! Planning might not be everyone’s cup of tea and there’s certainly no Ally McBeal-style legal drama based on the ins-and-outs of a day advising on planning and environment law [although that gives me an idea], but I cannot think of another legal niche that requires such diligence in keeping up to date and as much mental-gymnastics to apply the law, policy and guidance to every-day situations, no two alike. I look forward to contributing to Liverpool’s legal industry as it continues to leads the way.”

**Law Firm Award 1-49 employees –
Provenio Litigation**



Commenting on Provenio’s latest award win, founder and managing partner, **Mark Goodwin** said:

“We are thrilled to win the Law Firm of the Year Award. When we launched the business in 2019, our vision was to

create the premier business disputes firm outside London, using a team that all formerly worked together at DLA Piper in Liverpool.

“We have successfully implemented our growth strategy by attracting high value instructions, breaking into new areas of work and building a superb team.”

**Law Firm Award 50+ employees –
Jackson Lees Group**



“We were absolutely made up to win the large law firm award! It is fantastic to be publicly recognised for all the hard work that our people put in to get the best for our clients whether that be the dedicated lawyers or the amazing MAPD support teams we have around us. We are so lucky to be able to focus on making a positive difference to clients, our people and to our communities in the work we do. All of our brilliant people are absolutely amazing and to have won this award in the year that Lady Hale attended the ceremony is really special. Thank you.”

Esther Leach, Managing Director,
Jackson Lees

The independent judging panel said “The winning firm gave good evidence of the high profile work they carry out, most recently their involvement in the Covid inquiry, and the good work they do for the community. They have been at the forefront of social justice for Liverpool residents for some years. The judges were impressed with the way that they understand that each case involves an individual and the case has to work for them.”



Thank you !!!



I can't tell you how absolutely made up I was that we won the Large Law firm of the Year award and I am really grateful to be able to give a massive shout out to all of the brilliant people at the Jackson Lees Group whose commitment and devotion to making a positive difference to our clients and their causes really sets us apart. We have absolutely fantastic lawyers; some with tonnes of experience and others just at the start of their legal career but all equally united by one common belief in the law being used as a means to help and empower people.

Whether it is navigating the complex asylum system or acting as a Deputy to manage the finances of someone who lacks capacity, that same drive to use the law to bring about positive outcomes for people means that we can genuinely say that 'making a positive difference' is at the heart of what we do.

We have been at the forefront of many campaigns over the years and had some great successes in terms of outcomes such as the verdict at the Hillsborough Inquest. But the fight is never over and we are now at the forefront of bringing about a change in the law requiring a legal duty of candour when things go wrong, known as Hillsborough Law (The Public Authority (Accountability) Bill).

To set our lawyers up to be the best they can be, we must create a place people want to work with a positive environment, a welcoming, inclusive culture and the best operational support: The incredible operational support we get through being part of and supported by the MAPD Group means that our lawyers can really focus on doing the very best for our clients.

Developing our people, developing our technology and our processes and giving

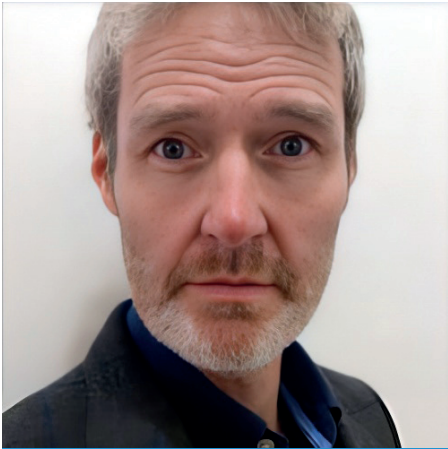
back to the communities we serve runs through our DNA and comes to life every day. We have an incredibly rich history of serving clients from 1889 and we build on that history by looking forward, embracing and innovating through AI and our innovation strategy, to be ready to make a positive difference for many many years to come.

Being recognised by Liverpool Law Society in this way is brilliant but to have this recognition in the year that Baroness Hale spoke at the ceremony really was the icing on the cake.

Thank you so much to Liverpool Law Society for recognising us like this but most of all thank you to each and every person who works with us at Jackson Lees Group for making it such a special business!

Esther Leach,
MD, Jackson Lees

Access to Justice Committee



James Mannouch

The Access to Justice Committee met during November. As ever, it was a well-attended meeting with several topics under discussion.

Given most weight was the issue of legal aid rates and the impact these are having on private practice. It is a well-established fact that legal aid rates have not kept up with inflation and the rising costs of business. The impact this is having on providers is stark. A fifth of legal aid firms have left the arena over the past 5 years. Others have reduced the number of legally aided matters they take on as a proportion of their overall case load. Private work is often having to subsidize legally aided work.

The Access to Justice Committee is working to explore options regarding Judicial Review. Any JR would not be brought on behalf of Liverpool Law Society, but the Society would be prepared to coordinate information-

gathering necessary to it. The Access to Justice Committee explored data kindly provided by Ian Townley at Broudie Jackson Canter. This data illustrates the scale of the issue with regards to a single firm. Extrapolated across a city region, the problem appears enormous. It is important that all data gathering relies on a common methodology. There is also a need for qualitative data. For example, by following individuals in need of advice we can begin to map their referral journey and record impacts on security and wellbeing. The work continues.

Anyone interested in joining the Access to Justice Committee should email: committees@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk

James Mannouch - Chair

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AI and the Provision of Legal Services



Liverpool John Moores University's impressive student campus at Copperas Hill hosted a fun and insightful event on Wednesday 6 November, "AI and the Provision of Legal Services".

Organised by Liverpool Law Society, sponsored by OneAdvanced and chaired by **Henry Sturm** of LegalGeek, the speaking panel consisted of **Catherine Bamford**, CEO and Founder of BamLegal, **Brian Noon**, Director and Co-Founder of In-House Legal Solutions, **Josh Bates**, Legal Director at O'Connors Legal Services and **Dr. Alison Lui**, Associate Dean Global Engagement, Reader in Corporate and Financial Law, Joint Deputy Head of the Centre of Study of Law in Theory and Practice at Liverpool John Moores University and myself **Edmund Chan**, Head of Legal Technology and Innovation at Hill Dickinson

After brief introductions from Henry, I provided my perspective on the question "What is AI?", citing some legal use case examples of expert systems, machine learning systems and generative AI

to emphasise the message that AI is not about computers thinking like humans, but about computers thinking like computers to achieve human-like outcomes.

This was followed by **Catherine** sharing her insights on some of the key use cases for Gen AI including review, summarisation, drafting and collaboration. Whilst not necessarily the most exciting use cases on paper, these use cases harness the power of generative AI today to deliver real business value and make lawyers' lives easier.

Brian then highlighted some of the key benefits that he and his business have been experiencing using AI solutions, including driving efficiency, managing risk, improving quality, creating scalability and enhancing client engagement and market presence.

Josh provided important guidance around some of the data and regulatory challenges of adopting AI solutions - the message was broadly 'not much to see here' in terms of new regulation, so for

now focus on maintaining existing best practice.

Dr Lui then talked about some of the university's initiatives in terms of bringing AI alive for LJMU law students and encouraging them to upskill in the area of prompt engineering to enhance their employability to prospective law firm employers.

This was followed by an engaging and interactive Q&A session chaired by Henry, including questions around barriers to AI adoption, hints and tips for selecting the right AI solution and speakers' favourite 'go-to' tools.

All in all, an interesting and thought-provoking session! Thank you once again to **Henry Sturm** for expertly chairing the event, to Liverpool John Moores University for hosting and to OneAdvanced for their kind sponsorship.

Edmund Chan
Head of Legal Tech & Innovation
Hill Dickinson LLP

Liverpool Law Society Conference 2024: Legal Cashiers and Managers

The Liverpool Law Society hosted its 2024 Conference for Legal Cashiers and Managers at the Taylor Wessing Liverpool office on the Albert Dock. Despite the cold weather, the winter wonderland setting provided a lovely start to the day.

Welcome and Introduction

Jo Downey warmly welcomed attendees with a brew and biscuit. The conference was hosted by Lisa Bolton from Peter Edwards Law, who shared her professional journey from legal cashier to practice manager, overseeing finance, compliance, risk, HR, and IT since 2012. Lisa introduced all the speakers and engaged well with both in-person and online delegates.



Keynote Speakers and Sessions

Brian Rogers, The Access Group

- **Topic:** Client Money at Risk
- **Highlights:** Brian, a regulatory



director at Access Legal, discussed the SRA's challenges with the Axiom Ince loss of £64M in client money. He covered potential changes in handling client money, including the consultation on replacing client accounts with TPMAs. Brian also shared case studies on misuse of client funds, AML breaches, and cryptocurrency issues.

Tom Lynes, Armalytix

- **Topic:** Safe and Efficient Financial Information Collection
- **Highlights:** Tom, head of Legal at Armalytix, spoke about using open banking and smart technology to collect financial information from clients safely and efficiently.

