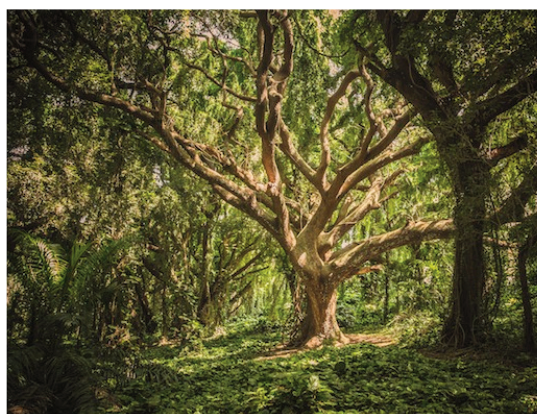
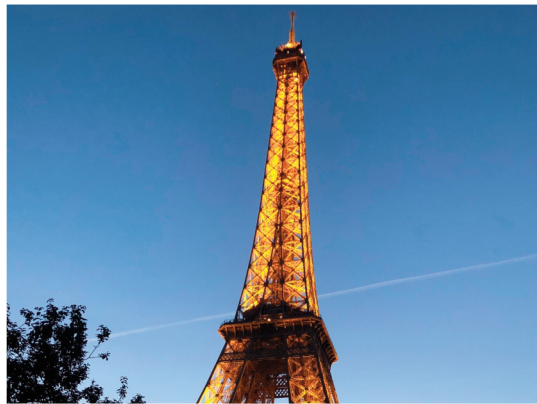


July 2020

# LiverpoolLaw

The magazine for the legal sector in  
Merseyside and the North West

Liverpool Law Society



[www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk](http://www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk)





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27th July

21st August

24th September

27th October

24th November

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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](mailto:editor@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk)

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## Welcome to the July 2020 edition of Liverpool Law

**Jennifer Powell**  
[editor@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk](mailto:editor@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk)

This month marks the clear transition to 'lockdown-lite' as one of our authors has aptly put it. The end feels in sight, the time when we can leave our homes more freely and look to slowly move back into our offices.

Having been on furlough since mid April it feels strange. The days of busy mornings, nursery runs and dashing into the office in rush hour traffic seem like a distant memory.

I've enjoyed my time at home but it has been a mixed bag of emotions. I initially felt guilty leaving my work and my colleagues but told myself it was for the greater good of the firm and I could keep my daughter safe. I was worried that going on furlough meant I was dispensable, but quickly got over that as I did going on maternity leave. The cogs keep turning no matter who you are.

It hasn't been easy, I've lost two aunties during this pandemic with the rubbish 10 person limit on their funerals. All this whilst dealing with an energetic and bored 2 year old hasn't made it the joyful 'time off' I hoped. I'm looking forward to going back, eventually, and enjoying a hot (!) coffee and lunch in peace with my friends with some added banter. This is something I have definitely taken for granted in the past.

It's great to see what all your plans are for different firms on the return to work and I'm glad to see what those who have contributed seem to be taking a sensible and flexible approach to the re-opening of offices. Making adaptations for those with childcare

issues and needing to be safe on public transport etc.

Please let us know how it goes and we welcome contributions for those already back in the offices- what's it like? How are you finding it?

This month there is also mention of the Law Society initiatives for BAME members, which is particularly poignant given the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as a great article on Black Lives Matter and what firms can do to help and diversify.

There's an article for Hope University this month which really resonated with me, it's talking about the students who come from lower socioeconomic families and aren't familiar with office environments or professional relationships. The article shows what they are doing to help those students and how firms can get involved. I've mentioned before how such initiatives helped me get a foot on the legal ladder, in particular I took part (and won!) the National negotiation competitions that are mentioned. If you or your firm are in a position to help the students in any way please do get in touch.

Finally we have our articles on what your perfect day would be following lockdown. Just reading them has made me want to get on the next available plane. What does your perfect day look like? Get in touch and let us know.

**As always please stay safe.**

**Jennifer Powell**  
Editor

## DIARY DATES

For further information on any of these events, please view our website or contact the Society.

Due to the coronavirus the following forthcoming meetings and events will be online to maintain safe distancing:

|            |   |            |   |
|------------|---|------------|---|
| 03/07/2020 | Lasting powers of attorney, deputyship and court of protection – key principles           | 16/07/2020 | Joint V local law societies meeting             |
| 03/07/2020 | Profitability and working capital management  | 16/07/2020 | Criminal Practice Sub-Committee                 |
| 06/07/2020 | Problems with Rent charges  | 17/07/2020 | Insolvency Update                               |
| 07/07/2020 | Civil Court Users' Group meeting via Zoom   | 20/07/2020 | Joint V Gazette roundtable and TLS meeting      |
| 08/07/2020 | Return to Workplace Discussion for members  | 21/07/2020 | Editorial Sub-Committee                         |
| 08/07/2020 | Commercial Lasting Powers of Attorney   | 22/07/2020 | Illegality Defences and Allegations in PI       |
| 10/07/2020 | Divorce & Financial Orders Certificate  | 23/07/2020 | Civil Litigation Sub-Committee                  |
| 13/07/2020 | Managing teams remotely   | 28/07/2020 | Finance & Policy Sub-Committee                  |
| 14/07/2020 | Costs Update with Professor Dominic Regan   | 29/07/2020 | Admissions of Liability - From Portal to Part 7 |
| 14/07/2020 | General Committee   | 30/07/2020 | TLS & JV CEO fortnightly meeting                |
| 15/07/2020 | The Care Act, Care Funding & Care Homes: the impact of Covid 19 and Corona Virus Act 2020 | 30/07/2020 | Future Planning Sub-Committee                   |
| 16/07/2020 | TLS & JV CEO fortnightly meeting  |            |   |

## Editorial Committee Dates

All meetings start at 1pm

Tue 21/07/2020 13:00

Tue 11/08/2020 13:00

Tue 15/09/2020 13:00

Tue 20/10/2020 13:00

Tue 17/11/2020 13:00



# From the President

## The latest from the President, Julie O'Hare

*"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."* – Barack Obama

I hope that this edition finds you all well!

A lot has happened in the past month - lockdown restrictions have started to ease, Liverpool won the league (finally), and we saw Pride Inside as large gatherings are still prohibited.

I do hope that you have been able to celebrate these long awaited events (sensibly of course)! Please let us have your stories and images for our next edition.

There has also been another significant happening since my last column - the Black Lives Matter movement started to gain momentum following the wrongful death of George Floyd.

It shocks and saddens me that people are still subject to prejudice; facing daily struggles just because of their physical or social identity. No one should ever have to experience such adversity.

Here at Liverpool Law Society we stand against discrimination and inequality and aim to support our members in the fight against bias. As you all may be aware this year has seen the setting up of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee. Owing to the current pandemic we have not been as active as we would have liked although we are still holding regular meetings and welcome anyone who is interested in making a change for the better to join us.

At the start of last month the national Law Society issued a statement and I, along with the Officers, Directors and staff at Liverpool Law Society wholeheartedly echo the sentiment. You can read more on the statement later in this edition.

We should not have to rely on future generations to create a world where people can feel safe and valued for being themselves, nor can we re-write history but we can encourage the right changes in attitudes now.

The Law Society is calling for members to take part in a BAME survey to gain insight into the experiences of our black and ethnic minority members which will help shape strategy going forward. The survey is open to everyone in the legal profession not just practitioners and fee earners. If you would like to take part please follow the link: <https://forms.microsoft.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=ss1OLdFCUEK3lCyyUjcZrY65BNma50dEq1gcXF2Do2hUQVRZNjFKRzBLMUpjSzDKQjg5SzY3V1Q4Vi4u>

Our local EDI committee is also looking for nominations of positive equality diversity and inclusion role models to host a series of Q&A articles for this publication. If you consider yourself to be a role model, or have a role model in mind then we would love to hear from you. Nominations are not restricted to the legal profession but can be someone who has made a positive contribution to your community. We are conscious that many of our members will be feeling the strain from the effects of Covid-19 from furloughing and consideration of redundancies or even the adaptation to different operational practices. We want to assure members that we are here to listen to the changing needs of our members. We have implemented online educational



**Julie O'Hare**

programmes which can still be attended by your furloughed staff. The programme is frequently updated and we would like members to engage with us during the development of our calendar; if there is an area or skill you would like to see covered please do contact us.

Like many of you we have also furloughed staff over the past month. This was not an easy decision at all and it was taken with a view to securing the very best future for the society. We strive to offer the very best service meaning that those staff still in the virtual office have been working endlessly to continue bringing you business as usual (and I am so grateful that we have an amazing team – thank you all). Thankfully we will see our furloughed staff back on a part time basis as of this month!

We will be holding a meeting with the local Councillors and Directors of the society this month and will report back in our next issue.

We will also be holding our follow up "Return to Work" online meeting this month (8 July) with our local leaders in law. With some of us planning on returning to the office soon I am hoping that we will be able to share ideas and offer support. If you would like to attend please do let us know.

That being said, many of us will continue to work from home which can bring with it its own challenges. Our Managing Teams Remotely

**continued on page 6**

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seminar on 13 July may be of interest to you and your colleagues so please do have a look at our website for more information.

Despite us not being able to see each other in person I do hope that you are all finding ways to stay in touch (and that includes with us). Early on last month we held our first online quiz with the one and only Steve Cornforth as the quiz master himself. The event raised over £1400 for the Community Justice Fund which is amazing (and very much needed) in the current climate. Many thanks to all of the participants and congratulations to the winning team from Peter Kneale!

As you will know I was looking forward to seeing you all at our Annual Dinner in November (perhaps not as enthusiastic over my speech) but sadly this is not likely to go ahead now. In the history of the society I don't think we have ever seen the passing of a year without this event (it's a staple in the diary for most of us) other than in times of war. As we wage war on this unforgiving virus the safety of our members is paramount! We are still crossing our fingers that we will get to see some of you soon though and so we are saving the original date of 12 November with a view to a much lower key, informal get together (restrictions permitting of course)!

Until next month, stay safe!

Julie O'Hare  
President

## Junior lawyers – we've got your back

Do you work closely with Junior Lawyers? If so, we need your help in reaching those at the start of their careers. Please share this with colleagues.

By now, you may be aware of our COVID-19 Support Hub and £1 million Personal Hardship Fund for those affected by coronavirus. Since launching these a few months back, we've received a number of applications from a broad range of solicitors. One group in particular is Junior Lawyers.

Recently we joined a webinar hosted by LawCare to highlight the help available for this group. Joined by representatives from LawCare, Solicitors Assistance Scheme and the Junior Lawyers Division, we discussed key challenges and signed posted where to receive assistance.

[www.sba.org.uk/junior-lawyers-weve-got-your-back](http://www.sba.org.uk/junior-lawyers-weve-got-your-back)



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## Black Lives Matter statement

Liverpool Law Society echoes the statement made by the office holders of the Law Society on 4 June 2020 which said 'Racism has no place in our society' and continued:

*"George Floyd's death has caused outrage around the world and exposed injustices and inequalities.*

*"As well as expressing sadness and sympathy it is vital we use this difficult time to reflect on the actions we must all take to tackle discrimination, as individuals, firms, businesses and communities.*

*"The Law Society and the solicitors' profession strive to ensure access to justice, equality for all under the legal system and to promote the rule of law. Racism and all forms of discrimination and prejudice have no place in our justice system – or in any other aspect of society.*

*"We will continue to promote diversity and inclusion in the legal profession, combat any instances of racism or prejudice in the sector and stand against injustice.*

*"Let us unequivocally add: Black Lives Matter!"*

Simon Davis, Law Society of England and Wales president, David Greene, Law Society vice president, I. Stephanie Boyce, Law Society deputy vice president and Paul Tennant, Law Society chief executive.

As a local Law Society, we too reject all types of racism and inequality. Liverpool Law Society's vision is to be a modern, inclusive, professional organisation to represent, support and promote the practice of law in the Liverpool City Region.

Respect, promoting community and integrity are our values which continue to be central to our work and services to, for and by the local legal sector. Every leader in law, every professional, every member of society has a role to play in eradicating racism, calling out discrimination and educating against prejudice.

Liverpool Law Society will continue to galvanise momentum brought about through tragedy, aided by our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee to ensure progress is made and action is taken.

Black Lives Matter.





# The Great Virtual Legal Quiz

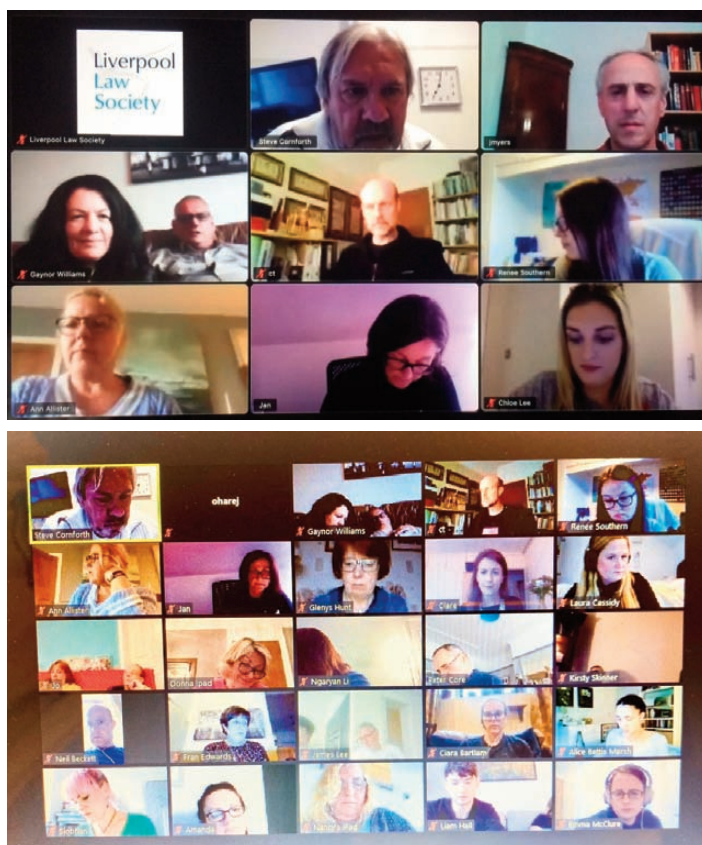
I was delighted to host the Great Virtual Legal Quiz on 10th June 2020.