Sue Mawdsley, Keystone Law

- **Topic:** AML Issues for Law Firms
- **Highlights:** Sue, a specialist regulatory lawyer, discussed AML issues, client and matter risk assessments, ongoing monitoring,

and enhanced due diligence. She also covered recent changes in sanctions and the importance of risk assessments and CDD on existing customers.

Sarah Keegan, The CS Partnership

- **Topic:** Implementing Processes within CMS
- **Highlights:** Sarah, with over 20 years of experience as a property lawyer, explained how CS Partnership helps implement processes within CMS to improve compliance, efficiency, and customer service.

Tom Blandford, Your Firm's CFO

- **Topic:** Cash Flow Management
- **Highlights:** Tom, a chartered accountant, emphasized the importance of managing cash flow from the outset, being transparent with clients about billing, and ensuring a smooth client journey.

Judith Ratcliffe

- **Topic:** Data Protection – from misleading myths to practical matters
- **Highlights:** Judith, a privacy professional and data protection officer, discussed how compliance can prevent unnecessary costs, shared tips for payroll practicalities, data sharing, and avoiding personal data breaches.

We also heard from **Robert Fish** from kind sponsors OneAdvanced who talked about Connecting legal cashiers to cases: How legal software can complete the loop.

Thank you to all the speakers and Liverpool Law Society for hosting and delivering a very good conference. I look forward to next years!

Michelle Houghton
Financial Manager,
Bell, Lamb & Joynson

Aurora creates first-ever brand campaign for Weightmans



Aurora's campaign for the award-winning law firm promotes its brand purpose 'See the Possibility' with storytelling creative featuring its own leaders

Liverpool-based creative agency, Aurora, has created law firm Weightmans' first-ever campaign championing its brand purpose. The brand campaign uses storytelling techniques and nostalgia, injecting emotion and impact by bringing to life the background stories of leaders at every level - showcasing how Weightmans is a very different type of law firm.

The legal sector's communications are usually conservative by nature, so Aurora took a personal warm film approach to emphasise Weightmans' purpose led and people focused positioning 'See the Possibility'. The Real Leaders film celebrates the people behind Weightmans and the value it places on its employees. It features members of the Weightmans' team, from managing partners to younger leaders, sharing stories from their childhood through to where they are as a leader today.

The 90 second film plus cut downs promotes how Weightmans is powered by its people. Weightmans has the second

most engaged workforce among UK law firms on LinkedIn and this campaign will be amplified by the reach and engagement of its 1500+ staff across the UK as they share the build user generated content around the film with their own personal leadership journey stories.

Weightmans' first-ever brand campaign will target both existing clients and new prospects across public and private sectors primarily on LinkedIn but also

featuring across other digital channels. It is the first stage of a longer term, integrated brand building and marketing strategy across film, events, thought leadership and more.

Sarah-Jane Howitt, Director of Business Development & Communications, Weightmans, said:

"We're super excited to be embarking on our first brand campaign with the wonderful creativity and imagination of Aurora - and its ability to always make people feel moved by its campaigns. We wanted to demonstrate how we are the antithesis of the stereotypical, cutthroat, working-all-hours law firm so often envisaged."

Valerie Bounds, Chief Strategy & Creative Officer and Co-Founder of Aurora, said:

"Weightmans has trusted us with its first-ever brand campaign and our job was made so much simpler by having access to such passionate and purpose-led people. Their values run through the firm like a golden thread and we love nothing more than building brands out from the inside."

View the Real Leaders film [here](#).



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Renters Rights Bill – an update and a call for evidence

An update on the Renters Rights Bill



Daniel Conroy

Our recent article set out [the key provisions of the Renters' Rights Bill](#) ("the Bill") which was introduced by the Labour Government and how it is likely to impact on registered providers.

Since our article was written the Bill has been through the first and second reading in parliament and is currently at the committee stage.

Abolition of S21

A cornerstone provision of the Bill is abolition of the assured shorthold tenancy regime which would, effectively, end Section 21 evictions also known as 'no fault evictions'.

A key aspect of the Bill, distinct from the Renters (Reform) Bill introduced by the Conservative Government which never became legislation, was the lack of a transitional period with the relevant date all tenancies will convert being a date specified by the Secretary of State.

Whilst the lack of a transitional period has caused some concern in relation to the social housing sector the government guidance now indicates that the abolition of S21 evictions will be "at a later date".

The Government guidance states "We remain committed to abolition of section 21 in the social rented sector too. While our intention is to do this as quickly as possible, we consider it necessary to update our Direction to the Regulator of Social Housing so that they can update their Tenancy Standard. This will ensure it is clear what registered providers must do under the new system. As this requires a statutory consultation process, we will apply the new system to social tenancies (where the landlord is a private registered provider of social housing) at a later date."

Committee stage

During the committee stage of the Bill concerns have been raised as to whether His Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service ('HMCTS') would be equipped to deal with the change in legislation and the significant delays which may be encountered in recovering possession of a property. In his responses to the committee the Minister for Housing and Planning, **Matthew Pennycook MP**, stated that "there is a shared understanding between the sector and the Government that ensuring that the Courts and Tribunals Service is prepared for the implantation of the new tenancy regime is essential" that "the court system is on its knees after the past 14 years" and that "We have chosen to implement the new tenancy system in a single stage. The commencement date will be made clear in due course, but we will ensure that the Courts and Tribunals Service is prepared for the implementation of the new system. That is essential, and a huge amount of work is going on to ensure that will be the case".

The concerns around the capacity, and funding, of HMCTS has wider implications however, in the context of the Bill, the comments do mean that all parties, including registered providers, have a lack of clarity of when the provisions of the Bill will come into force given they are, seemingly, contingent

on HMCTS being "prepared" for the implementation and the lack of certainty as to what changes, and specifically the timeframe and metrics of any changes, that will be required in order to make HMCTS "prepared".

Call for evidence

In light of the Bill passing through parliament the Public Bill Committee is seeking submissions on the Bill from anybody with relevant expertise, experience or interest.

Submissions can be emailed to scrutiny@parliament.uk and further guidance can be found [here](#).

The Public Bill Committee will finish their consideration of the Bill by 28 November 2024 so registered providers with any comments on the Bill should write to the committee as soon as possible to ensure their voice is heard.

Daniel has extensive experience dealing with disrepair matters, acting for registered providers and housing associations, including cases involving the Equality Act 2010 and Environmental Protection Act issues.

.....
Daniel Conroy
 Principal Associate
 Weightmans

The role of business in cities



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



Julie Johnson

As the end of the year approaches, and the city begins to look a lot more festive, it's time to think about what we have achieved, and what we need to plan for the future.

While the end of the financial year will not come for another three months, as we approach the shortest day of the year, and many offices plan for a pause over Christmas, there is still plenty of time for reflection.

For the past 14 years, one of the major questions in and around cities like Liverpool has been on funding. Who funds who? Who should pay for what? How are those with the deepest pockets supporting those who need it? At Liverpool BID Company, representing as we do the interests over over 800 businesses across Liverpool city centre, the question widens to the role of civic space within the public sector. How far should business play a role in cities?

At this time of year, many of us think of this a great deal. From the richly decorated buildings with Christmas decorations, often funded by private business themselves, to the carol concerts and fundraising drives to support those less fortunate than themselves the role, and duty, of business within civic life comes to the fore.

This is not philanthropy or charity, instead it is the desire to invest and to plug those gaps where they are needed. It is not entirely selfless. Take the Christmas lights in Liverpool city centre. Liverpool BID covers 80% of the city centre's Christmas lights, investing over £460k up until 2027. Without it, the city would look darker and much less festive. This might dissuade people from visiting the city over Christmas, from doing their Christmas shopping here and having their Christmas nights out. The investment in the Christmas lights brings plenty of joy, but it also makes good financial sense.

The Elf on the Shelf, which will be in various locations in the city centre up until Christmas Eve, is fun and jolly and brings a feeling of happiness and hope. It also helps those venues in the city centre who benefit from added footfall and profile.

In 2025, attracting investors to the city is a major goal for the professional services sector in Liverpool. Working with the Combined Authority and Liverpool City Council, there will be an importance to helping to attract international business to the city, to better understand property deals and construction to help businesses make more informed decisions.

The Arts and Culture Fund managed by Liverpool BID Company is announcing the recipients of its latest grants. From theatre, walking tours to dance events, this investment in the arts definitely plugs a gap in the public sector, but it also benefits the businesses of the city centre. Cultural activity brings people to the city in months where there might be less to do, it gives people a reason to visit.

Next Spring, Liverpool Restaurant Week will return, providing a profile and celebration of the city's hospitality venues. A new Must-See Month will cast a similar light on the city's arts and cultural venues.

All of this activity, along with street cleaning and added security, networking and special events, comes from private sector investment through the BID levy. It emphasises the desire and ability of the private sector to enhance the environment of a city and to add to the colour and creativity taking place within it. The role of all of us in cities like Liverpool is to think of how, in the next year, we can continue to push the city forward and help it to thrive.



Law Society National Council

A special meeting of the Council of The Law Society (TLS) was held online on Monday 11 November. The sole purpose was discussion of the Report into the conduct of the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) in the matter of its intervention into Axiom Ince. The Report was produced by a practice in Northern Ireland, Carson McDowell, commissioned by the Legal Services Board (LSB).

TLS's President, **Richard Atkinson**, and Chief Executive Officer, **Ian Jeffrey**, guided members to consider the positions of TLS as both regulator – being owner of the SRA and delegator to the SRA – and as a representative body. Debate featured views that the SRA should “stick to the knitting” and not seek further reach, that

greater separation between TLS and the SRA could jeopardise receipt of funds by TLS from the Practising Certificate Fee, and that some recalibration of responsibilities under the Legal Services Act 2007 might be necessary.

The meeting was not intended to reach any conclusions or recommendations, and those must await another day in so far as TLS can act. This is likely to be a discussion that runs for some time. A staging point is likely to be a set of Directions to be issued by the LSB to the SRA.

The meeting was an opportunity for me to experience how Council is conducted ahead of the full quarterly meeting which I shall be attending in London

on Wednesday 11 December. I decided not to ask to speak at my first Council and to observe the length and nature of contributions from the floor.

My preparation for membership was assisted crucially by my predecessor, **Nina Ferris**, and by a most helpful day in London on 22 October. New members of Council were invited to TLS's HQ in Chancery Lane to meet each other and the Officers and senior staff. We were shown into the Council Chamber to see how speaking and voting works and enjoyed networking over refreshments. Currently, I am awaiting the Agenda for the December Council.

Jeremy Myers
Council Member for Liverpool

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Liverpool John Moores University Celebrates Pro Bono Week with Legal Advice Centre



Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) recently marked Pro Bono Week 2024 with a special event to celebrate the work of its Legal Advice Centre (LAC). Held on November 7th, the evening brought together students, faculty, and local partners to showcase the life-changing impact of pro bono legal services.

The event, hosted by the LAC, acknowledged the hard work and dedication of volunteer solicitors, placement partners, and students who have helped thousands of people access free legal support. In the past year alone, the LAC provided assistance to over 1,000 individuals, with a significant increase in demand, seeing a 44% rise in inquiries and a 12% increase in client appointments.

Mary Mullin, Clinical Legal Education Programme Leader at LJMU, highlighted the LAC's impressive achievements. She spoke about the invaluable hands-on learning experiences provided to students, who work on real cases across various areas of law, from family and housing to civil, criminal and commercial law.

Tonika Stephenson talked on the *Windrush Clinic*, which offers support to victims of the Windrush scandal. She shared her passion for helping those affected by the injustice and the Windrush charity success in securing over £300,000 for a client.

The event also celebrated the *Exceptional Case Funding* clinic led by **Michelle Waite**, which helps individuals unable to access legal aid. Michelle shared her pride in the clinic's 100% success rate in securing funding, offering vital legal support to clients with severe challenges.

The celebration also focused on the clinic's *Community Economic Development* work, led by **Paula Doran**, with students helping small businesses navigate legal issues. **Julie O'Hare** shared details of the *Civil Advice* clinic work and investment in the student experience.

Conor McGuire from *Support Through Court* spoke about the importance of supporting individuals facing court without legal representation, while student panellists shared how pro bono work has enhanced their skills and shaped their career aspirations.

Liz Jones shared details of her *Community Legal Education Programme* for those facing contact disputes at court in collaboration with University of Liverpool.

The evening was a testament to the power of pro bono work in providing access to justice for vulnerable communities and preparing the next generation of legal professionals. As the event concluded, **Rachel Stalker**, Subject Leader expressed the commitment from LJMU to continuing this important work, ensuring that justice is accessible to all.

Mary Mullin, LLB (Hons),
Solicitor, Principal Teaching Fellow
(Legal Advice centre)
LJMU



Optimising Law Firm Efficiency and Profitability with AI and Automated time recording



The legal industry has traditionally been resistant to change, but the emergence of artificial

intelligence (AI) presents an undeniable opportunity to enhance efficiency and profitability for law firms. At a time when competition is fierce, the ability to deliver high-quality services while controlling costs is key. AI, when integrated effectively, allows law firms to meet these challenges head-on, offering tools that streamline operations and provide more value to both lawyers and their clients.

AI has a profound impact on staff productivity. Human resources are the most expensive and vital asset in any law firm. By taking over repetitive, low-value tasks like legal research, document drafting, and even matter analysis, AI allows lawyers to focus on higher-value activities that require human expertise. AI-driven research tools, for instance, sift through vast legal databases in a fraction of the time it would take a lawyer, offering comprehensive insights while reducing possible errors from lapses in human concentration.

This shift not only improves operational efficiency but also provides an opportunity for legal professionals to enhance their skill sets. Lawyers can now focus on strategic, high-level work, thereby creating more value for clients while increasing their own billing potential. However, AI is not a replacement for human judgment. It acts as a powerful complement, augmenting the lawyer's role rather than diminishing it. To this end, law

firms must embrace the idea that AI will redefine—not replace—how legal services are delivered.

Driving Efficiency Through Cloud Technology

To fully leverage AI, law firms must ensure that their internal infrastructure can support these innovations. Many law firms have already migrated their practice management systems to the cloud, where centralised data storage offers a perfect environment for AI applications to thrive. With access to a vast array of client information, case documents, and workflow data, AI can efficiently analyse and process large volumes of information, driving both innovation and operational improvements.

For those law firms that continue to rely on disconnected databases or outdated systems, the potential for AI-driven efficiencies is significantly reduced. If client and matter information is not organised and centralised, AI tools struggle to function effectively. The solution is to create cloud based practice management systems, ensuring that data is accessible, secure, and can be utilised effectively to improve both firm efficiency and client outcomes.

Increasing Billable Hours with Automated time recording

Another important technological development available to law firms is the ability to improve billing accuracy through automated time recording. Traditionally, time recording has been a manual process which can be prone to human error, leading to under-billing and revenue loss. Now, lawyers can track their billable hours more precisely. With powerful tools that automatically record and assign time

to specific legal tasks, ensuring that no billable work goes unrecorded. This improved accuracy not only enhances profitability but also alleviates the administrative burden on fee earners, allowing them to focus on more meaningful client interactions.

Such leading-edge technology provides a game-changing opportunity for law firms to optimise staff output, streamline operations, and drive profitability. Those firms that have put themselves in a place whereby they can embrace such technology, particularly by ensuring their data infrastructure is AI-ready, will be well-positioned to lead the way in the evolving legal landscape.

About LEAP

LEAP Legal Software has been helping law firms to become more efficient and profitable globally for more than 25 years. LEAP is committed to consistently providing world-class legal practice productivity solutions and has innovation at the heart of its research and development so that users continually have the best possible experience.

Dedicated to delivering cutting-edge and intelligent legal software solutions, LEAP's team of specialist developers present innovative AI solutions that automate routine tasks, simplify document management, and enhance decision-making, allowing lawyers to do what they do best — practise law.

For more information, please visit www.leap.co.uk.

Gareth Walker,
CEO, LEAP UK



A broken record... A final push!

I have collected records all my life. Some of the older ones get stuck and repeat the same line endlessly! When it comes to the legal walk that's me, A broken record – keep on fundraising!



It is hard to believe that it is over 2 months since the Liverpool Legal Walk. We are almost 1/6 of the way to the next one! But the fundraising is never done. The Just Giving page for October's walk is open until 31st December 2024. We have presently raised well over our original target of £5k but the need never goes away. The walk raises funds to support agencies that provide legal help to this in need. As an example, in 2023 the Merseyside Law Centre dealt with –

- 945 Housing Cases and provided 1701 hours of free assistance
- 320 Asylum/Immigration cases and provided 1024 hours of free assistance
- 192 Benefits cases and provided 288 hours of free assistance
- 21 Tribunal hearings

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This is something that is repeated across our region with the Vauxhall Law Centre, the Equality and Employment Law Centre, LJMU Legal Advice Centre, Liverpool Law Clinic and many others ...

So let's have one final push before the end of this year, to raise as much as we can!

The JustGiving page can be accessed here: [Liverpool Law Society is fundraising for The Access to Justice Foundation](#)

Steve Cornforth
Liverpool Legal Walk working party

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Top tips for maximising the power of your data

Law firms using LEAP Legal Software, integrated with Microsoft's Power BI tool, backed by the Jayva Global consultancy and training team have access to impactful data visualisations, analytical insights, business-intelligence reporting and statistic-driven decision making. This article explains why...

LEAP's the first-and-only Microsoft-certified Power BI connector for legal software

On 25th April 2024, LEAP announced its prestigious accolade of developing and certifying the inaugural Power BI connector in the legal software industry. This achievement is testament to the LEAP development team's sterling efforts to always make the latest software innovations available to its users in order to add value to their businesses.

Jayva is LEAP's trusted certified consultancy partner

Having launched in 2014 as LEAP's first certified consultants in the UK and globally in 2018, we supply the full range of implementation services including installation, configuration, training and ongoing helpdesk support in the UK, USA, New Zealand, Ireland and Australia.