This started with a conversation (by Zoom!) that I had with Sarah Poblete and Laura Cassidy from the Access to Justice Foundation. The June Legal Walk was not able to go ahead because of lockdown so we decided to host a virtual quiz. The Foundation helped with the admin and London Legal Support Trust provided some questions. I added some of my own. We were not sure what the response would be. It was a bit slow at first. But eventually we had 64 quizzers across 18 teams.

We had questions on topics from general knowledge, music, current affairs, Liverpool (the city!) and the usual picture quiz. It was great fun and the event raised just over £1400.00 for the Community Justice Fund which is supporting agencies providing free legal advice to those in need during the Covid-19 crisis. It was an interesting challenge presenting a quiz remotely. It was even more challenging for the team of markers who deserve a medal for collecting and collating answers by email and giving us a result! For the record, Peter Kneale Solicitors from Liverpool were the winners.

It was a great fundraiser but also gave 64 of us the chance to spend an evening showing off our knowledge, laughing, singing and generally doing what you do in a pub quiz!

Steve Cornforth



## Siobhan Taylor-Ward shortlisted for the LALYs

Siobhan Taylor-Ward, a solicitor at Merseyside Law Centre has been shortlisted in the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards, organised by the Legal Aid Practitioners Group.

Siobhan is listed in the Legal Aid Newcomer category.

Siobhan studied English at Liverpool John Moores University and spent the early part of her career as a support worker for adults with mental health problems.

Siobhan decided to become a solicitor and studied for the GDL and the LPC part time whilst working at Vauxhall Law Centre as a welfare benefits adviser.

She then joined the Hillsborough Case Team at Broudie Jackson and Canter and had to juggle work, her studies and home life.

Siobhan was concerned she would be unable to secure a Training Contract, but applied to the Justice First Fellowship and was successful and became a Fellow. She trained at both Greater Manchester Law Centre and Merseyside Law Centre, where she completed her training and qualified as a solicitor.

Siobhan says, "I am really delighted to have been shortlisted for the Legal Aid Newcomer Award, I am very happy."

Siobhan is an active member of Young Legal Aid Lawyers (YLAL) which is committed to defending publicly funded legal advice to protect the vulnerable in society.

Siobhan is a single Mum and has a 16 year old daughter and 8 year old son.



Siobhan Taylor-Ward with Lady Hale

# News from the Sub Committees

Email: [committees@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk](mailto:committees@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk) with any queries or comments

## Access to Justice

The Access to Justice Committee met on 11th June 2020. It was again expertly chaired and managed via Zoom.

We discussed the impact of Covid-19. The Temple Legal Centre has seen few family law enquiries which mainly relate to child contact issues. Merseyside Law Centre have seen an increase in homelessness cases. The temporary ban on evictions has been extended to the end of August. This provides some relief but the expectation that there will be an avalanche of possession cases when the ban is lifted.

Siobhan Taylor-Ward gave us an update on the Young Legal Aid Lawyers (YLAL). The position is gloomy with many concerned over their finances, job security, and being asked to do work above or below their level. Siobhan also highlighted the YLAL #prayerforlegalaid which focuses on the needs of asylum seekers and migrants - <http://www.younglegalaidlawyers.org/node/2995/>



**Steve Cornforth**  
Access to Justice  
Sub Committee

down. Residential matters have largely come to a halt and commercial work is slowing. Surveyors are unable to gain access to go into properties which are occupied, also builders also struggling to get materials which is stopping progress, on the other hand, new builders pushing to complete. New work fallen off cliff – people unable to move. Keen to progress if already agreed.

EPCs can't be granted and agents won't market without = initial slow down. Consultation re removing for need for EPCs to enable movement. Lots of people viewing and making enquiries.

Hoping for a positive movement after lockdown.

Some work on shelf atm e.g. possession matters. Noting that conveyancing for leasehold seems to be ongoing. Deeds of covenant frequent but not same level. Increasing disputes with neighbours – increase in petty minor issues. Number of caravan site disputes – eg moving-in in breach of covenant. Enquiries dropped off on resi but not completely. LR – eventually confirming that they will expedite but issues in expediting in boundary issues e.g. raising concerns of timescale. Tribunal working online and this is working ok.

Number of cases with injunctions which are difficult esp as the courts are non-communicative and can be left to negotiate with injunctive in person.

Court of Protection v slow and non-communicative/ Wills/probate – increase in wills and execution through windows. Remote instructions okay if know client/referred. Any sort of suspicion/concerns about capacity/influence – not doing them – too risky. Lot of new probates. People want to talk more given lockdown.

Taking on extra admin roles too.

Some offices open but locked office and witnessing through door. Can witness signatures for people in Woolton or Heswall. Discuss IT - scanning – office lens useful, care is needed on security, concerns about GDPR and use of personal phones, some found it all exciting-forcing advances to be made technologically and electronically. IT can be unreliable.

Training- Private Client con now in December; cross border seminar on 29th April, company law intro 24th April, Zoom is working fine. Elderly Client Seminar delivered on Zoom in March was vg and worked well.

Private client – new probate forms. Cut-off date for using SOT extended to 18th May. A 1-page doc to a 20- page doc. Designed to go with IT rather than legal form. All skills built up by legal and probate being ignored by this as don't need to draft a legal document. Applicant not even to sign online. Designed as a lay person's form – massive de-skilling. Discussion re probate service and any delays, doing applications online and taking less time than before. No particular information available online other than generalities. Straight forward cases working

## Non Contentious

NCB 23rd April 2020, via Zoom

Many apologies for this being so late in this article, and I make no excuses. This is an abbreviated record of the April meeting; we'll be having the next meeting in the very near future and I'll make every endeavour not to be so late.

### COVID-19 and related Issues:

Conveyancing, signatures massive problem because LR accepting only wet ink. Heavily reliant on skeleton crew in office.

Land Registry struggling, before Easter massive issues progressing anything. Back to normal service online for searches. Registrations – only dealing with anything expedited. Need to request expedition if it NEEDS doing. Birkenhead say only expedited being dealt with and putting small reqs in place to stop. Yesterday the Land Reg should have received 700 laptops. Property funding- Mortgages withdrawn and offers



fine (4-5 weeks) but cases not all straight forward. E.g. a taxable estate lost in system since Feb, as the HMRC sent the Summary to the DPR at Liverpool but the Liverpool DPR were no longer accepting applications which were diverted to a central DPR, note HMRC had been asked to return the summary to the solicitor and not the DPR directly.

Concern about how going long it is to last and how going to pick up on what doing again in future. How meant to comply with CPD properly. Keeping paralegals up to date. Concerns generally about not being told exit strategy. Possession clients adjourned for 3 months. Great level of uncertainty. Prefer to meet in person. Can't do mediation via Zoom. Not enjoying Zoom meetings, because you don't get same interaction. People less willing to put forward info. Miss speaking to people after meetings – opportunity lost. Concern about how keep on top of everything. Concern about vulnerable people.

LLS Zoom meetings good to link people geographically, generally positive feedback.

The Chair thanked all for attending.

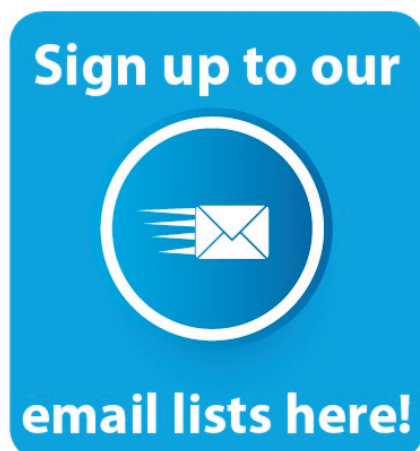


**Naomi Pinder**  
Chair  
Non Contentious Business  
Sub Committee

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Liverpool Law Society

ONLINE: Admissions of Liability -  
From Portal to Part 7  
on Wednesday 29th July,  
with **Nicky Carter** who will be covering:

- When is an admission and admission?
- Without Prejudice?
- Partial Admissions
  - Causation admissions
- Pre-action admissions
- Post proceedings admissions
- Portal Admissions
- Withdrawing admissions
  - When?
  - How?
  - Where?



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# #Black Lives Matter



On 13 June 2020, Liverpool saw protesters march in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter campaign, following the death of George Floyd in US police custody in Minneapolis, in May. Thousands took part in this peaceful demonstration to raise

awareness of racial issues. The death of George Floyd made headlines throughout the world, leading people in many countries to protest against the injustice which people of colour often experience.

It is well documented that Liverpool has its own troubled history due to its involvement in the transatlantic slave trade. During the 1700's it was known as the European capital of the slave trade. Such was Liverpool's dominance, that one in five African captives crossing the North Atlantic Ocean was carried in a Liverpool-based slave ship. The slave trade formed the backbone of the city's economy and the reinvestment of the proceeds stimulated trading and industrial development throughout the North-West. The wealth that was generated played an instrumental role in shaping the face of Liverpool as we know it today.

Throughout the city there are clues acknowledging Liverpool's roots as a hub for slave trading. The Port of Liverpool Building displays stone carvings of slave ships on its façade. Today, hundreds of city centre workers pass through Exchange Flags on their way to work. But at the height of the slave trade it served as a hub for the buying and selling of cotton, an industry linked to the slave trade, and would have been filled with merchants exchanging business cards bearing the flag of their slave ship on them – hence its' name.

Liverpool has come a long way and the city is increasingly turning its attention to shining a light on its historic links to the slave trade. The city's Mayor, Joe Anderson, has put a plan in place to detail Liverpool's involvement in the slave trade via plaques around the city. Educating people about how they can actively put measures in place to ensure we don't make mistakes in the future.

The paradigm shift in equality that we're experiencing at the moment, means that law firms too are focusing on how they can do more to promote diversity – both throughout their organisations and in society as a whole. Many are implementing measures designed to increase their knowledge and understanding of the key issues at play. Firms are implementing reverse mentoring systems, with employees providing insight to senior leadership, as an effective way to have honest and open conversations about diversity. A recent article in the Telegraph newspaper analysed racial inequality and reported that, among the 756 UK partners at the five Magic Circle firms, only five are black.

The business case for diversity is compelling. The latest report from McKinsey indicates that companies with culturally diverse top teams are 36% more profitable than their less diverse peers. By ensuring a level playing field, providing career opportunities for all their employees, law firms can reap benefits. Deploying analytics tools to show that promotions and pay processes are transparent and fair and aim to meet diversity targets is increasing. Implementing and upholding a zero-tolerance policy



**Usha Sharma**

for discriminatory behaviour, as well as ensuring that processes are in place to allow employees to challenge any racially insensitive behaviours within their organisation is also on the rise.

Earlier this month, the Black Solicitors Network penned an open letter to all Senior Leaders of Law Firms. It noted the surge of 'courageous conversations' in the workplace. It recommended the introduction of mandatory anti-bias, anti-racism and inclusion training for all staff and that firms should analyse what proportion of their workforce are represented by black lawyers at the trainee, associate and partner levels. Indeed Baroness McGregor-Smith in her 2017 report on Race in the Workplace stated: 'If BME talent is fully utilised the economy could receive a £24bn boost which represents 1.3% of GDP'.

Racism is a sensitive subject, which understandably many may feel uncomfortable discussing. But by opening up the conversation and implementing robust measures to tackle issues such as unconscious bias and the systemic barriers black people often face in their personal and professional lives; we can work towards making our society more equal and provide everyone with the opportunity to succeed.

On 14 June the Prime Minister announced a new cross-government Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities which will examine continuing racial and ethnic inequalities in Britain. This will include conversations around mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting.

Brabners has set up a Together Action Group, to look at ways we can promote equality, diversity and inclusion both within our firm and across society. It is made up of individual affinity groups one of which is a BAME Affinity Group. I am fortunate enough to lead this group. It has full support of the firm's senior management and is tasked with, and dedicated to tackling issues related to race. Our ambition is to highlight the issues, to understand the challenges, to find solutions and implement the measures required to support our people both personally and professionally.

**Usha Sharma is a Senior Associate Solicitor in the Real Estate Team at Brabners LLP. She leads the BAME Affinity Group for the firm.**



**Clatterbridge Private Clinic leading the way working with medical lawyers in the treatment of Mesothelioma with Immunotherapy. Mesothelioma is a type of cancer that develops in the lining that covers the outer surface of some of the body's organs and is usually caused by asbestos exposure. At Clatterbridge Private Clinic, we have expert consultants who specialise in Immunotherapy treatments for Mesothelioma patients.**

We are the only clinic in the northwest that provides a range of immunotherapy outpatient treatments for Mesothelioma. If you have clients claiming compensation for Mesothelioma due to asbestos exposure, we can provide them with the highest quality cancer care in a modern, relaxing, and safe environment. We can even provide a full breakdown of costs and treatments for you to use to support your client's claim, so they can recover costs from the Defendant or secure interim payments for their treatment.