LEAP and Jayva work together hand in hand – LEAP supplies the software; Jayva supplies the accompanying technical services. In terms of Power BI, our trio of offerings span training, support and report creation.

Power BI is an analytics tool for optimum business intelligence

Power BI is made up of a collection of apps, connectors and systems that combine data from various sources – such as Excel spreadsheets, cloud-based data warehouses and on-premise data warehouses – into interactive, visually immersive reports within a single data source.

With LEAP integrating smoothly with legal accounting software such as QuickBooks Online and Xero, this centrally stored data is financial too, thereby giving an at-a-glance snapshot of what's happening in a law firm's back-office accounts function as well as in its front-office, client-facing division.

Power BI is a cost-effective purchase

There's a free version of Power BI, called 'Power BI Desktop' which is recommended alongside either a 'Power BI Pro' or 'Power BI Premium' licence. Licences are only needed for software admin users to create reports for firm-wide circulation.

Rolling out Power BI is ease personified

It's super easy to implement Power BI and connect it to your LEAP data. Head to Google or the Microsoft App Store and search for 'Power BI Desktop'. Download this free desktop version to your device locally, open the application, find your data source and connect the two systems by entering your LEAP credentials.

Power BI comes with popular-and-customisable reporting templates

In your LEAP-Power BI combined solution, there's a range of report templates covering fee earner, practice-wide, matter and financial performance. These reports can be tailored by using as a base and building upon it thus making reporting even more powerful. This is where Jayva's report creation services come in. To discover more, please email info@jayvaglobal.com.

Power BI's benefits are extensive and assorted

Having already covered some of the benefits of Power BI above, further

advantages comprise the ability to...

- **Make informed decisions.** By pulling in data from every origin, make predictions about the future and form decisions that stand the test of time.
- **Increase efficiency.** You'll save valuable time on management information reporting and its examination to run your practice smarter.
- **Strengthen customer service** by concentrating on what matters to your business – excelling at delivering legal advice.
- **Boost revenue and profitability** by being more financially savvy, allocating resources optimally and operating more efficiently.
- **Enhance data quality.** Input data once then combine, cleanse, shape and format for accurate, actionable observations.
- **Access data easier.** Power BI becomes your single source of truth by aggregating data from separate systems.
- **Plan strategically.** Analyse vital metrics to fuel continual improvement throughout your business.
- **Perform benchmarking.** Compare statistics with those of your rivals to ascertain where you stand in your industry.
- **Gain competitive advantage.** Utilise your data's benchmarking insights to become a competitive force to be reckoned with.
- **Know your business inside out.** With real time, up-to-date data that's constantly refreshed, you'll have a much better feel for what's going on in your company.
- **And much more besides,** from avoiding compliance hazards to reaching ROI on your existing software, and lots in between.

Continued on page 44



Specialist training support for your law firm

- + Harness the power of your technology
- + Realise ROI from your software investment
- + Thrive in today's challenging legal space
- + Benefit in many more, expansive ways

“

“The training of super users was a genius stroke. It spreads the technical know how around and prevents one sole person being inundated with system queries.”

Andrew Horwich, Symes Bains Broomer Solicitors

“Our Jayva trainers showed us around the software features relevant to our diverse roles in practice. The staff are friendly and efficient which is a formidable combination.”

Andrew Gray, Truth Legal

”



Get in touch to learn more:

0333 20 20 995 | info@jayvaglobal.com | www.jayvaglobal.com/training-services

Maximising the power of your data continued...

There's a bright future ahead for LEAP-Power BI clients

If you're wondering what's next in the Power BI journey, here's a summary of things to look forward to...

- **Increase knowledge and expertise.** With Power BI being in early adoption stages in the LEAP setting, knowledge and expertise is growing exponentially. Although already achieving amazing results in law firms, this will keep getting better.
- **Introduce more extensive date ranges for transactional information.**

The future will bring the ability to compare prior years, trends and more.

- **Welcome custom templates pulling in multiple data sources (QuickBooks Online, Excel etc).** We're testing the benchmarking scenario to pull in data cells based on an expected standard for specific area specialisms so look out for a plethora of new custom templates.
- **Add extra end-points such as custom fields.** Extra end-point data is being incorporated, particularly surrounding data protection, anti-money laundering compliance and know your client conflict checking.

Watch this space.

Jayva is willing to lend a helping hand

To discuss anything you've read in this article – whether it's considering your software options, project managing LEAP and Power BI-related software upgrades, training and mentoring software users, whatever – please email Jayva at info@javaglobal.com or visit www.javaglobal.com/power-bi-consultancy.

Read this article in its entirety at www.javaglobal.com/news/maximizing-the-power-of-your-data.



As expert Auctioneers & Valuers, Outhwaite & Litherland have been supporting North West Lawyers and professionals with valuations and advice since 1907.

We offer a complete probate valuation service, which now includes RICS accredited property valuations, in addition to the existing valuation service, estate sales and property clearance.

We hold a variety of specialist auctions during the year along side a catalogue of regular general household sales.

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In-House Legal Solutions supports University of Liverpool's Year in Industry initiative

In-House Legal Solutions is providing unique insight into the world of in-house law to University of Liverpool students and bridging academic knowledge and professional practice.

The number of ways to embark on a career in the legal profession is vast, with a wide array of specialisations and career paths to choose from considering a career in law. Among these, the in-house legal landscape often remains a less familiar field for aspiring lawyers. However, In-House Legal Services, a provider of bespoke legal services for in-house legal teams, is trying to change this by offering a unique opportunity to law students to gain experience working for an alternative legal services provider with an in-house focus.

As the demand for agile In-house lawyers begins to grow, In-House Legal solutions has partnered with University of Liverpool's 'Law with Year in Industry' programme to become the only firm to offer in-house legal experience as part of the scheme. It is a vital way of giving students access to experience the workings of in-house legal teams whilst empowering students to explore alternative pathways in their legal careers.

Earlier in the year, the outsourced legal business began offering opportunities for aspiring lawyers, by running a two-week Summer Vacation Scheme for second- and third-year law students to gain valuable in-house legal experience in a corporate/commercial environment. During this scheme a cohort of 4 students received mentorship by experienced in-house solicitors and trainees, participated in skills-based workshops and were involved in charitable initiatives. The students left with a wealth of practical experience and insights into the in-house landscape.

Ted Imrie, who has completed his second year of studying Law, took part in the Summer Vacation Scheme and is the first to join IHLS as part of the yearlong industry programme. This immersive



Ted Imrie

experience offers students the opportunity to engage with real-world in-house legal work, gaining invaluable insights into processes of how out-sourcing legal work is operated.

Ted will spend the next 12 months at IHLS, working closely with the team on various legal projects including tech and AI developments. Under the mentorship of both junior and senior lawyers in the team, he will gain hands-on experience, where his role involves drafting, negotiating, and reviewing legal documents, assisting with legal administration, and engaging with clients. Ted assists a range of current team members, from paralegals to directors and operations support, to give him a broad understanding, not only of legal practice but also the inner workings of running an in-house law firm.

Ted has said *"In my short time here I've already I've gained hands-on experience and insights into the in-house legal profession whilst working alongside the team. It has been eye opening to see how the firm incorporates that commercial mindset that is gained from being in-house into its advice, and to see the ambition of the firm to incorporate technology and AI tools into their everyday work for the benefit of clients."*

Brian Noon the director of In-House Legal solutions said *"At In-House Legal Solutions, we are committed to providing opportunities that support the growth of lawyers who want to join the profession. We are excited*



Brian Noon

to be involved in these schemes which are a prime example of this commitment, offering invaluable learning experiences that invest in the future of aspiring lawyers who want to potentially learn about in-house law. These opportunities bring new ideas and fresh perspectives to our team but also embody our core value of supporting the learning of the next generation of lawyers."

Professor Valsamis Mitsilegas, Dean of the University of Liverpool Law School added *"We are thrilled to partner with In-House Legal Solutions (IHLS) as part of our Year in Industry programme. Their commitment to offering University of Liverpool students' unique opportunities to gain hands-on experience in the in-house legal field is invaluable. By bridging academic knowledge with real-world practice, IHLS is playing a pivotal role in expanding our students' understanding of alternative legal career paths. The involvement of IHLS not only enhances our curriculum but will also help shape the future of our students; providing them with the skills and insight needed to succeed in an evolving legal landscape."*

"As one of the largest and most successful Law Schools in the UK, we're committed to providing world-leading legal education, both on campus and out there in the world."

For any young professionals eager to understand the broader spectrum of legal careers, venturing into the in-house domain could be the key to unlocking a fulfilling and versatile profession.

Kate Mansfield



The latest news from Merseyside Law Centre, providers of free specialist legal advice and assistance for the Liverpool City Region. Access to Justice for all.

Free Welfare Advice for Over 65s

Are you over 65 and unsure about your welfare benefits? We are here to help. Our dedicated team offers free, friendly advice on a range of benefits, including:

- Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Reduction
- Attendance Allowance

Our aim is to ensure that people aged 65 and over are claiming the support they are entitled to.