Our Patient Liaison Team is always on hand to help you and your clients and provide any information they may need. We also have a concierge system in which we can arrange for travel to and from the centre for your client and even arrange for accommodation nearby if they have to travel long distances for their treatment.







Vauxhall Community  
Law & Information  
Centre

## Our regular column from the team at Vauxhall Community Law and Information Centre who support the local community and promote access to justice.

### The new 'normal' way of work...

We are becoming more adaptable to the new 'normal' way of work from our homes....

Our team have set up a remote advice service helping people with their benefit claims and representing at tribunals. Unsurprisingly we have now seen an increase in the number of people seeking help with their benefit and debt problems.

We have seen the latest figures for HMCTS social security appeals. Our benefits team can vouch for the backlog of SSCS appeals diminishing! Fewer people have been lodging appeals and our team have participated in a large number of 'remote telephone hearings' and we are pleased to report a 100% success rate to date.

Although we are a long way off from returning back to the office we are constantly evolving the way we work to help people. Please feel free to contact us if you feel you can offer us some help.



and trustees who came together to take part in the Great Legal Quiz to help raise money for the Access to Justice Foundation, Community Justice Fund. Final result? We came joint 9th with Young Legal Aid Lawyers but the biggest winner was being able to raise money for such a worthwhile cause. Thanks to all the organisers for putting together a fantastic evening of entertainment, even if it meant we had to listen to Steve Cornforth sing!

### Yoga

At uncertain times like these, we have been encouraging staff to take part in online courses offered by the Law Centres Network. Delighted to see that our Nancy Hatenboer and Ngaryan Li taking some time out to participate.

We all agree here in Vauxhall that protecting health and wellbeing is paramount!

Namaste!



### The Great Legal Quiz

It's not all been about work for us this month as wellbeing has been one of the big areas we have concentrated on.

We had a fantastic team consisting of staff, volunteers





# News from Merseyside Law Centre

Fighting for equality through social justice to combat poverty & homelessness



This month our JFF Fellow and trainee solicitor Tom Lavin presents a case study on homelessness and domestic violence during the coronavirus.

## Homelessness and Domestic Violence during the coronavirus

On the 27th March 2020, the government suspended possession proceedings to prevent landlords evicting their tenants during coronavirus lockdown. On 9th June 2020, the suspension was extended to the 23rd August 2020.

As most renters cannot be evicted from their homes during this suspension period, Merseyside Law Centre have seen a decrease in the number of clients requiring help making homeless applications.

However, we are still seeing clients who are homeless due to domestic violence.

On an afternoon in May we received a telephone call from a distressed woman who spoke limited English.

She explained at the start of lockdown she and her husband had agreed to separate but due to lockdown they had been forced to continue living together.

At first the arrangement had been relatively civil but the woman explained her husband had become increasingly abusive to her and the children as time had gone on. She explained she no

longer felt safe in the home and had taken to barricading herself and the children into one of the bedrooms at night.

After we had explained that there was potential to exclude the husband from the property so that she could remain in the home, the woman advised her preference was to move to a different area to feel safe.

Homelessness legislation provides that a person will be treated as homeless if they have a home but it is unreasonable for them to continue to occupy it for reasons including domestic violence.

As such, we were able to make a homeless application on behalf of our client and secure emergency accommodation for her the same afternoon.

We continue to be busy giving advice over the phone and by e-mail while our staff work from home, providing advice and assistance on housing, welfare benefits and asylum support

Our current contact details are below so please do pass these onto anyone you think may benefit from or require our services.

**Tel: 0151-709-0504**

**E-mail: [enquiries@merseysidelawcentre.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@merseysidelawcentre.co.uk)**

**Twitter: @MerseyLawCentre.**

# Should there be Public Inquiries into the Covid-19 Crisis?

Public Inquiry! Call a Public Inquiry! The clamour goes up for a high profile official investigation into the virus and the government response to it. There should, of course, be inquiries into the crisis and its handling, but there needs to be some clear thinking on what should be looked at, when, and what can be achieved.

Lesson number one of Public Inquiries is that they are often set up by Ministers to kick the can down the road, so a political hot potato can be cooled and dealt with later...or not.

Lesson number two is that they can be limited by the Minister in setting the 'terms of reference', and by the choice of Chair, often a retired senior judge.

Lesson number three is that Public Inquiries should not determine matters of democracy but should determine matters of fact and accountability.

The result of a properly timed, resourced and scoped Public Inquiry is that they can debunk the sort of nonsense soundbite which often substitutes for informed debate. What does that mean? It means that it is not for an unelected judge to determine whether austerity was a good idea, but it is very much for a Public Inquiry to investigate the evidence and determine whether a decade and more of austerity resulted in a shortage of trained nurses and vital life-saving equipment.

It is not for the unelected judge to determine whether 'doing the right things but only at the right time' was more than a convenient soundbite to make up for a policy vacuum, but the Inquiry should plainly look at the evidence to see whether the UK's death toll shows that the government did do the right things at the right time. Or not.

Fundamentally, it is for voters at an election to determine whether "Boris" is the new Winston Churchill leading the UK out of the most severe public health crisis in living memory, persuading F1 companies to make ventilators, sourcing PPE where inexplicably there was none, and leading the Thursday night clap, or whether Prime Minister Johnson has been found out, floundering and blustering through. Did he surround himself with cronies advising calamitously that letting the virus spread would create "herd immunity" which would make it go away, whilst ignoring clear evidence from China and Italy in particular, that an early lockdown would save tens of thousands of lives? At some point the voters will decide whether they applaud or deplore the government actions in the crisis and they deserve to be properly informed when they do so.

The power of Inquiries is that they can and should allow all relevant parties – government departments, relevant public authorities, medical associations and health service unions, and most importantly, the families of those who have died – to take part in an official investigation to determine three things. Firstly, what did and did not happen, at what time: establishing as definitive an official narrative as is possible. Secondly, who was responsible for ensuring the effects of a pandemic were minimised, and accountability where those persons or

institutions failed. Thirdly, what lessons are there for the future, to ensure the UK responds more effectively if and when there is a next time.

The history of Public Inquiries has established two key points: Inquiries will take as long as you let them, and the need for candour.

Many Inquiries are announced soon after disasters and other controversial events occur or come to light, often it seems, to deflect attention from responsible government Ministers. This feeling is reinforced as the 'terms of reference', the appointment of a Chair, and funding, are delayed for months and even years. The effect of this approach is that their effectiveness is reduced as time is created for memories to fade and evidence to be lost.

That does not need to be. Public Inquiries can be versatile and they can do an important, focused job swiftly. It is often forgotten that the first judicial inquiry into the Hillsborough disaster was set up within days, heard evidence within weeks, and the judge, Taylor LJ, delivered an interim report within four months. The history of the failed Hillsborough processes over the next 20 years is well documented, but the subsequent righting of those wrongs by the 2012 Independent Panel report and fresh 2016 inquests, vindicated and built upon many of the findings of that first initial report. The reason the interim report was delivered so quickly was to allow for major changes to stadium safety, before the start of the next football season. There is an important lesson here, for the current ongoing crisis.

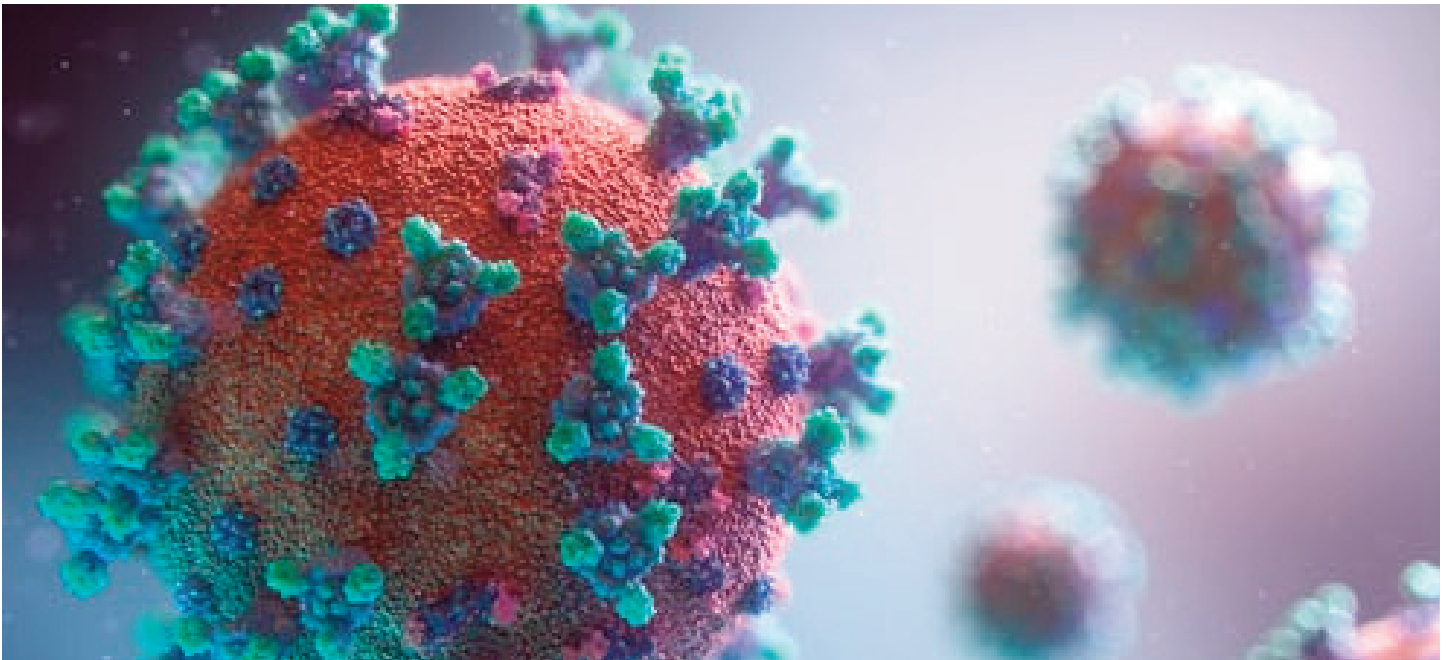
Although there are many matters relating to the pandemic which should be subject to Public Inquiry, there are some which are more complex than others, and some which are more urgent. A Public Inquiry, or Inquiries, should be announced and commenced now, but with clear timelines and aims.

Establishing whether the 23 March lockdown was a catastrophically delayed measure, the consequences of which led to far greater loss of life, may be a matter which can wait. But looking at the results of Exercise Cygnus, the 2016 multi-agency simulation which identified major deficits in available resources of vital equipment if there was a pandemic, might be instructive in looking for how urgent contingency plans should be urgently formulated and put into action, to produce or requisition the means to produce and distribute enough PPE and tests, so vital in the coming months.

It is reported that the Cygnus learning and recommendations were not only ignored by government but the Department of Health has attempted to prevent their disclosure, just as it has resisted calls to identify those who are party to SAGE discussions and recommendations, and minutes of its meetings. Finding out how and why contingency policies were either inadequate or ignored, should shine the light on areas which must be addressed now, in determining how to prevent and deal with further substantial outbreaks in the coming months.

Knowing who makes scientific recommendations to government and their rationale is essential to proper public discourse and





public accountability. Finally there is every chance that there will be a second wave of contagions later in the year: we must ensure that the reaction to this is prompt, well-informed and efficient.

Some areas of inquiry, such as why many BAME communities have been disproportionately struck, why UK testing capacity and policy is so far behind that of other countries such as Germany, and why PPE provision has been so lacking generally, and at the frontline and in the care sector in particular, may be matters which can be looked at by separate Inquiries conducted concurrently, to get answers that we need now, without delay.

The second historical lesson referred to, is that Public Inquiries are frequently subverted or delayed by a lack of candour. All public authorities, institutions, and private corporations invariably express condolences to the bereaved and declare an intention to act with complete transparency and cooperation at the outset of these processes. Regrettably this is not what then happens. Sometimes this is for ordinary reasons of human frailty – the inability to face up to personal failure – or it is because of the fear of dismissal or censure. Sometimes it is straightforward corruption where officials and others in authority try to hide wrongdoing. And sometimes it is because the law does not require it and legal advice is to admit as little as possible.

One leading QC who acts for public authorities recently suggested that candour in such processes should be considered in the context of the organisation's "litigation strategy". Only admit what you have to.

After 25 years of struggling to get to the truth, the Hillsborough families united at the end of the 2016 inquests to demand new laws to make it unequivocally clear that those who lead public authorities (including the police and local and central government, and public-facing private companies, such as stadium and shopping mall operators) should be under a legal duty to proactively set out to official inquiries what happened, what went wrong and what they failed to do. It was the Hillsborough families who also said that new laws were needed to provide enforcement powers and protection for whistle blowers, or history would repeat itself serially.