Appointments are available at our offices, or if preferred, we can arrange a home visit for your convenience

For more information contact us on :
0151 452 2495
Or email:
gabriele.ciuzelyte@merseysidelawcentre.co.uk

www.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk/benefitsandwelfare

Link to article: [Law Centres: Poor relations | Law Gazette](#)

The importance of PIP appeals – from nil points to enhanced rate.

Our client came to us after his initial PIP claim had been rejected. He had ongoing serious health difficulties which impacted his ability to walk and get dressed amongst other things. He had found filling in the initial form problematic and had not described his condition well enough to score the correct amount of points. This a frequent issue we encounter with clients, people often finding the PIP assessment form difficult to understand and fill out which leads to incorrect decision being made by the DWP. After discussions with the client, a deeper delve into his medical history and collating medical evidence from his GP, we discovered that he had further health issues which were contributing to his difficulties and so we decided that it would be appropriate to assist with a mandatory reconsideration. The case went to appeal with us a representative and the case was successful. The Client was awarded enhanced rate of both DL and mobility.

This case really exemplifies the importance of access to free legal services for individuals who are struggling to navigate the system. This client was entitled to PIP but didn't have the ability to ensure that his situation was explained properly on an official form. Without our assistance and the caseworker's diligence and investigative instinct, it is very likely that our client would have struggled on without support for a long time resulting in negative consequences for his life.

65s and Over Service Up and Running

Our new dedicated service for people aged 65 and over is now up and running. To arrange an appointment and for more information, please see flyer:

Law Gazette Article on Law Centres

Our CEO Liz contributed to an important article by the Law Gazette this month. The article explores the precarious situation Law Centres find themselves in now. Being underfunded and overwhelmed plus difficulties in recruiting and sustaining staff, the need for fundamental change in how the government approaches all areas of social welfare law is stark.

“Develop a model of funding that can help law centres and other providers become more stable”

Liz Reed, Merseyside Law Centre

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. www.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk/online-enquiry-form

Twitter: @MerseyLawCentre

Facebook: Merseyside Law Centre
 Instagram: @merseysidelawcentre
 Bluesky: @merseysidelaw.bsky.social

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS OCTOBER 2024

- Financial gains for clients: £106,391
- Work Completed: 402 hours
- Court hearings: 51
- Cases opened: 79

Merseyside Law Centre

LET US BE YOUR **HELPING HAND**

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</p> <p>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</p> <p>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

FREE HOUSING ADVICE

IMPROVING OUTCOMES THROUGH LEGAL SUPPORT AND HOUSING LOSS PREVENTION ADVICE SERVICE

- ✔ We offer free legal advice and representation if you have received a notice seeking possession of your home from your landlord or mortgage lender.
- ✔ We can provide early advice and assistance and representation if your home might be at risk.
- ✔ We can represent you on the day of your hearing or help you in advance if you contact us before the date of your hearing.
- ✔ We may be able to help you defend the claim against you.
- ✔ We can assist with rent arrears, debt or welfare benefit issues.

Our services are free even if you do not qualify for Legal Aid

HOW TO ACCESS OUR SERVICES

DROP INS- NO APPOINTMENT REQUIRED

Liverpool Civil and Family Court 35 Vernon Street, L2 2BX	Wed & Fri 11am-1pm
Dovecot Multi Activity Centre, L14 9BA	Mon & Thurs 10am-12pm

ONLINE

Online enquiry form available
www.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk/enquiryform

TELEPHONE

Call us on:
 0151 709 0504
 (9.30 - 5pm, Mon - Fri)

Regulation Update

December 2024

The latest Regulation news from Andrea Cohen of Weightmans LLP



Andrea Cohen

As the first snow of winter hits the UK, panic sets in, trains stop running, roads are closed, schools are shut...and meanwhile in the compliance world, things are running at a pace, tempers are heated, hopes of a wind down to Christmas are fading and Compli is back with our monthly update on regulatory matters, risk and compliance, and recent disciplinary decisions.

Axiom Ince report

As we reported in our 'Stop press' last month, the long-awaited Carson McDowell report commissioned by the Legal Services Board into the SRA Axiom Ince debacle was released. Those expecting/hoping for some sign of contrition at the COLP and COFA conference the following week were disappointed, although not unduly surprised, with the SRA dismissing criticism, disagreeing with the conclusions of the report and the SRA chair acknowledging there were some things it didn't do right, which is 'history' for the SRA and it has taken the action required. The mood on LinkedIn and comments on the Law Society Gazette reflected the views of many solicitors and it is likely that this will not be allayed when the LSB's independent review into the SRA's conduct in relation to the SSB collapse is published, which is now expected to be early next year (having initially been due in summer).

Economic crime – AML, Sanctions, Fraud

In the same week as the LSB released the Axiom Ince report, the SRA published two reports, SRA AML Annual Report 2023-24 and AML Training - Thematic Review, setting out what good training looks like, including a training checklist, and some statistics on compliance.

The Annual Report confirmed that proactive supervision, which includes inspections, desk-based reviews, etc. has doubled, with only 22% of firms being fully compliant, and enforcement increased by almost 50%, with over £1million fines imposed by the SRA and SDT in relation to AML breaches. In addition, 343 firms had their sanctions controls assessed and there were 55 sanctions inspections. Amongst other measures this year there will be a rolling programme to check independent AML audits and an increase in proactive supervision.

In addition, this week the LSB launched a consultation on proposed draft guidance regarding how legal regulators can fight economic crime, further to the new regulatory objective of 'promoting the prevention and detection of economic crime' in the Legal Services Act 2007, which was added by the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (ECCTA). This may lead to an increase in SRA inspections, investigations and enforcement. The consultation runs until 7 February 2025. Watch this space!

If you need assistance with any areas, including an independent AML audit, please get in touch.

Cybersecurity – A timely reminder

You may recall we mentioned the risk of cyber-attacks last month, with law firms being a target for cyber criminals as firms regularly handle commercially

sensitive and confidential information on behalf of clients and act on transactions involving the transfer of significant funds. The SRA AML annual report also recognised this an emerging risk, not only the immediate risk of an attack on a firm's own IT systems but also the risk of an attack within the law firm's supply chain, which might have serious knock-on consequences to a firm's operations. One specific example given by the SRA was that *"A recent cyber-attack affected users of a particular case management system which affected many firms' ability to provide a normal service to clients."*

This is the time to review your firm's cyber security posture and to understand whether there is anything else you can be doing now to either prevent successful attacks on your IT infrastructure or, in the event that you do suffer a successful attack, put you in the best position possible to respond effectively and minimise any damage. We work with our CyXcel team to provide an integrated and holistic approach to cyber resilience, with experts from cybersecurity, legal, technical and regulatory fields. To find out how CyXcel can help you avoid the emerging risks flagged by the SRA, please get in touch info@cyxcel.com.

SRA consultation on consumer protection

Following close on the heels of the COLP and COFA conference, the SRA launched its consultation on consumer protection, covering a wide range of areas, including changes to the way firms hold client money, interest earned on client money, compensation fund changes, Accounts Rules changes etc. The consultation ends on 21 February. The Law Society and local law societies will be responding, and we would encourage solicitors and firms to review and respond to the consultation. As noted in relation to previous consultations, a low level of responses will result in the SRA introducing the changes it is proposing.

ECCTA – Government guidance

On 6 November, UK Government published guidance on the new corporate criminal offence of Failure to Prevent Fraud, providing advice on the requirement to develop and implement reasonable fraud prevention measures. Large organisations (having 2 out of 3 criteria, namely, 250 + staff, £36m annual turnover, £18m held assets) have until 1 September 2025 to develop and implement these measures. After this time, any organisation not having introduced reasonable anti-fraud procedures, could face investigation and prosecution and an unlimited fine.

The SRA's decision on its proposals on financial penalties in light of its new powers to issue unlimited fines for certain breaches of its rules under the ECCTA, following the consultation that ended on 20 September, is still awaited.

New practice notes and guidance

SRA guidance

The SRA has published the following updated guidance since our previous update:

- Legal Professional Privilege when working in-house: [SRA | Legal professional privilege when working in-house - Guidance | Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)
- Key points for governing boards, chief executives and senior officers in organisations employing in-house solicitors: [SRA | Key points for governing boards, chief executives and senior officers in organisations employing in-house solicitors - Guidance | Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)
- Reporting concerns about wrongdoing when working in-house: [SRA | Reporting concerns about wrongdoing when working in-house - Case study | Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)

- Identifying your client when working in-house: [SRA | Identifying your client when working in-house - Guidance | Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)
- Internal investigations: [SRA | Internal investigations - Guidance | Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)
- Understanding in-house solicitors professional obligations employer: [SRA | Understanding in-house solicitors professional obligations employer - Guidance | Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)

Law Society practice notes

- What to do when a complaint goes to the Legal Ombudsman: [What to do when a complaint goes to the Legal Ombudsman | The Law Society](#)
- SRA powers of investigation: [SRA powers of investigation | The Law Society](#)
- Handling Complaints: [Handling complaints | The Law Society](#)

Disciplinary and regulatory decisions

There have been a number of decisions and judgments reported since our last update, including:

Fines for AML breaches

A raft of firms have been fined a total of £57,000 for AML breaches, including not having FWRA or client and matter risk assessments in place, lack of appropriate source of funds checks, ongoing monitoring, CDD etc. with fines ranging from £2300 to £18,000, based on percentage of turnover.