The subsequent Public Authorities (Accountability) Bill 2017 was

championed by Andy Burnham, before he left Parliament to become Mayor of Manchester, and sponsored by MPs from all parts of the House, including Tories, Lib Dems, SNP, Greens, SDLP, and Plaid Cymru. Its first reading was unopposed, but the Bill was stopped in its tracks by the 2017 election. Although it has remained the policy of Labour and other parties to enact it, the May and Johnson governments have simply ignored it and failed to return it to Parliament.

If there was a legal duty of candour in terms as set out in the Bill, there would be no question that the results of Cygnus could remain secret, or that relevant SAGE minutes could be withheld for other than clear national security grounds, or that government departments would have to provide proper answers to questions regarding testing and PPE, rather than slogans and soundbites. With candour comes accountability and change.

The current crisis has raised many important questions, some of which are urgent. The intelligent use of Public Inquiries can play an important role in cutting through meaningless soundbites like 'doing the right thing, at the right time' or 'stay alert'. Forensic analysis of material produced backed up by an enforceable duty of candour, can expose the effects of cuts in services, austerity, privatisation, deregulation, and the inadequacies or absence of proper contingency planning.

Findings of Public Inquiries do not have to be delayed for years and can make those we entrust with public safety accountable for failures and omissions. Above all, recommendations from properly timed, briefed and resourced Public Inquiries can push through real change, in a timescale which will prevent the mistakes and calamitous policy failures of the past from killing more people now and into the future. That is why we need appropriate public inquiries to be started now.

**Pete Weatherby QC and Elkan Abrahamson Director & Head of Major Inquiries at Broudie Jackson Canter**

# Strictly Legal

## Choosing the right opportunities for your law firm

Spartacus (or maybe Kirk Douglas) once said: "I believe in opportunity and the power of reason to seize upon it. Whatever happens, it happens because we choose for it. We decide our fate." With an irony not lost on classical scholars, this rallying cry was uttered shortly before he and his 6,000 admiring followers were slaughtered by the Roman Army, but you could argue this rather proved his point.

Some 2000 years later, law firm leaders are grappling with the unenviable task of ensuring the right choices are made about the future direction of the firms they lead. Some may say this is business as usual but, at this moment of heightened economic and social uncertainty, there is a sense that a wrong choice could be an existential one.

Several years ago, in one of our thought-pieces, we posed a series of questions that we thought law firms should be asking themselves to determine if they were fit enough for the year ahead. Questions such as, will all our services still be needed or wanted by paying clients? Is our team adequately trained and competent to provide them? Do we have a vision that has been clearly articulated internally and to our clients and stakeholders?

Do we have contingency plans to enable us to cut our losses if government action renders a service unprofitable or undeliverable? Do we have a robust business continuity plan? Do we have the support of specialist insurance brokers, bankers and accountants who can help us ride the shockwaves and confidently forecast and benchmark our financial performance? Are we equipped to seize new market opportunities as they arise? And critically, do we have a governance agreement (partners or shareholders) that will enable us to reach and implement the critical business decisions we need to make?

These questions seem to be even more relevant today, as we move from lockdown to lockdown-lite and, eventually we hope, into broad sunlit uplands. Inevitably, questions like these demand a degree of introspection but, above all, require a culture which encourages the generation of new ideas. Ideas have a tendency to unearth new business opportunities but, as we all know, not every business opportunity is a good one. So, the challenge for law firm leaders is how to choose the right ones for your law firm.

Scouring the authorities for a definitive guide on how to evaluate a business opportunity has led me to conclude that there isn't one. The search was, however, more rewarding than squeezing into my Lycra shorts for my daily breakfast workout with Joe Wicks.

Here then, in speedread format, are my pick of the best **TESTS OF A GOOD OPPORTUNITY** to help you narrow the field.



Nigel Wallis

### TEST ONE - IS IT CLEAR WHAT THE OPPORTUNITY ACTUALLY IS?

People who put forward ideas rarely describe them with sufficient clarity. If you've read a proposal twice and you still can't work out what the opportunity is, thank the proposer kindly, ask for further and better particulars and diarise it for a fortnight. Passionate promoters respond positively and quickly. If you have to chase, assume it was not a strong idea or allocate it to an enthusiast to re-fashion it.

### TEST TWO - DOES THE OPPORTUNITY FIT INTO YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE?

To get traction, an opportunity needs to sit well with your strategic plan. Outliers can be wonderful and entertaining, but they can be hard to implement unless you are radically rethinking your strategic plan or diversification is being urgently thrust upon you.

### TEST THREE - HOW WILL THE OPPORTUNITY DELIVER A BENEFIT TO YOUR CLIENTS?

The best ideas are those that create a better way of fixing clients' problems or delivering some other added value to clients. Even an average idea can do this with a bit of tweaking and improvement. The world is awash with products and services that nobody wants to buy.

So, sounding out a few trusted clients can be a useful way of



reaching an evidence-based decision. A good old-fashioned SWOT analysis can also help.

#### TEST FOUR - HOW WILL THE OPPORTUNITY DELIVER BENEFITS TO YOUR FIRM?

In these testing times, few firms have resources to waste on new products, services or systems that do not deliver some improvement to the firm's bottom line. That said, something that enables you to retain clients or create a market differentiator, should not be ignored if there is a good chance of it delivering measurable benefits over the longer-term. If you remain undecided, ask a few sceptics to highlight the benefits for you.

#### TEST FIVE - WHAT RESOURCES WILL IT TAKE TO EXPLOIT THE OPPORTUNITY?

This is not just about financial resource but, importantly, the input of time from support staff, lawyers, management, and the marketing team. It is never possible to fully cost the development of a new product, service or system but, in the absence of some basic financial forecasts showing the best case, worst case and most likely outcome, it is hard to see how you can justify throwing the firm's support behind it.

#### TEST SIX - DO WE HAVE A CHAMPION WILLING AND ABLE TO DRIVE THE OPPORTUNITY?

If the answer to this is no, the opportunity's a non-starter.

**Nigel Wallis, Director,**  
O'Connors Legal Services Limited

## Free affiliate membership of Chamber of Commerce for LLS corporate member firms

Members of Liverpool Law Society can benefit from a free 12-month affiliate membership (worth £150) of the Liverpool & Sefton Chambers of Commerce.

Affiliate Membership of the Liverpool & Sefton Chambers of Commerce entitles you to attend the Chambers' free events and other paid events at the reduced member rate. Full details appear below.

Request your application form from  
**[contactus@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk](mailto:contactus@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk)**

### Corporate Member Training Offer

*Helping your staff to remain competent*

### Save up to 30% on training costs

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Purchase 10 course credits in advance for only £800 + vat\*.

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**Then simply book ANY of your staff, including all support staff, on a wide range of LLS events, assigning credits as required - easy!**

Any training event up to 3 hours in duration is 1 credit, anything over 3

hours up to one day is 2 credits, including our full day conferences.

**For an application form, please contact: [training@liverpoolchambers.org.uk](mailto:training@liverpoolchambers.org.uk)**

#### Terms:

- The credits may be used by the Liverpool Law Society corporate member firm for any of their staff
- The Credit bundle is non-refundable Offer excludes the Children Panel Qualification 3 day course & limited events when specified Any supporting materials will only be issued to those who have booked on courses which they have unavoidably been unable to attend
- The Society retains the right to cancel or alter the date of courses
- Subject to our usual [terms & conditions](#).

Those who book events but do not attend and don't provide notice of cancellation will have the appropriate credit allocation applied.

To see more information, [Click here](#)

## Affiliate Membership

How can your Membership help get you  
#WellConnected?

Liverpool Law Society affiliate membership of Liverpool Chamber offers a 'Virtual' membership suitable for those who require an association with the Chamber of Commerce and a virtual access to services.

#### This includes:

- **Company profile listed on the Chamber website**
- **An option to upload news and events to the Chamber website**
- **Member discounts on attending Chamber events**
- **Digital version of the Chamber's Well Connected Magazine**
- **Digital membership certificate**
- **Use of the Chamber logo on your business promotional material**
- **An opportunity to advertise job vacancies on the Chamber website**
- **Member discounts on room hire/hot-desking at One Old Hall Street (L3 9HG)**

#### Notes

No events included – free or premium.  
All communication would be electronically.

**Upgrade to our Standard Membership package for £360+VAT per year**

For details on upgrading to this package and other available upgrades please contact the membership team on 0151 224 1880.

# Will a widening attainment gap be Covid 19's most enduring symptom?

Like everyone else in the country, Hope Law School has battled its way through the coronavirus pandemic with determination and ingenuity, pathos and grief. In this short note, I'd like to give a quick summary of our response to the unprecedented circumstances which confronted, and continue to confront, both staff and students, before turning to a reflection on some potential longer term consequences.

After face-to-face teaching was suspended in late March, staff moved to online delivery. As Hope is committed to being a collegium (fellowship) in which students and staff work closely together through daily engagement and debate, the move to virtual teaching posed a new challenge, but one to which colleagues quickly rose. Starting from a strong basis of effectiveness – pedagogy and teacher training has always been a cornerstone of Hope's provision – we arrived at best practice well in time for Easter. Lectures were the least problematic element, as the School is used to recording lectures. Staff also 'retooled' lecture slides for deployment at a distance. However, seminars and tutorials brought with them a need for online interaction, and this required the setting up of forums and chats, as well as usage of the ubiquitous Zoom.

But looming just behind the question of online teaching was the matter of online assessment. The University itself quickly acclimatised (deadlines extended, degree calculations adapted, fieldwork postponed), and even appointed new 'Advotechs' to assist those with less experience of the relevant technology. However, the Law team faced the particular difficulties arising from the Qualifying Law Degree and its many regulations, among which the requirement to be assessed in all of the Foundation subjects. Luckily, the rules provide latitude as to the precise type of assessment used, facilitating the setting of 'take-home' exams, coupled of course with robust moderation.

Throughout this experience, we kept in mind our whole student body, ensuring that use of costly technology did not negatively impact engagement. This causes one to reflect on the negative impacts some school-age students have faced over this period, though. What damage will this enforced educational vacuum have caused them, and will it be ongoing? In a country where the least advantaged pupils, in terms of their accumulated knowledge, are already some two school years behind the most advantaged by the time they enter university, one worries that the already near-impossible game of catch-up which such undergraduates must play – especially those wanting to go into law – just became impossible for real.

Worse still, those in legal education already saw trouble on the horizon: the Solicitors Qualifying Exam and its centralized multiple choice tests. Those same least advantaged pupils – later undergraduates and graduates – will lack the experience of having taken competitive entrance examinations, with which the new tests share some DNA, in just the same way that they lacked the access to books and other educational resources during lockdown. Will the 'SQE route' become a sort of 'officer class' for solicitors, with anyone else having no option but to work their way up from, say, an apprenticeship?

It is not new to say that to unleash aspiration, and foment social mobility, law programmes must incorporate practical legal knowledge to build students' confidence and professional skills



## Practice Development: the law syllabus' missing skill?

where they are unlikely to have had links to the legal professions growing up. This kind of experiential learning frees students from the law school's traditional 'one size fits all' pedagogy, linked to the doctrinal tradition of analysing legal principles and extrapolating logical conclusions. One cannot help but imagine that this 'thinking like a lawyer' route to professional success is easier for those who grew up surrounded by lawyers in the first place.

At Hope, we have been hugely lucky in having the wonderful Maxwell Hodge spearhead the setting up of a law clinic on our campus, and, as well as volunteering there, students have the chance to compete in national competitions based on such skills as negotiation and client interviewing. But there is much more we could consider. When I was working in Brussels years ago, I always thought the most prized skill of all was Practice Development, which in that town involved going to a lot of cheese and wine events (I don't know about Liverpool). Again, familiarity will breed success for those brought up in that kind of environment. And yet it is those very students who most struggle with, say, mooting, who I think (with a little bit of legal knowledge) could smooth-talk a potential client with a winning (or at least workable) litigation strategy. They're certainly brilliant at making up excuses for late essays! I'm in talks with a colleague at Canterbury Christchurch University to try and turn this into a new competition for students and would be delighted to hear from anyone interested in being involved.

Look at us all now – tired, toughened, transformed. And some of the transformations might be here to stay. Certainly this year's pedagogical innovations are already on the agenda for next year's teaching and learning training at Hope, as we commit ourselves to 'deep learning' going forward. But to bring about increased job prospects in a time of huge unemployment, and wider participation in an employment market where all participation is at risk – that will be the Herculean task facing law schools going into the next academic year. Let's redouble our efforts on those employability skills, perhaps more important now than ever.

**Richard Lang,**  
Associate Professor in International and European Law,  
Liverpool Hope University



# Routes to Qualification

## Becky Kirkham of Hill Dickinson discusses her training through a legal apprenticeship

### Why did you opt to take the apprentice route, rather than the traditional university route?

I opted for the apprenticeship route for a number of reasons, the main reason being that I wanted to avoid incurring student debt: with an apprenticeship all of your fees are paid for by the firm. I wanted to learn about the practical aspect of the job as well as the academic – I think both are just as important. I was also able to stay at home (not everyone's preferred choice) and begin earning a wage from day one – this appealed to me for obvious reasons. I also recall looking around universities and not feeling as I thought I should have. It gave me a sense of dread rather than excitement, and I felt I would struggle to settle.

### What is the structure of your training?

As well as my daily role, we have what's called 'off the job training' where we are given time out of the office each week to complete our academic studies. This is decided between you and your team. I am studying with the University of Law, which mostly takes place online. Students are assigned a tutor for each module as well as a skills tutor who looks after our wellbeing and monitors that we are completing the correct sort of tasks in work. We have a weekly submission, usually in the form of a short essay, which is marked each week and returned in time for you to prepare your feedback before the following week's submission. The tutors are helpful if you have any questions about anything and always respond quickly. We also have frequent live webinars to make sure everyone understands the work and there is a summer school each year.

### What type of work do you do?

I am in the corporate/banking team, so we deal with transactional work. When I first started I did a lot of administration work (booking meeting rooms, raising invoices and so on). It provided me with an essential foundation, as I had just completed my A Levels, had never worked in an office before and had no real

understanding of what a banking solicitor does. As I progressed and began to understand what the job involved, I was given more responsibility. I now assist a lot in the beginning of a transaction, which might involve undertaking searches on companies the banks are lending money to, and am given the responsibility of drafting some documents, like board minutes. I also assist once a transaction is completed, registering the various security procedures that need to be carried out and organising the documents. When completing tasks I am new to, my supervisor and other members of my team are always happy to check my work and give me constructive feedback to help me progress. The team are always prepared to answer questions but they like me to attempt the work given and then receive feedback to help me learn and progress. This can sometimes be a challenge, especially when completing tasks for the first time, but it demonstrates the trust and respect we have as a team.

### How long will it take you to qualify as a solicitor?

When I finished sixth form at 18, I joined Hill Dickinson as an apprentice paralegal. This was an apprenticeship with CILEX, which lasted two years. I then discussed with my supervisor the possibility of progressing to an apprentice solicitor, which is what I'm doing now – this training takes five and a half years to complete. Assuming I pass all my exams, I'll be qualified by the age of 25.

### What do you see as the pros and cons of legal apprenticeships?

When I first started, I found the biggest difficulty of the apprenticeship route was that all my friends had gone to university and there was a sense of 'missing out'. However, I quickly got over that when I went to visit them and realised the student lifestyle wasn't suited to me. I also found work, life and study balance hard to get used to initially – it was a big jump from sitting in the common room to sitting in the office, however this transition is something you soon adapt to. You also



**Becky Kirkham**

don't get to choose which area of law you will initially work in when you start an apprenticeship, so if your aim is to work within a specific area of law this may not be the best option for you (luckily I didn't have a preference).

However, I believe the pros definitely outweigh the cons. You immediately get a taste of what the job involves, which university study doesn't always provide. I also believe that the experience you get from working in the office is essential to your professional development – from the age of 18 I've had to learn the 'dos and don'ts' of the office, which has had a positive impact on my personal development too. I'm someone who benefits and learns most from getting hands on with my work and also watching other people work – and there's plenty of opportunity for that here at Hill Dickinson.

# Wills in the days of a Pandemic

Modern medicine has meant that far more people are living longer, the care of babies and children has improved so much in recent years and thankfully the rate of infant mortality is very low here in the UK. Although, I always think about the countries where this is not the case and a child under 5 in Africa dies from malaria every two minutes (UNICEF).

One of the consequences of modern medicine is that death has become hidden and almost a failure. Have you noticed that the process is often described in the vocabulary of war, a battle to be won or lost, of success or failure; as if personal bravery and strength of spirit can somehow overcome everything? Talking about dying has become taboo, it is seen as the end and almost unacceptable.

As a result of this dreadful pandemic, suddenly our own mortality has been thrust in our faces. As a society, we are facing death in a way that we have not faced since the War and this now covers four generations. We've just commemorated the 75th Anniversary of VE Day and I've listened to the testimony of the old soldiers and they are breath-taking in every way.

This is all a bit off the point of Wills, but having been in the world of Wills and Probate for so many decades, I meditate upon these matters in a positive way. So, where does all this fit in with making a Will? I often hear clients say that they have put off making a Will for a long time, sometimes many years but after the Will is signed, they have great peace of mind and can get on with life. Making a Will involves facing one's own mortality and it also involves thinking about our loved ones and their grief upon our death and it's another impediment to people making Wills. Let's also face it, some people aren't fortunate to have people who love them and facing up to this fact cannot be easy.

There have been many more people making Wills and solicitors involved in making Wills are included in the definition of key workers. In the last 12 weeks, I have had the honour of helping many clients to make Wills, adopting new procedures to observe all the rules on social distancing. I have helped NHS doctors, people who want to get their house in order just in case they get Covid-19 and the frail elders who are close to the end of their journey on Earth.

Let me tell you about Joe (not his real name). Joe's time here is very limited and his son phoned me and told me that dad wants to make a Will. As a matter of law, I must always take very careful instructions from the person who is making the Will, I cannot accept instructions from a third party, no matter how well meaning and genuine in their belief of what someone else wants to happen. In normal times, I would go and see Joe at home and we'd have a good chat, I want to get to know him and his dynamics- it's always a good idea to get to know about any children who are estranged or any third party who may be maintained, perhaps a grandchild or close friend. The visit needed to be replaced with a carefully pre-arranged telephone call.

I like to chat, it's important to get to know someone in a way that cannot be gleaned from a series of questions or an internet form. It's crucial when I prepare Wills for a person who is frail and needs some extra tlc. I make sure that there is no rush, no pressure, I ensure that it is the person who is making the Will



**Naomi Pinder**

because they want to, not because someone else thinks it's a good idea.

Joe and I chatted for quite a while and his wishes (instructions, in legal-speak) were expressed in a natural way, arising from our conversation rather than bald questions. Solicitors are good at questions, our brains are taught to analyse information and to test it, but such cross questioning is not at all appropriate for Joe. Joe's son and I discussed when would be a good time for me to come and see Joe, and I called round mid-morning when he is "at his best". I was meticulous about the Covid rules on distancing and shielding, working all the time with Joe's son and making sure that he was happy with all the precautions I was taking. I spent time with Joe, not great behind a face mask but taking great care with Joe all the time, after all the eyes are the window of the soul and we had eye contact.

After everything had been signed, Joe's eyes filled with tears with relief and love for his family, he had been granted the peace of mind to know that everything was in place to look after his wife of over 60 years. It was a great blessing for me to have been able to help and serve Joe in this way, and to see him at peace was wonderful.

I feel that I've rambled on a bit, so if you have reached the end of this - well done and thank you.

Take care and with all good wishes, Naomi

**Naomi Pinder**  
**Catherine Higgins Law**





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## Changes to the Family Justice System

During the lockdown there has been significant change and disruption to family cases. Most significantly, cases were unable to progress as usual in court with hearings taking place remotely using phone calls or video platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

The adaptations made by the judiciary, court staff and practitioners alike allowed cases to progress instead of grinding to a complete halt. However, they were urgent measures taken in a time of global emergency and these measures were not intended to be anything but emergency measures. Remote hearings have significant advantages of allowing practitioners a greater certainty of adherence to time slots provided by the court and reducing lost time waiting on the court landing. At a time when pressure on social workers and CAFCASS is so high, and local authorities across the country are woefully underfunded, the benefits of time saving to practitioners' wellbeing and to the community cannot be underestimated. Indeed, there have been calls to allow a greater number of remote hearings to continue post lockdown as many practitioners have felt great benefit as a consequence of remote hearings.

The message is not all positive however. Those that benefit most from the changes are practitioners, the impact on clients and the direction a case takes as a consequence of remote hearings is yet to be seen. It is perhaps rather naïve to think that there will be no consequences to remote hearings. Many court users feel more distanced from the process which could lead to taking their case less seriously with predictable non compliance as a consequence.

Hearings that have been backlogged are those considered unsuitable for remote hearings, typically any contested hearings. This has led to cases not proceeding to conclusion during the pandemic. The ramifications are significant for this as new cases are still coming in to the family justice system. Case loads for all practitioners have increased significantly and with it so have individual and collective pressures on an already overburdened system. For individual court users, the pressures on the family justice system as a whole have an impact on the service they receive and they remain in limbo without finality to their case. All in the family justice system are acutely aware of these difficulties and pressures and there is a strong motivation to get cases heard properly, allowing cases to finalise and those involved to be able to move forward without the stressors of litigation.

Courts across England and Wales have been trying to address this problem. Cases quickly became assessed to ascertain whether they were suitable to determine through video platforms and some cases have concluded using these methods. Notably many contested High Court cases have been determined using video platforms, with Family Court hearings seemingly being less readily determined this way. Locally, HHJ De Haas QC and HHJ Parker, together with a team from Liverpool Family Court and HMCTS have been putting significant efforts in to a phased re-opening of Liverpool Family Court to ensure that our local community can continue to be well served by the family justice system. It is heartening to say that Liverpool Law Society and the local Family Bar Association have been included in these discussions.

In May, Liverpool Law Society sent questionnaires to our Members who are family practitioners. I was grateful to receive a significant number of responses which were collated to ensure that Liverpool Law Society could fairly represent the interests of all of our Members. Since then we have been engaged in several meetings with HHJ De Haas QC and HHJ Parker and on behalf of LLS, I have been to Liverpool Family Court to see for myself the measures that have been put in place for the safety of all court users. Significant measures have been put in place including:

- Floor stickers in the queue to get into the building to indicate 2 metres apart
- Security questions asked to identify anyone that has symptoms
- Distanced security checks with entry refused if the scanner goes off 3 times without explanation given that physical



Emma Palmer

- touching is not possible
- Barristers with passes to bypass security (see below)\*
- Hand sanitiser on each floor for use
- Marshalls on each floor and stairwell
- A limited number of conference rooms open with each team being assigned their own court room for their sole use for the duration of their court slot.
- Markers on the floor to ensure chairs within conference rooms are socially distant
- Waiting area seats taped off to prevent court users sitting within 2 metres of another
- Marked, socially distant, seating within court rooms
- Anti bacterial wipes, masks and bottled water available upon request
- Court room screens in place for hybrid hearings
- Paper towels in the toilets for drying hands avoiding the need for hand dryers

\* The Family Law Bar Association has, over the last year, been working on a pass system so that barristers can bypass security on entering a court building. Unfortunately, this is not something the national Law Society progressed. As a consequence, barristers with such a pass can more readily access the court than solicitor advocates. Locally, this is something that we wanted to achieve for our Members and HHJ De Haas QC has pledged her full support to achieve a similar method of entry for solicitor advocates. Liverpool Law Society has been looking into this with the court but it is apparent that if ultimately it will be possible then it certainly will not be achievable in the immediate future. In June, Liverpool Family Court had 2 court rooms open and in July that will increase to 3 court rooms before being reassessed for August



potentially for up to 9 court rooms to re-open depending on the success of the first stage of the phased re-opening.

I believe that court users can be reassured that Liverpool Family Court is as safe as it can possibly be to allow for cases to start being heard in person once again. That the court is as safe as it can be does not however reduce the risk in its entirety. We do not enter a building alone and we can only be responsible for ourselves. We cannot regulate the behaviours of others. It is therefore imperative that the hearings considered appropriate for in person court hearings exclude those court users who may cause a risk to people at court.

With hybrid hearings, it remains that only those needed in court should attend. Others in the court case can continue to attend remotely. In care cases for example it is expected that parents may attend to give evidence, together with their legal representatives, but the social worker, guardian and the representatives for those parties should continue with remote evidence. The decision as to who needs to be physically present is to be determined on a case by case basis.

The phased re-opening is not the only method to have more hearings heard locally. Liverpool Law Society and the local Family Bar Association have also been invited to think creatively for ways to solve the current, pandemic led, family justice system difficulties. One such suggestion stemming from Liverpool Family Court is the option of clients attending at the offices of their solicitors or at their barrister's chambers to then remotely engage in a hearing. This has the obvious benefit of clients being physically present with their legal teams, something that is to be strived for. However, with many solicitors offices being closed to clients, many conference room facilities not easily allowing social distancing and the unpredictable nature of many clients once a determination is made (and no security available) there is currently limited appetite for this amongst Member firms as a generalised approach but rather a rare exception considered on a case by case basis. Collaborative thinking of all involved in the family justice system benefits the individuals and communities that we serve and ideas are very much welcomed by all as to how we can safely progress forward in the best interests of our clients.

In the midst of this, a seemingly rather rushed consultation (seemingly not with the Law Society but with the Family Bar Association) has taken place to resurrect the idea of extended court hours. I understand that the national Law Society was responding to the consultation in any event to advocate for the move to be scrapped, as it the FLBA seemingly. Manchester is the most local court involved in the pilot but given the possibility of a roll out nationally it is absolutely something we need to keep an eye on and liaise with our local courts on should it become likely that it will be rolled out. Given that the family justice system is already over burdened and every single organisation working within it has substantial demands and pressure, I cannot see how this can possibly work without losing significant numbers of family law practitioners to other professions where working 24/7 is not expected!

For anyone that has read this far – well done! Everything has been fast moving in terms of the country and courts starting to re-open and decisions being made. By the time this goes to press no doubt things have moved forward even further. We at Liverpool Law Society are doing everything possible to keep our Members updated, informed and involved. We welcome your contact with us, we welcome your feedback and we welcome your creative thinking, now more than ever.

Finally I would just like to say a big THANK YOU to all involved in the family justice system for the ways our communities have been served throughout this pandemic.

If you wish to get involved in Liverpool Law Society or share ideas, thoughts or indeed, worries then please do not hesitate to get in touch with Liverpool Law Society or with me.