In addition, a firm has been fined £12,000 because, while it produced fully compliant documents at an inspection in September 2023, it could not locate previous versions of its FWRA and PCPs and was found to have failed to maintain a record.

Fine for acting for lenders, family members and himself

In an agreed outcome with the SRA, approved by the SDT, a solicitor who acted for lenders in conveyancing transactions without telling them he was also acting for himself and family members has been fined £12,500 and ordered to pay almost £20,000 costs. The solicitor admitted acting in five conveyancing transactions where there was a conflict of interest or significant risk of one.

Struck off for abandoning firm

A sole practitioner who abandoned his firm, failed to notify clients, left the office premises owing £22,000 rent, and left confidential files unsecured in the office for at least five months, has been struck off and ordered to pay £21,000 costs.

Conditions removed on practising certificate

A solicitor who had conditions placed on her practising certificate relating to misconduct at the firm where she had been COLP and COFA, has successfully applied to the SDT to have the conditions removed after seven years, despite the application being opposed by the SRA. The SDT said that while the original breaches were serious, the main instigator had been the owner of the firm, there was no evidence of further misconduct, and she had completed a vast number of training courses, including 164 courses in 2022/2023, covering her area of practice, as well as professional ethics and compliance.

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

Charity Spotlight: Zoe's Place



Betty's Story...

The family reflects on the challenge of balancing Betty's needs with those of their other children. Betty spent most of the first two years of her life in hospital, which meant missing out on many firsts. Her first birthday, Christmas, New Year, Easter, Halloween— "her first everything, she was in hospital. We never had a first with her at home," Jayne explains. "You miss out on so much. And then the other children never got a sibling because she was just not there at any point. It was hard balancing the needs of our other children with trying to bond with a baby who was living in an incubator."

In 2022, Jayne was seven months pregnant with Betty when she went for a routine check-up. She called her husband to join her as the doctors

explained they were concerned and baby was in distress. Delivery would need to happen within 10 minutes. The family knew their baby would have Down Syndrome, but the premature delivery brought with it a series of complications they weren't prepared for.

Betty was born early and spent the first 74 days of her life in the hospital. When she was finally able to come home, she struggled with breathing issues and often had to be rushed back to hospital. Jayne recalls, "It was normally two or three days at home, and then she looked unwell again."

After numerous hospitalisations, Jayne reached breaking point and took Betty to Alder Hey Children's Hospital, where the medical team discovered several additional

complications that had gone unnoticed. It was Alder Hey that introduced the family to Zoe's Place, somewhere that would provide much-needed support.

Betty's milestones were delayed and different from her siblings. She was initially tube-fed, and now she is PEG-fed. But when she finally achieved key developmental milestones, the moments were even more special. "When she eventually gave us that first smile, it was completely magical. She's just recently learned to sit up unaided, and the other children were ecstatic. So, each milestone is much longer coming, but it's so much more magical."

The support from Zoe's Place has been invaluable for the family. "No matter how tired you are or how much



it all seems, you know that at some point, close in the future [Zoe's Place] are going to be able to just take over." Jayne shares, "I can just hand her over and use that time to do stuff with the other children that I can't do with Betty. So, for instance, in the summer, I took Noah, who's three, to Farmer Teds. We had a lovely time but it actually struck me if I had Betty with me, we couldn't have done half of the stuff we did."

Zoe's Place isn't just about respite care; it's a source of advice and community for the family. "Every time I've said I'm struggling with something, somebody [at Zoe's Place] has had the answer. It's more than just taking her for a couple of days; it's for the whole family. We all get a benefit in different ways from it and she has lots of fun."

As Christmas approaches, Jayne's wish is simple: "If we could have a Christmas Wish, wave a magic wand, it would be, everyone was at home, no one was unwell, there was no prospect of a pending hospital visit. Not just for us either; for everyone that comes to Zoe's Place. I'd like everyone to have their children at home."



Knowing Me, Knowing Precedent U, A-HA!

The Introduction of the Fixed Costs Determination process

We are now one year on from the extension of the fixed recoverable costs regime to include all types of civil litigation claims with a value of up to £100,000.00. The number of cases which fall within the extended scheme has been growing, and in light of the limited and untested guidance when it comes to allocation to tracks and recoverability of disbursements, this has had the inevitable knock-on effect of increasing the likelihood of the number fixed costs disputes which arise.

As such, the CPR has been updated to introduce the new Fixed Costs Determination (FCD) streamlined process and a new Precedent U.

Precedent U

The new Fixed Costs Determination process is set out in the amendments to CPR 45 in a new Section X and sets out the circumstances for when a Precedent U should be prepared and filed. Precedent U is an Excel based precedent and is split into three sections.

Section A acts as the front page and includes the usual claim details. It requires a receiving party to confirm the allocated track and banding that has been applied in addition to details of the value of the claim. There are sections provided to detail the fixed costs, disbursements and Court fees which are sought. Reference is required to the stage or rule to which each item claimed relates to. Finally, Section A concludes with a statement of truth confirming the belief that the costs stated are correct. Additionally, it also requires confirmation that the fees of any specialist legal representative and disbursements incurred in the amounts stated will be paid to the persons stated.

Section B serves as a quasi-Precedent G and provides the receiving party the opportunity to explain the costs sought. Alongside this it provides space for the paying party to make a counter offer and set out their challenges. Finally, space is provided for the Court to annotate and record their decision in respect of each item sought under the FRC regime.

Section C is a separate section and provides for the receiving party to make submissions for a claim for costs under CPR 45.9 (claim for costs exceeding FRC where there are exceptional circumstances), 45.10 (claim for costs exceeding

FRC where a party or witness is vulnerable and that vulnerability has resulted in additional work), 45.50(3) (costs for stage S1 are subject to assessment up to the maximum figure show, except in personal injury claims) and/or 45.13 (where there are allegations of unreasonable behaviour). Section C requires an N260 to be prepared and submitted in respect of the additional costs sought. It also provides space for the paying party's response to those costs claimed.

Summary assessment of fixed costs following the conclusion of a hearing

CPR 45.63 introduces a provision for fixed costs to be subject to summary determination at the conclusion of a hearing. Any party who intends to claim fixed costs or disbursements must file and serve a completed Precedent U no later than 24 hours before the time fixed for the hearing. If the Court is unable to make a summary determination at the conclusion of a hearing it may direct that the fixed costs and disbursements be determined without a further hearing and may give directions for the determination as it thinks fit. The costs that determination shall be treated as if it were an interim application under CPR 45.8.

The Fixed Costs Determination process following compromising a claim

Where all matters, save for costs, are agreed without a hearing, an application will be required to apply a FCD to take place. In litigated matters this will require an application to be made in those proceedings under Part 23. In non-litigated matters, costs only proceedings will be required to be commenced together with a Precedent U and any supporting evidence for the costs claimed.

In either case, the paying party are required to respond within 21 days by preparing their responses within Section B and C within the Precedent U. The Court will then determine the costs without a hearing by annotating their decisions on the Precedent U.

Costs of the process will be capped at £500 plus VAT as set out in a new table 17 (plus court fee).

Right to Appeal a Fixed Costs Determination

There will then be an opportunity to challenge any decisions in the determination by requesting a hearing.



Kris Kilsby



Helen Spalding

Costs of the hearing will be paid by the requesting party unless they achieve an adjustment in their favour of at least 20%. Those costs will be treated as an interim application (£250-£333).

Disapplication of Part 36 Offers in the FCD process

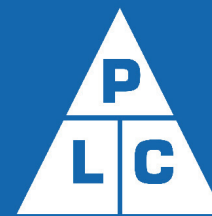
It should also be noted that CPR 45.66 confirms that Part 36 does not apply to any determination under the new process. This inevitably means that, without the encouragement and rewards of making good and early Part 36 offers, the best course of action will likely be the FCD process instead of negotiation.

Kris Kilsby is a Costs Lawyer at Paramount Legal Costs and a Council member of the Association of Costs Lawyers.

Helen Spalding is a Costs Solicitor.

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For any further questions or queries about the FRC Regime please get in touch at Kristopher.Kilsby@paramountlegalcosts.co.uk or helen.spalding@paramountlegalcosts.co.uk



PARAMOUNT LEGAL
COSTS LIMITED

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Forthcoming Courses

DATE	EVENT	SPEAKER
15/01/2025	Making more complex applications in the Court of Protection- tax planning, gifting, statutory wills, equity release, trustee removal	Helen Forster
22/01/2025	Newbuild Conveyancing: Trips and Traps	Richard Snape
23/01/2025	Law firms: how to immediately make more money, fix your cash- flow, convert more enquiries and bring in more work	Jay Sahota
29/01/2025	Introduction to Wills and Probate, and Connection with Family Law	Safda Mahmood
31/01/2025	The latest on the SQE & Trainee Programmes: Roundtable with The College of Legal Practice	College of Legal Practice
03-05/02/2025	Personal Injury Trusts	Helen Forster
06/02/2025	Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 - a focus on looming Identity Verification	Jackie Sheldon
11/02/2025	Housing Conditions Conference 2025	Various
03/03/2025	Financial Orders: Law & Practice	Safda Mahmood
03/03/2025	Cohabitation: Law & Practice	Safda Mahmood
04/03/2025	Introduction to Private Client work	Rebecca Roscoe
06/03/2025	International Women's Day event	Various
10/03/2025	HM Coroners Court workshop	Nicola Halpin & Gareth Thompson
11/03/2025	SRA Accounts Rules Update	Linda Lambert
12/03/2025	Domestic Abuse Conference 2025	Various
18/03/2025	Conveyancing Law Update	Richard Snape
19/03/2025	Costs Conference 2025	Various
20/03/2024	Directors Duties - the fundamentals (including the new voluntary code of conduct)	Jackie Sheldon
25/03/2025	Practical Probate: The Works	Rebecca Roscoe

* Training events open to legal professionals nationwide *

ONLINE events are recorded, so if you can't make the date/time, no problem!

Booking onto any of our online events means you will receive a link to access a recording of the event to watch at your leisure!

On behalf of all at Liverpool Law Society, we would like to thank you for your support during 2024 & wish you a very Merry Christmas & a peaceful New Year!



Making more complex applications in the Court of Protection
with Helen Forster


'Live' online, 15th January, 10am - 1pm

This online seminar will explain when the court can get involved and some of the more complex applications that can be brought within the same.

What You Will Learn:

- A brief overview of the Court of Protection procedures in place
- How to make a statutory will application, and the pitfalls
- Making applications for gifting and tax planning
- How to remove a trustee
- Equity release applications
- Removing attorneys or deputies

[Click here to book](#)



Newbuild Conveyancing: Trips & Traps
with Richard Snape

'Live' on 22nd January, 1.30pm - 4.30pm

This online course will look at some of the many issues relating to newbuild conveyancing, primarily for the buyer and some other problems which may arise together with their solutions.

Topics covered include:

- NHBC and similar schemes including the future of newbuild guarantees under the Building Safety Act 2022
- Planning issues including S.106 agreements, planning conditions and Community Infrastructure Levy
- Drainage issues
- 38 Highways Agreements

& more...

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)



Law Firms: How to immediately make more money, fix your cashflow, convert more enquiries and bring in more work
with Jay Sahota

'Live' online, 23rd January, 9.30am - 12.45pm

A must-attend for all managing and senior partners, managers, heads of department, heads of training, practice managers and FDs

This online session from the Masala Mentor, a solicitor and previous law firm owner and seller, will show you, how to:

- **Instantly improve your firm's cashflow, with lots of detailed golden nuggets – some of which only experience can buy!**
- **Improve your value and self-worth, enabling you to charge more with confidence so that your clients pay you happily**
- **Make more money via better billing; convert better; get more work from existing clients; and bring in copious amounts of work via networking**

[BOOK HERE](#)



Introduction to Wills and Probate, & connection with Family Law
with Safda Mahmood

'Live' online 29th January, 10am - 4pm

This online will equip you with the essentials in terms of principles of wills & probate, and as to how it links into other areas of law, particularly family law.

The areas to be covered are:

- Requirements for a Valid Will
- Capacity and Formalities
- Witnesses and Types of Gift
- Making Changes to Wills
- Revising and Revoking Wills
- Clauses to Assist Children
- Family Provision Claims
- Divorce, Dissolution and Wills
- Intestacy and Contentious Probate
- Introduction to Probate and Administration
- Grants and carrying out probate

[BOOK HERE](#)

Liverpool Law Society

Personal Injury Trusts

with Helen Forster

'Live' online, 3rd & 5th February

Personal injury trusts are a niche area full of traps for the unwary. These live and interactive sessions will explain when and how you should advise your clients to consider the founding of a personal injury trust, how to draft them, the problem areas and practical advice and guidance.

What You Will Learn

- A reminder of personal injury trusts
- What is a personal injury trust?
- When are they required?
- When can they be set up?
- What can a personal injury trust obtain for the compensated person?

& more...

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)

Liverpool Law Society

****NEW****

Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 – a focus on looming Identity Verification

with Jackie Sheldon

'Live' online, 6th February, 1pm - 2.30pm

This course is appropriate for anyone involved in advising UK companies or conducting filings at Companies House.

This online course will cover the following:

- The fundamentals of identity verification, including who will have to verify, how they will verify, consequences for failure to verify (and why verification is being introduced)
- Useful methods to brief clients and how to prepare for the process internally
- Outline implementation plan (reflecting current proposed dates for identity verification)
- Authorised Corporate Service Providers (and what they will need to do to verify on behalf of clients) including internal risk considerations
- Q&A.

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)

Liverpool Law Society

Financial Orders: Law & Practice

with Safda Mahmood

'Live' online 3rd March, 10am - 12.30pm

This online course will consider the various factors surrounding financial orders and the developments in the case law and statutory provisions.

The topics covered will include amongst others, the following:

- Case Law Developments
- Short Marriages and High Wealth Cases
- Periodical Payments and Maintenance Pending Suit
- Inheritance, Gifts and Barder Principles
- Cohabitation Cases
- Conduct Arguments
- Pre and Post Nuptial Agreements
- Material Non – Disclosure
- Bankruptcy and Financial Orders
- Key aspects surrounding Procedure

For more information or to book, [click here](#)

Liverpool Law Society

Cohabitation: Law & Practice

with Safda Mahmood

'Live' online 3rd March, 1pm - 4pm

This online course will consider the various factors surrounding advising cohabitants in family law matters. The developments in this significant area of law will be considered with emphasis of the leading case law and statutory provisions. It will be of benefit to those delegates who seek to become more confident with how to run/defend a case through the courts involving trusts of land and Schedule 1 Children Act Matters.

The topics covered will include amongst others, the following:

- Joint Tenancies and Tenancies in Common
- Resulting and Constructive Trusts
- Trusts of Land and Appointment of Trustees Act 1996 – Applications
- Proprietary Estoppel
- Drafting and Procedure
- Practice following Stack v. Dowden, Kernott v. Jones and Barnes v. Phillips
- Consideration of Hudson v Hathway 2022

& more...

For more information or to book, [click here](#)



The 2025 Housing Conditions Conference

Tuesday 11th February - attend in-person or online

Are you a legal professional working in the housing sector? Whether you represent tenants, landlords, or both, this Conference is the premier event to deepen your expertise, exchange insights, and stay informed on the latest developments in housing law and property rights.

For more details, [click here](#)



Conveyancing Law Update

with Richard Snape

'Live' online 18th March, 1.30pm - 4.30pm

Residential Conveyancing is currently undergoing fundamental changes. This online course aims to look at these changes and how to react to them.

Topics covered include:

- The new TA6 enquiries and potential issues
- Announcements in the King's Speech
- The Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024
- Banning new leasehold houses;
- Lease extensions
- Changes to administration charges
- Changes to estate management charges
- Changes to rentcharges

& more...

BOOK HERE

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- Share Valuations
- Company Sale & Purchase
- Professional Fees
- Rights of Way & Boundaries
- Construction
- Intellectual Property
- Professional Negligence
- Business Interruption
- Defamation
- Housing Disrepair
- Very Expensive Motor Cars
- Employment
- Contractual Failings
- Inheritance Act and ToLATAs

Civil and criminal experience as expert for over 20 years in:

- Loss of Profit and Consequential Loss
- Business & Share Valuations
- Matrimonial Valuations
- Partnership & Director Disputes
- Professional Negligence
- Criminal & Commercial Fraud Investigations
- Personal Injury & Fatal Accident
- Drug Trafficking etc. Asset Tracing & Confiscation
- Section 994 Disputes
- Director Disqualification
- Expert Determinations



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The Silent Pillars Of Justice: Ethical Challenges Faced by Court Interpreters



Accuracy and Fidelity: The Challenge of Precision

A court interpreter's responsibility is to provide accurate and faithful interpretations, a task more complex than it seems. Languages are rich systems of idioms, expressions, and cultural references. Literal translations often fail to capture meaning, as with idiomatic phrases like "kick the bucket," which require contextual adaptation to avoid confusion. Misinterpretation in such cases could significantly affect legal outcomes.

Interpreters must also navigate ambiguities in testimonies. Witnesses may use vague or culturally influenced language, especially if they are nervous or unfamiliar with court procedures. Interpreters must resist altering or "cleaning up" these statements, as even minor changes can affect how testimony is perceived. Balancing precision with linguistic and cultural differences is essential to maintaining the court's integrity.