**Emma Palmer**  
Chair of Liverpool Law Society Family Sub – Committee.  
[emmapalmer@msbsolicitors.co.uk](mailto:emmapalmer@msbsolicitors.co.uk)

## A landmark change to divorce on the horizon

I am pleased to note that the Divorce, Separation and Dissolution bill is now reaching the final stage before it becomes law, despite the added complication of the Covid-19 outbreak bringing the country into lockdown. The bill aims to introduce the much needed “no fault” divorce and consign the fault based divorce into the dustbin of history.

The bill was originally introduced in June 2019, but stalled when the prime minister unlawfully suspended parliament last year. The bill had to be then re-introduced to parliament. The third reading of the bill took place on Wednesday, 17 June 2020.

Once the Queen has provided her assent and the bill becomes law, the introduction of the no fault divorce is likely to see an increase in the number of couples coming forward to divorce as currently couples, not looking to apportion blame, must wait 2 years before applying for a Divorce.

The new law will also:-

- Remove the possibility of contesting a divorce, as a unilateral statement from one of the parties to the marriage will be conclusive evidence that the marriage has irretrievably broken down
- Introduce a new minimum period of 20 weeks from the start of proceedings to confirmation to the court that a conditional order of divorce may be made, allowing greater opportunity for couples to agree practical arrangements for the future where reconciliation is not possible and divorce is inevitable.

The above is truly a long overdue landmark change to the Divorce process and may bring an end to the “blame game” currently present within the system.

**Darren White**  
Family Solicitor  
Maxwell Hodge



**Darren White**

# The end of the traditional working week?

The past few months have been trying times for all businesses, including law firms who have had to make huge adjustments to the way they practice law. As the lockdown eases, but with social distancing still in place, many firms are introducing new ways of working.

**Jessica Hampson**  
Director/ Owner  
CEL Solicitors

**How was the transition to working from home at the beginning of lockdown?**

CEL Solicitors prides itself on being authentically forward thinking and that of course means embracing technology. As we were already paperless and had moved to the cloud before lockdown, it was a smooth transition to work from home albeit it was a first for us and an interesting challenge.

**What's been the biggest challenge?**

The biggest impact has been the social side and culture, we put a lot of emphasis on teams socialising in and outside of work and team spirit hence our 3 bars and amphitheatre for twice weekly meetings, keynote speaking and socialising. We have of course switched to zoom and for morale and team camaraderie we are taking it in turns to wind up early on a Friday, host zoom quizzes and have utilised our WhatsApp group with memes, gifs, uplifting videos, acts of kindness and plenty of bad jokes.

**Do you have a date when staff will return to the office?**

No. Our policy from day one and throughout the pandemic is to treat everyone as an individual and not a one size fits all approach. As such, and in line with government advice, we have let the staff decide how they want to work and have accommodated each decision. At present, we have around 40% of the staff at the office working with the other 60% either choosing to work from home completely or beginning their own phased transition back into the office at their pace.

**Have you made any specifications/changes to the office space?**

We currently have 47 staff so we were lucky that our new 8000sqft office which can easily hold 100 plus staff was designed with space in mind, with 2 chill out zones and a reception space and amphitheatre that seats 75 to offer different work spaces as well as traditional desks that cater to 65 staff. In that sense the 2-metre rule has been easy to enforce. We have also increased our cleaning which includes more heavy-duty cleaning products and deep cleaning. We have also provided masks to all staff and have a flexible working hours policy for anyone taking public transport to avoid rush hour.

**Will staff be returning full time, or will you be offering working from home options? Has the lockdown changed your view on agile working?**

What I have found is that more flexibility, staff autonomy and working from home works (with the right people and culture of course!). CEL Solicitors has seen an increase in hours and productivity with targets exceeded during lockdown. As such, hot



**Jessica Hampson**

desking, flexible hours and working from home is something that has been greenlighted by the board to continue once lockdown is lifted.

I wanted to put the faith in our staff to help the business negotiate a tough time and I am so glad that I did because that effort has paid off and I am so grateful.

**How do you see the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic changing the future of your business and law in general, whether positively or negatively?**

I believe the pandemic has been a big wake up call for how the legal industry genuinely treats their staff, performs work and embraces change and technology. I can already see that the firms who have treated their staff with support and respect during lockdown, with solid internal policies, and who have continued to invest in generating new work and have a culture of adaptability which includes embracing technology have thrived as opposed to survived during this crisis.



## Alison Lobb Managing Partner Morecrofts

Emerging from lockdown has taken far more planning than going into it ever did, although of course we have had the luxury of time, rather than having to react to a crisis. We were blessed by having recently invested in a major technology upgrade at the start of the year, so we have been able to support those who can work remotely to continue doing so. Our offices are all open, currently by appointment only, as we continue to prioritise the welfare of our staff and their families. We know that our people are our main asset, and our main concern is to ensure we are looking after them as well as possible.

We recognise that many of our team will have caring and other responsibilities, and that some will feel unsafe working in an office environment and travelling on public transport, so we will facilitate their working remotely and flexibly for as long as they need. We anticipate many will eventually adopt a hybrid style of working, spending some time in offices and some time working remotely. The whole experience has opened the door to more conversations about how and where people work, and many of our team have been pleasantly surprised to find out what they can do even when not based physically in an office.

At the same time, we have invested in making our offices "Covid secure" for those who do want or need to be there, for clients who need to come in, and for court hearings and mediation sessions where those cannot take place remotely. We ensured that our offices were deep cleaned, and have screens, sanitisers, floor markings, and masks and gloves available for when they are needed.

We have a full risk assessment which is being circulated to our staff and published on our website, have created a suite of posters for all our



Alison Lobb

offices and have commissioned written and video advisory information for staff and clients to ensure our offices are as safe and secure as they can possibly be.

We are committed to our presence in the commercial district and the local communities served by our branch offices, but the whole experience has enabled us to introduce better and smarter ways of working which have been embraced by all our teams. We have also learnt a lot about our people, some displaying leadership qualities which we did not know they had, and that is very encouraging for our succession planning and our future.



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**Eloise Smith**  
**Office Manager**  
**PGMBM**

On Monday 16th March, when we decided to suspend office-based working due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not imagined that almost fifteen weeks later this would still be the case. The experience has proven to be a test of operations not ordinarily at the forefront of office planning as well as of the agility and resilience of our staff. The outcome of these challenges has influenced greatly our thoughts, visions and actions for the coming months as the country seeks to adapt to an altered national and international landscape.

Our Liverpool office has proved to be in many ways much more flexible and adaptable to the sudden and dramatic changes imposed by lockdown than what we may have anticipated. As a paperless office working entirely from a remote desktop system, we have minimal tasks that necessitate being in the office and that cannot be achieved working at home. Working from home for part of the week or when required, was already an option to our senior members of staff and we also had several pool laptops available for more junior members of the team.

In the weeks prior to the office closure, the Senior Leadership Team discussed extensively how we would respond in the event of lockdown and our IT Team had to implement logistically the necessary work and planning to ensure everyone would have a laptop with access to the remote desktop when necessary. Staff were advised of our preparations and consulted for any concerns that they may have had; so, when the decision was made to close the office, everyone was able to log on as normal the following day.

What was more difficult to anticipate was how staff would be able to work in their new environment, and we quickly enhanced our reporting capabilities so that areas of concern could be spotted and addressed rapidly. We also analysed our past reporting data so that we could benchmark productivity fairly. We quickly discovered our staff maintained, and in many cases, increased their productivity and were actively engaging with us to highlight and resolve any issues brought about by working entirely from home. Whether this was requiring extra equipment so they could be safe and comfortable or altering working patterns to facilitate childcare. Our Senior Leadership Team have come to trust staff emphatically to meet their contractual obligations when working from home, and plan to consider working from home options on this basis in the future.

As a result of our mainly positive experience of office closure, we have decided to take the time to watch and learn to see how the next stage of the pandemic progresses and what measures prove to be successful for other workplaces in returning to the office. We have not set a date for reopening the office space and we plan to take the lead from our staff as to when this might be. We have also agreed that at least initially upon reopening, attendance to the office will be voluntary. We want to allow staff the option to work in an environment in which they feel safe as well the flexibility to respond to many of the challenge's lockdown has brought about, especially regarding childcare.

In the interim, we are preparing the office space so it is ready to be reopened as and when staff and the business may require. This has included working with our Landlord to agree to policies for using the communal lifts and entrances that are appropriate both for ourselves and for other users of the building. Our office space



**Eloise Smith**

itself has had to be adapted so that colleagues' desks no longer face each other and that communal spaces and facilities such as the kitchen area and printers are restricted to one user at a time. We are enhancing our cleaning facilities, as well as making cleaning and hygiene supplies available to everyone. Additional measures include a limit to the number of people using the office space and signage to suggest movement around the office in a way to help maintain social distancing. We have also considered how people travel to work and we will be altering working patterns so that those reliant on public transport don't have to travel at peak times.

For us, office-based working will look very different for some time to come and will continue to evolve and take shape based upon the safety of our colleagues. The engagement of our team and their willingness to respond to change has increased our confidence in the benefits of agile working which we hope will persist long after any formal return to the office.



# 5 reasons legal teams love flexible resourcing

People will always be the largest expense and greatest asset to any legal team so achieving the optimal resourcing model is often hailed as the holy grail in legal operations.

Flexible resourcing providers, such as F-LEX Legal, offer legal resources on a short term, short notice and on-demand basis. We explore why this service has boomed in recent years and shows no time of slowing down anytime soon...

## 1. Access to specialist skills

Foreign languages? New systems? Niche area of law? Learning new skills can be a long and expensive process. If it's a one-off piece of work for a client, it often makes more sense to hire someone skilled in these areas.

## 2. Move with speed

Recruitment can take weeks if not months to complete. If you're facing a tight deadline or case which requires speed, time is of the essence. A flexible resourcing provider can offer you interim lawyers or paralegals ready to hit the ground running within hours.

## 3. Avoid long term costs

Recruitment, benefits, pension and training are expensive costs which continue to incur whether you're charging billable hours or not. Using interim support means you only pay for services when the work is there.

## 4. Right talent for right task at right cost

A recent F-LEX survey found that 48% of senior lawyers work on tasks which should be done by someone more junior because they don't have the resource. Providing paralegal or junior lawyer support lets your senior team focus back on client relationships and adding strategic value.

## 5. Pre-vetted and trusted

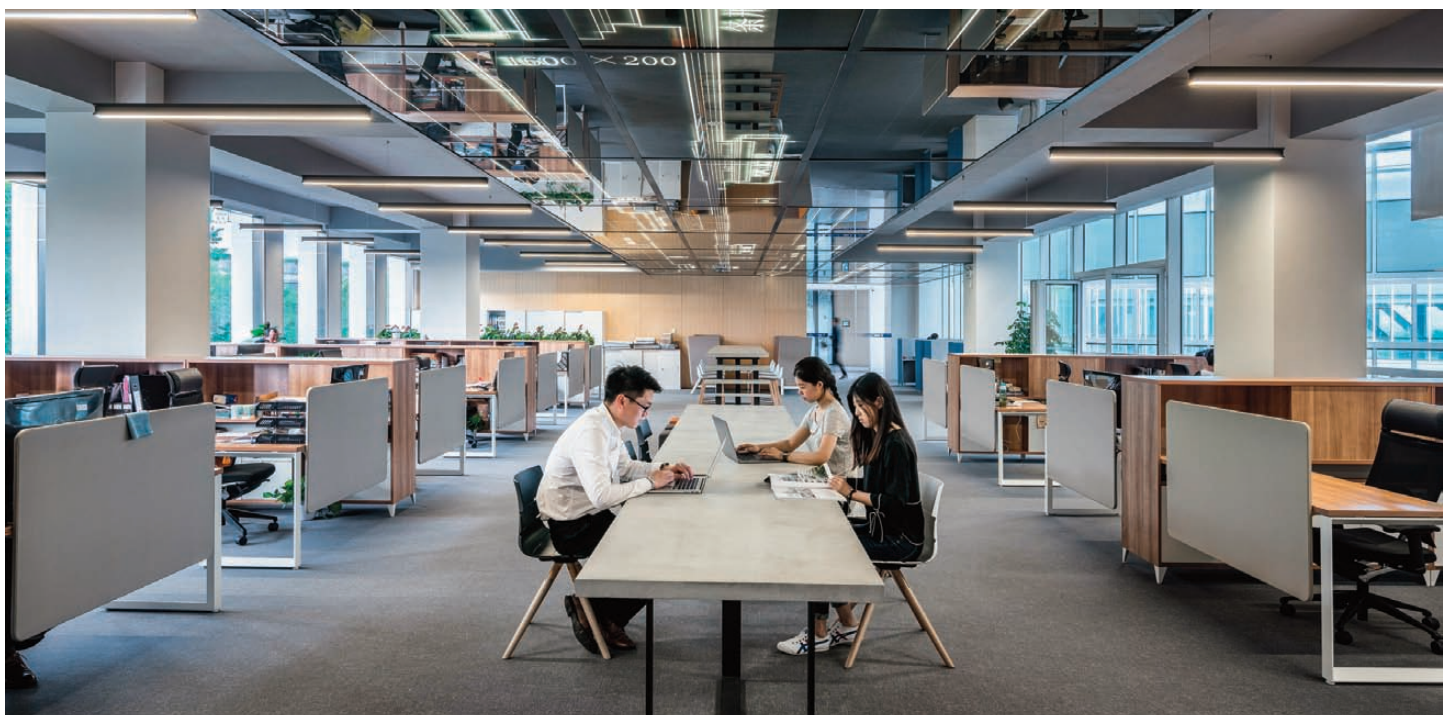
Organising timesheets, checking IR35 status, reviewing references or completing compliance checks can all take a significant amount of time. Many flexible resourcing partners, such as F-LEX, manage the administration, quality check the candidates and employ workers directly on PAYE so you can focus on clients and business.