Cultural Competence: Beyond Language

Effective court interpretation demands both

linguistic expertise and cultural competence. Language and culture are deeply connected, and interpreters must convey cultural nuances without distorting meaning. For instance, gestures or forms of address can vary significantly between cultures, requiring careful interpretation to ensure clarity.

Interpreters must also avoid injecting personal biases while conveying culturally significant information. This delicate balance is crucial to ensuring all courtroom participants fully understand the communication without distortion.

The Human Element: Practical Realities

Court interpreting is mentally and emotionally taxing. Interpreters are often exposed to distressing testimonies involving violent crimes or traumatic experiences. The emotional strain of such high-pressure environments can impact their ability to remain impartial and accurate over time.

Additionally, interpreters must make ethical decisions quickly, often without the opportunity to consult guidelines.

Continuous training, mentorship, and psychological support are essential to help them cope with these demands and maintain their professional standards.

Legal Implications: Ensuring Fair Trials

The consequences of inaccurate or unethical interpreting can be severe, potentially leading to wrongful convictions or acquittals. Such errors undermine the defendant's right to a fair trial, highlighting the interpreter's critical role in justice.

To support interpreters, courts should provide rigorous certification, ongoing training, and mechanisms for addressing ethical concerns. These measures help interpreters meet the high demands of their role and uphold the fairness of legal proceedings.

In a courtroom, where every word can influence a person's fate, interpreters are vital. They bridge linguistic divides, ensuring voices are heard and rights are protected, embodying the ethical principles at the heart of justice.

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New playbook to help legal businesses improve customer retention

Leading outsourced communications provider Money Penny has launched a new playbook to help legal businesses improve customer retention.

Titled 'Retaining Customers and How to Unlock Growth,' the playbook makes a compelling case for businesses to reinvest in client retention strategies and outlines how brilliant customer care is crucial to unlock growth and achieve competitive advantage.

Hannah Stringer, Marketing Director at Money Penny, said: "Customer retention is critical to business success, and it's one of the top priorities for business leaders across all sectors.

"On average, 65% of a business's custom comes from repeat customers – yet all too often, an organisation's main focus is on winning new work rather than retaining and expanding its existing client base."

The playbook asks 'Are your clients happy?' and encourages businesses to consider whether they're doing all they can to maximise existing relationships.

It also includes case studies from award-winning estate agent franchise Ewemove and infrastructural giant Enerveo, and a by-

lined article from guest services business Portico.

Hannah continued: "As a business focused on helping others improve their customer experience through telephone answering, live chat, and more, we know first-hand that prioritising customer service delivers clear reputational and financial benefits. Organisations with the highest levels of customer satisfaction achieve the strongest growth. Happy clients are more loyal, likely to refer you, and profitable.

"We hope this report will provide a useful roadmap for organisations keen to reinvigorate customer experience, retention and growth."

To download a copy of 'Money Penny's Retaining Customers and How to Unlock Growth' playbook, visit <https://www.moneypenny.com/uk/resources/blog/free-playbook-helping-businesses-improve-customer-retention/>

To learn more about Money Penny's legal sector expertise visit: <https://www.moneypenny.com/uk/legal-answering-services/>

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FINDING YOUR VOICE IN TODAY'S DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

Transitioning to a New Case Management Software: Expert Insights from Denovo

Transitioning to new case management software can feel daunting for law firms. Fears about data loss, operational disruption, and retraining staff often deter firms from making the switch. However, Steven Hill, Managing Director of Denovo, brings over two decades of experience in helping law firms navigate this process successfully. In this Q&A, Steven shares his expert insights on overcoming challenges and reaping the benefits of transitioning to a new system.

Apprehension Around Change

Grant Yuill (GY), Head of Marketing at Denovo: Steven, you've worked with countless law firms over the past 20 years, helping them transition to new software. Why do law firms often approach this process with apprehension?

Steven Hill (SH), Managing Director at Denovo: Lawyers are inherently cautious, as they are trained to assess every possible risk. Transitioning to a new software system can feel like stepping into the unknown, especially when that system handles core business functions—client data, tasks, finances, and more. The fear of things going wrong, like losing access to critical client files, is understandable.

Key Challenges in Switching Software

GY: What are the most common challenges firms face during this transition?

SH: One significant concern is data loss. I've had partners express sleepless nights over the possibility of not being able to access client files after migration. Retraining staff is another hurdle; people are often resistant to changing processes they've used for years, even if the new system is more efficient.

Time constraints also play a role. Firms are perpetually busy, juggling deadlines and client matters, making it hard to prioritise onboarding a new system. It

can be difficult to convince them that the short-term time investment will yield long-term efficiency gains.

How Denovo Supports the Transition

GY: What strategies does Denovo use to help firms overcome these challenges?

SH: Preparation is crucial. We never rush the process. Our dedicated onboarding team plans every step, from initial data extraction to final implementation, breaking it into manageable stages to reduce overwhelm. Clear communication is also vital. We ensure that everyone in the firm knows what to expect at each stage.

Training is another critical element. We don't just point out features; we show staff how to seamlessly integrate the software into their daily routines. Our goal is to make the software second nature.

GY: Any memorable challenges you've encountered?

SH: One firm insisted on running our software alongside their old system for six months as a safety net. Their IT team's scepticism turned into advocacy after a smooth transition.

Another notable case involved a firm with poor internet connectivity. Their Wi-Fi, disrupted by an industrial microwave next door, caused significant issues. Once we identified the problem, we set them up with a reliable connection, and they've been satisfied ever since.

Managing Expectations

GY: How do you set realistic expectations for clients during onboarding?

SH: We're upfront about the learning curve and potential hiccups. We emphasise that this is a partnership—our team is there for ongoing support to ensure clients get the most out of the software.

Honest conversations early on are essential. If a firm has complex data or processes, we let them know it might take more time to get everything perfect. Setting realistic timelines makes the process smoother for everyone.

Firms that involve their teams from the beginning and encourage them to embrace the new system typically see the greatest improvements in productivity and efficiency.

Making the Case for Change

GY: What would you say to firms hesitant to make the switch?

SH: Sticking with outdated software out of fear is riskier than embracing change. The legal industry is evolving and staying competitive means using technology that simplifies operations and frees up time for client-focused work.

At Denovo, we've honed the transition process through years of experience. We address concerns, mitigate risks, and provide unwavering support, making the switch smoother than firms expect. Once they've transitioned, most clients wonder why they didn't do it sooner.

A Seamless Transition with Denovo

Denovo specialises in helping law firms successfully transition to modern case management systems, ensuring data security and comprehensive support throughout the process.

Contact Denovo today to discover how switching to a more efficient case management software can transform your practice.

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Social Media Highlights

Each month we will be bringing you a selection of the latest social media posts by Liverpool Law Society and its members.

Vauxhall Law Centre @VLCLiverpool · 31 Oct
 On behalf of everyone at the law centre, we'd like to wish a happy belated 90th birthday to VLC Trustee and Treasurer, Annie Goodman.

Annie has been with the Law Centre since its beginning and has continued to support our work throughout the years.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ANNIE!!!

2 9 316

Maria Fogg Family Law Ltd
 25 November at 09:30

INSTAGRAM

3

Like Comment

Glenville Walker @Glenvillewalker · 14 Nov
 Throwback to last week when our Senior Associate and corporate specialist, Jayne Croft, met with Year 9 students from All Saints Catholic High School in Kirkby. Jayne provided valuable advice and shared her inspiring journey to becoming a lawyer.

#Community #CareerAdvice

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Unit Chambers @UnitChambers · 26 Nov
 We could get used to this...👀

@LexisUK_Family @LexisNexis @LexisNexisUK

1 2 10 318

Mann Roberts Solicitors Limited @4whenitmatters · 20 Nov
 The first festive networking event of the season. The Bold Business to Business Women that Network Christmas Special was great.

Always a very welcoming atmosphere, well organised and relaxed event.
 #mannrobertsolicitors
 #torwhenitmatters

24

Donoghue Solicitors @donoghuelaw · 19 Nov
 News update: After Edwin Afriyie succeeded in his case against the City of London Police at the Court of Appeal, the #police appealed for permission to take the case to the Supreme Court. Today, the Court of Appeal refused permission. Read why here: bit.ly/4hipuE1

1 2 608

CiwydAlyn @CiwydAlyn · 23 Nov
 Residents and families certainly enjoyed the snow at Chirk Court! We loved seeing everyone having fun, and they even managed to build a snowman!

If you'd like to find out more about Chirk Court, call our friendly team on 01691 774286, or click here: ciwydalyn.co.uk/chirk-court/

2 85

Jackson Lees @JacksonLeesLaw · 5 Nov
 The Jackson Lees Wills, Trusts and Probate team is thrilled to be attending Day 2 of the Wirral Bazaar event today

For more information on planning for your future, click here: ow.ly/OowY50U0b7X

Learn more about the Wirral Bazaar: ow.ly/gR4q50U0b81

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If you have an interesting tweet to share, why not send it to us, clearly labelled 'Social Media Page':

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