*F-LEX is a legal tech start-up on a mission to redesign the way we work. In 2017 we launched our platform to connect local law students who struggle to find legal work experience with local law firms and general counsel who need paralegal support on demand. Today we are the leading agency in the North for interim Paralegals and Lawyers.*

**To book resource, or learn more through a demo, please contact Louise, Head of the Northern Hub:**

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# Infectious disease experts looking to the local law community to help prevent future pandemics

The first of its kind in the world, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) has been instrumental in positioning the City of Liverpool and the North West of England at the forefront of tropical medicine research since its inception almost 125 years ago – a time when Liverpool was one of the world's most prominent port cities, trading with overseas regions including Western and Southern Africa.

Back home, numbers of sailors admitted to hospital with 'tropical diseases' increased drastically so, in 1898, Sir Alfred Lewis Jones, a local shipping magnate, donated £350 annually for three years to establish a dedicated School of Tropical Medicine. His support continued after his death when a gift in his Will supported a purpose-built facility in Pembroke Place. Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine was born in recognition of the threats that tropical diseases presented to communities and businesses.

Fast forward to modern day and LSTM's work is as important today, if not more so, as it was almost 125 years ago. For decades, LSTM has worked in some of the world's most fragile health systems building and understanding of the causes and transmission of disease, developing new treatments and interventions, and delivering solutions to improve healthcare.

For example, our research has led to the development of a successful approach to the rapid scale-up of HIV testing and counselling services in high prevalence countries, a vital component of the global HIV response. Our partnership work with Malawi-Liverpool-Wellcome Trust Research Programme saw the trial of a modern rotavirus vaccine in Africa cut infant deaths from diarrhoeal disease in Malawi by 39%, leading to a global vaccine recommendation by WHO. In partnership with WHO, we have developed a smartphone app to help health workers understand why circa 5.3 million babies each year are stillborn or die in the first month of life.

As experts in infectious diseases this knowledge and experience has never been of such importance, both locally and globally.

As COVID-19 has demonstrated, viruses and other pathogens do not respect geographical boundaries. LSTM is in a unique position to support the efforts to tackle the deadly pandemic, both here in the UK and overseas. Many of our clinically trained staff treating COVID patients in Liverpool's hospitals and have seen first-hand the devastating effects of this disease. Over the last few months, we have redeployed our facilities and research staff to focus on finding new solutions and strategies, underpinned by a £1m COVID-19 research fund established in partnership with the



**Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine 1909**

University of Liverpool.

More recently, LSTM was selected as a site for the Oxford vaccine trial; a decision which indicates the esteem in which LSTM's respiratory and clinical trials expertise is held. This is potentially one of the most important clinical trials for public health in recent history and we are very proud that LSTM will be part of it.

Not forgetting the challenge that COVID poses to our partners overseas, in April, LSTM launched the first phase of a fundraising appeal for the COVID-19 Response and Resilience Fund to raise vital funds for our COVID research here in the UK and to buy life-saving equipment for our front-line staff based in Malawi, one of the world most fragile health systems.





**Emily Adams**

As we move out of the immediate crisis and start to see the number of deaths and new cases in the UK fall people may feel that the danger has largely passed. Sadly, this is not true. The World Health Organization lists many diseases which have the potential to cause public health emergencies, but for which there are currently no effective drugs and/ or vaccines. LSTM is uniquely placed to play a leading role in understanding what we can learn from the COVID-19 pandemic and how we create greater resilience to prevent similar devastating outbreaks in the future.

We now desperately need to shift our attention to future resilience, making sure we are better prepared for future pandemics and to further our research into COVID-19. Just as LSTM's very foundation was through the collective support of the city's industrialists, we are now appealing for your support again, 121 years later.

We are now looking to Liverpool's business community/sector to support our next round of funding by joining our COVID Funders' Circle and are looking for up to ten businesses to support us at the £25,000 level.

In becoming a member of the COVID Funders' Circle, we would recognise your status as key partners in supporting the delivery of the next stage of research. This will include the creation of specific opportunities for engagement with key researchers and LSTM more widely.

We would love an opportunity to talk to you more about this vital initiative that provides a unique opportunity for your business to contribute to sustaining the next 125 years of global health research, here in Liverpool.

We would love an opportunity to talk to you. As professional advisors, you may have clients who would be interested in supporting this vital initiative that provides a unique opportunity to contribute to sustaining the next 125 years of global health research, here in Liverpool.

**For more information please contact Karen Brady, Director of Fundraising by emailing [karen.brady@lstmed.ac.uk](mailto:karen.brady@lstmed.ac.uk) or call +44 7714 481656**

## Will Aid needs you!

Will Aid is a national will-writing campaign that takes place every November. The scheme was designed to reinforce the need for a will while raising funds for nine of the UK's best loved charities.

**WILL  
AID**

Solicitors sign up to offer some of their time and waive their usual fees and in exchange, invite will-makers to make a voluntary donation. The donations raised support the vital, life-changing work of our partner charities.

Every year, demand for Will Aid outstrips supply, so we desperately need more firms involved to help us meet this challenge.

We are anticipating that the demand for our services will be higher than ever before as the Coronavirus outbreak has made even more people want to get their affairs in order. How is Will Aid beneficial for you?

Since Will Aid was founded in 1988, it has helped more than 300,000 people write their will and enabled the legal profession to raise over £21 million for good causes.

Will Aid is a great opportunity to give back to your community and raise your profile and reputation.

Will Aid has lots of loyal participating firms who praise the initiative for helping them generate positive local publicity as well as introducing them to valuable new clients.

### Sign up now!

You can sign up to take part in our 2020 campaign now!

It is easy to sign up to and you can pledge as little or as much time as you want. The Will Aid team is here to support you and ensure taking part in the scheme is as easy as possible so you can focus on writing wills.

Solicitors waive their fees for writing a basic single will or basic pair of mirror wills, instead the client is asked to make a voluntary donation to Will Aid.

Any work carried out in addition to a basic will can be charged separately and paid to the legal firm.

If you would like to donate your time to Will Aid this November, please sign up online here:

**<https://www.willaid.org.uk/solicitors/register>.**

If you have any questions or would like to talk through the scheme before signing up, please contact the publicity team on [pr@willaid.org.uk](mailto:pr@willaid.org.uk).

# Hill Dickinson's life sciences team appointed to The Centre for Process Innovation legal framework panel

A leading independent technology innovation centre and founding member of the UK government's High Value Manufacturing Catapult has appointed life sciences law firm Hill Dickinson to its legal framework panel.

Hill Dickinson bid successfully to win three lots within the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI)'s framework panel for the provision of legal advice relating to:

- Construction and engineering
- Commercial and intellectual property litigation
- Safety, health, environment and operational regulatory

The appointment runs for an initial period of 24 months, with the option to extend by a further two periods of 12 months.

CPI works with partners to translate research, ideas and inventions into products and processes that enhance health and wellbeing, protect and improve our environment and increase productivity across industries. Their extensive expertise support companies in diverse markets such as pharmaceuticals, speciality chemicals, food and drink, electronics and transportation.

In April it was announced that CPI had joined the national drive to rapidly discover, develop, trial and manufacture an effective vaccine for COVID-19. They will lead efforts to manufacture and formulate the novel mRNA vaccine candidate from Imperial College London. CPI will focus its efforts on evaluating the process of scale-up and development of the mRNA vaccine platform technology and building the capability to manufacture



**Jamie Foster**

millions of doses of the vaccine as soon as it is found to be safe and effective.

Jamie Foster, a partner in Hill Dickinson's life sciences team, said the firm was delighted to have been appointed to the CPI's Legal Framework Panel, saying: 'Hill Dickinson has worked with CPI since 2019, advising in relation to the development of innovative products and processes with the potential to accelerate and transform healthcare. Our life sciences expertise spans a number of different practice areas within the firm, providing interdisciplinary capability. We are immensely proud to be appointed to the legal panel to support the CPI in its work.'

## MSB supports Redwood Bank to deliver £3 million loan despite uncertain climate

MSB's Property Finance team has arranged a £3 million loan on behalf of lender Redwood Bank, having acted in over £8m worth of transactions in May alone, despite a significant drop in market activity as a result of Covid-19.

MSB acted on behalf of Redwood Bank and was responsible for reviewing all transactional documentation prior to completion of the loan, to ensure that the assets provided suitable security.

The loan was for a professional landlord who was refinancing a large portfolio and obtaining development funding for an ongoing project. The Bank had introduced desktop valuations for all newly secured property business loans, as a temporary measure, allowing them to continue to support the business community.

Recent reports show that 58 per cent of UK SMEs feel their banking provider has been slow to offer help during the Covid-19 crisis. However, where some lenders have left borrowers in difficult positions, Redwood has continued to show a willingness to support its customers.

Darren Barwick, Commercial Property Partner at MSB who led the transaction, said: "MSB has always had a highly respected commercial property team and they transitioned seamlessly to working from home, continuing to deliver the best possible service to our clients. In this case, the borrowers and guarantors

were able to receive independent legal advice via video calls to enable the transactions to proceed without delay.

"The market has seen a huge drop in activity yet we are still managing to get transactions completed, which is a huge achievement. It's fantastic that Redwood Bank still has an appetite to lend funds when others have withdrawn from the market during this time.

"We're committed to being an agile firm, doing what we can to support our clients. This piece of work is testament to the team's dedication, demonstrating the complexity of the work they are doing and the incredibly high standards of delivery, especially during such a challenging time."

Gary Wilkinson, CEO and Co-Founder of Redwood Bank, said: "During these challenging and uncertain times, we are completely committed to our customers, colleagues and business partners.

"We remain passionate about supporting British businesses and even more keen on helping them navigate this ever-changing financial and business landscape – we have a strong appetite to lend and will continue to do so to help keep business moving."



# Trio make Partner at Brabners

Brabners has promoted three of its lawyers to partner across its healthcare, charity and family practices.

Nicola Lomas leads Brabners' work in the dental industry and joined the firm in 2016. Her practice forms part of the firm's healthcare sector specialist team that has grown rapidly over the last two years.

Graeme Hughes is an experienced charity lawyer and has specialised in the third sector since 2010. He is recognised by the Legal 500 as a 'Leading Individual' in the industry and acts for well-known local and national charities including Youth Federation, United Kingdom Islamic Mission, Turner Home, the British Friends of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and several charitable foundations associated with professional football clubs.

Natalie Dickson joined Brabners in 2007 and is a highly regarded family lawyer. She is a member of Resolution, former Secretary of Merseyside



**Nik White, Natalie Dickson, Graeme Hughes, Nicola Lomas**

Young Professionals and committee member of both Merseyside Women's Lawyers Division and Liverpool Ladies Network. She is also a trustee of the Brabners Foundation, the firm's charitable arm.

The three partner announcements come as Brabners also confirmed promotions for 23 other lawyers – five to legal director, eight to senior associate and ten to associate.

Nik White, managing partner at Brabners, said: "We are only as strong as our people and 26 promotions across the firm is

indicative of the quality of the lawyers we have onboard. We will always seek to attract the best externally but looking after the colleagues we already have in the business and nurturing their development and progress is just as vital to our continued growth.

"Despite the difficult times we're all living through, I'm

determined that we will never be a business that stands still. Recognising and celebrating the exceptional talent in our firm is even more important now as we look to push forward, maintain the momentum and continue to build during the challenging economic conditions."

## ONLINE: Costs & Funding Update

**With Professor Dominic Regan**

on Tuesday 14th July, 11.am - 12.30pm

**This has been a bumper year already for Costs cases and Dominic will be looking at them & their consequences.**

### Discussing:

- ◆ Extra costs where the other side ignite ADR
- ◆ Part 36 uplift decisions worth tens of thousands
- ◆ How a defendant can get indemnity costs after making a good Part 36 offer
- ◆ The latest on reforms including RTA , fixed Costs up to £100,000 and new ways if funding
- ◆ The liability of funders to pay costs in full with the Arkin cap removed
- ◆ How QADER is going to be dealt with by the Rules Committee

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**How are you,  
really?**

## Seven move up at Morecrofts

Morecrofts Solicitors has promoted seven members of its team to senior positions.

Highly experienced licensed conveyancer Peter Pownall, litigation specialist Carly Philp and Helen Robins, who leads the Court of Protection team, are now Senior Associates.

Meanwhile, property specialists Caroline Grundy and Alison Williams, family law solicitor Kim Okell, and private client lawyer Vicki Morris have all been promoted to Associate Solicitor.

The promotions feature staff from each of Morecrofts' six offices in the Liverpool city region, in Prescot, Crosby, Allerton, Woolton, Wirral and Liverpool.

Alison Lobb, managing partner at Morecrofts, said: "In these difficult and worrying times for many people, we are pleased to be able to share some positive news about so many members of our team.

"These thoroughly deserved promotions demonstrate the high level of performance and commitment to excellence shown throughout our team on a daily basis. They also reflect the breadth of our legal services and office network.

"We continue to attract and retain the best talent by giving them a clear career path at Morecrofts and the success of this approach is evidenced by the high proportion of our current senior and partnership team who began their training with us."



**Alison Love**



**Carly Philp**



**Caroline Grundy**



**Helen Robins**



**Kim Okell**



**Peter Pownall**



**Vicki Morris**

### **Managing Teams Remotely in 20202**

with **Candy Bowman** on **Monday 13th July, 11am - 3pm (inc breaks)**

**This course addresses the essential skills on both operational & interpersonal levels to help people adapt and achieve the best outcomes.**

#### ***Covering:***

- Overview of remote working - challenges and opportunities
- Understanding your team dynamic, awareness of strengths & development areas
- Overview of management styles and situational leadership
- Maintaining motivation and trust levels
- Being visible from a distance - the crucial role of consistency
- Creating a communication strategy, common understanding of methods & timing
- Rewarding positive behaviour and addressing any negative
- Recognising the needs of different personality types
- Conducting video conference meetings for optimum engagement
- Offering encouragement and emotional support
- Creating a safe space for expressing problems
- Collective identity, cohesion and connection - opportunities for the firm to interact

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



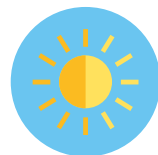
## Look After Yourself

### Top 10 Tips for Good Mental Health and Wellbeing



#### Keep Active

Find a physical activity you enjoy and make it part of your life, you will feel better and boost your self-esteem



#### Take a Break

Use your lunchbreak to get away from your desk. Step outside for just a few minutes, it can re-energise you



#### Sleep is Important

Sleeping well can improve concentration and refresh you



#### Eat Well

A balanced diet rich in nutrients is good for both your mental and physical health



#### Drink in Moderation

Stay within the recommended alcohol limits: heavy drinking affects brain function and can cause disease



#### Keep in Touch

Maintain good relationships with friends, family and your wider community: strong connections can help you to feel happier



#### Share How You Feel

Talk about your feelings, it can help you cope with problems and feel listened to



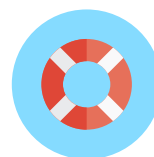
#### Give Back

It has been proven that giving - time or money - can make you feel valued and give you a sense of purpose



#### Be Mindful

Mindfulness - positive emotions and paying attention to the present - can help you enjoy life more



#### Ask for Help

Asking for help is a sign of strength, and can lead to the right support for you, whatever you're going through

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# My Perfect Day

This month we asked our readers “As we start to see the end of lockdown, what would be your perfect day?”



**Tom Hurley**  
Trainee Solicitor  
CEL Solicitors

To start my day right, I'd head to The Tavern Company on Smithdown Road near Penny Lane for their award winning full English breakfast and bottomless cups of tea. I'd probably struggle to breathe after so much food so I'd definitely need to have an hour or so to relax and what better place to do so than on a golden sandy beach on one of the Phi Phi Islands.

After a nap in the sun, I would spend the afternoon cycling through the wild backroads of Southern Vietnam followed by a relaxing sail down the Mekong Delta before finally coming to stop at a local bar for a few cold Saigon beers.

For dinner, I'd attend Bodega Biarritz in the Gothic Quarter of Barcelona and sit out and watch the sun set with a few glasses of red wine and some tapas dishes such honey glazed chorizo and tomato bread with serrano ham.

My perfect end to the day would find me in the crowd at the Pyramid stage at Glastonbury with a cold cider watching absolutely anybody, as the atmosphere and energy at Worthy Farm is always unbeatable regardless of who is playing.



**Rebecca Cliff**  
Family Law Solicitor  
Jackson Lees

I will probably disappoint by saying this but where else would you want to spend a perfect day but other than what is on your doorstep and in your heart!

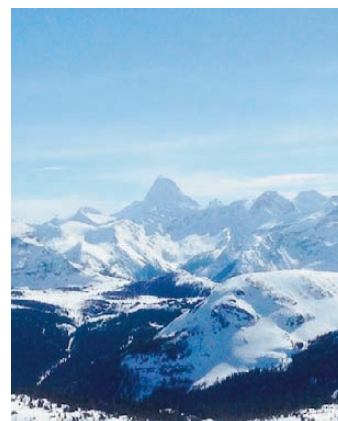
I'm lucky enough to live on Wirral and have home roots in

London. I have the best of both worlds. My perfect start to the day would be to wake up with the sun shining through the window and the smell of summer. A trip around Birkenhead park when there is no one else around., sit on a bench and take in the sounds and the sights. Birkenhead Park is truly a wonder that is so underrated and needs to be appreciated more. Then an easy start to the morning with my boys and then a trip to London to see the sights that I grew up with. Showing my children, the unofficial landmarks of London that I got to grow up with and with the best tour guide around, my dad. Nothing beats seeing the back streets of London and the secret history that lies all around.

Then I would have a quick stop to Essex and visit Hainault Forest –not exciting I know but running around the forest, hiding up trees, finding swings, being a kid again and not having to worry what people think.

By the power of magic, I would be back on the Wirral. Taking a trip to the beach and watching the sun set at New Brighton. Taking in the peace, the beauty and the skyline of Liverpool. A place where you can gather your thoughts and reflect on your day.

The local beauties are often taken for granted and need to be explored and shared more.



**Alison Lobb**  
Managing Partner  
Morecrofts

My perfect day would start waking up in Abersoch, with the bay shimmering in the sun. and the amazing smell of the sea. We'd wander barefoot along the beach for breakfast somewhere overlooking the islands, and enjoy a “full welsh” before paddling back along the edge of the water. Then I'd pick up my friend and my skis and head up to Sunshine village in Canada. I'd get there early so the snow was untouched, but not so early that the sun wouldn't have softened the overnight freeze, and whizz down all my favourite runs, before jumping on the chairlift up to the top of Goats Eye Mountain and heading down the long run from top to bottom of the mountain. Then it would be back into Banff for a lunch of gumbo and cornbread at Touloulou's restaurant, a real flavour of the deep south.

In the afternoon I'd be on Dartmoor, walking up to the top of



some of my favourite tors, where the view goes on for miles and you feel like you can almost touch the sky. I'd sit for a while and just enjoy the birds, butterflies and views. The sun would be out but there'd be a gentle breeze so it wasn't too hot, and all biting insects would have been eradicated! Feeling tired and sun-kissed we'd wander down for a swim in the River Dart where the water is clear (though cold!) and dragonflies skim over just over your head and glitter like flying jewels. Refreshed by our swim we would have built up an appetite and would venture to our favourite pub, the anchor Inn, where we'd sit outside in the sun with a pint of local cider and a bowl of freshly picked mussels.

The evening would be spent at Anfield, watching the mighty reds in a hard fought but decisive victory against one of their main rivals, and there being no traffic for a change we'd get home in record time for a mellow bottle of red and a plate of cheese in front of a good comedy of thrilling drama.

A day full of sun, fresh air, exercise, fine food and drink, the only thing missing would be a tennis match where our team would beat one of our main challengers and win the Liverpool League – wonder whether I could fit that in?



**Gaynor Williams**  
**Partner**  
**Bennett Williams**

My perfect day would be all about spending time with my family. It would start with a day with my husband, my adult children, and my 2 dogs. My two eldest 'children' (25 and 28) were living/travelling in Canada and Australia prior to the pandemic, and they both returned home so that we could all be together through lockdown. Although my house is very noisy now (my son is a DJ and my 2 daughters love singing/bickering), I have appreciated having everyone back home, and safe.

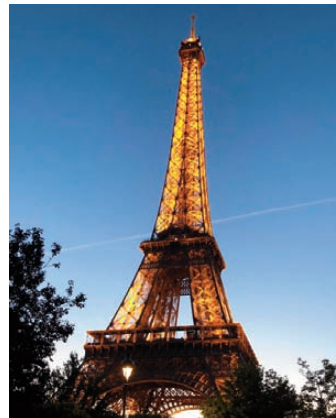
So my perfect day would start with a day with my family and dogs, in my husband's homeland, Wales. We would be up early, it would be a sunny day, and we would drive into North Wales, stopping for breakfast on route, because my 'children' need to eat every hour. The Alpine Coffee Shop in Betwys y Coed is great for breakfast, and we would pick up a bag of freshly fried welsh cakes, from the little welsh cake shop, to take on our journey.

After breakfast, we would head to the village of Porthdinllaen near Morfa Nefyn, Gwynedd, on the north coast of the Llyn peninsular. It has access to a beautiful long beach with crystal clear waters, and, in my view, rivals any beach in Europe. It is ideal for a leisurely walk in the sun and there is an added bonus of a quaint pub called the Ty Coch Inn, at the end of Mon Nefyn beach, (it has been voted one of the best beach bars in the world, and I have to agree). You can order lunch and they bring it to you on a tray, so that you can eat it on the beach. On a warm sunny day, it is a beautiful place to sit and watch the world go by. My daughters would no doubt sunbathe, and my dogs would keep

cool in the sea, my son and husband would probably sample a few local beers.

Our ideal family dinner venue would be in any of the restaurants in Nelson Mandela Square, Johannesburg, with my aunties, uncles, and cousins, who live there. My family originate from Liverpool, so there is always a lot of 'scouse' humor and laughter when we get together. The restaurants in the square overlook the water fountains, and they change colour at night, making beautiful shapes, and attracting lots of children, who love to run through them.

After dinner, we would take a walk alongside the Yarra River in Melbourne, joined by my brother and his wife, and my Australian niece and nephew. There are rows of coffee shops and ice cream/donut stations, where you can buy a snack and sit and watch the boats go down the river. The end to my perfect day would be at my brother's house in Adelaide, we would sit in his garden to watch the sunset, and share a bottle (or two) of wine.



**David Whelan**  
**Trainee Solicitor**  
**CEL Solicitors**

The perfect day for me would begin in New York. This is somewhere that I have always wanted to go and it would be great to spend a morning looking round the city at all of the landmarks and seeing how many I recognised from the countless television shows I've watched which are filmed there!

Following this, I would travel to Paris, have lunch by the River Seine and take in the amazing sights from the top of the Eiffel Tower. In the afternoon, I would go to the Palace of Versailles and spend some time looking around the Palace and its grounds. After this, I would visit Barcelona so that I could visit the Sagrada Familia.

To finish the day off, I would spend the evening walking down one of the many beaches in Barcelona and taking in the last of the sun.



**Steve Cornforth**  
**Steve Cornforth**  
**Consultancy**

My perfect day would start with a visit to the Boulangerie de la Mole near Saint-Tropez for freshly baked croissants and coffee.

Breakfast would be followed by some exercise and what better way to work off the calories than a trek to the Citadel at Mystras near Sparta in Southern Greece. This was a major Byzantine centre of trade. The citadel is high up Taygetos mountain with stunning views!

The cool off swim would involve a trip to Marsa Alam and the Egyptian Red Sea. Some of the best-preserved coral reef in the world and a stunning display of colour.

Back to Liverpool for dinner and the one and only Yuet Ben. This is far and away the best Chinese food in the world ever - Hot and Sour Soup, Shredded Chilli Beef and fried rice finished off with Toffee Fruits and a few bears!

Then it would be off to Goodison Park to watch Everton beat Bayern Munich 3 – 1.



**Jason Chan**  
**Trainee Solicitor**  
**CEL Solicitors**

Being in lockdown has certainly taken its toll and I have wanted to do nothing more than take my son and wife travelling. My son's first birthday was during lockdown so it was heartbreaking not being able to properly celebrate this milestone. We had planned to take him abroad to see the world but that doesn't seem like it will happen any time soon.

If we could, my perfect family day out would be to start off with an amazing breakfast where you can order as much freshly cooked food from the menu at the Soori boutique villa in Bali followed by a mid-morning dip and splash about in the private pool.

We'd then head to the beach and revisit the spot where we got engaged.

Me and my wife love sushi, so for lunch, we will head over to

Osaka, Japan and feast upon the fresh sushi. The little one can't eat raw fish so we will order him some udon noodles (happens to be one of his favourite!)

Whilst in Japan and, having just dined upon their friends, it's a trip to the Osaka Aquarium to wonder upon the incredible sealife including daddy's favourite emperor penguins! My son will like the sharks he is obsessed with the baby shark song.

By Mid afternoon we will time travel back to the UK and have a tour around Peppa pig world in Hampshire – every parents' nightmare but every child's dream come true. My son can even take his George rucksack he has!

By now we should be tired and exhausted but the adventure doesn't stop there! We will fly over to Hong Kong to see some family and friends and eat some of the best street food you will find in this world before finish it off with an ice cream waffle and bubble tea.



**Jamie Mitchell**  
**Trainee Solicitor**  
**CEL Solicitors**

Most people's perfect day would involve relaxing on a beach or putting their feet up. That's not the case with my perfect day!

My perfect day would start off by waking up at the crack of dawn in one of my favourite places in the world, Kyoto in Japan.

I would make my way across the ancient city to the world famous Inari Shrine. Mount Inari is approximately 233 metres high, nevertheless the views at the top of the mountain are more than worth the few hours of trekking.

Once I've made my way back down the mountain, I am absolutely starving! So I would make my way to one of Japan's many sushi bars. The queues for the sushi bars are normally out of the door, but seeing as it's my perfect day, I walk in and am seated straight away.

After eating my weight in sushi and thoroughly embarrassing myself with my use of chopsticks my next stop would be to head to Gion in Kyoto, which is home to the Geishas. It is a great area to explore the ancient streets and to maybe get a picture or two with one of the geishas.

After walking all day, it's time to get some Kobe Beef, the best steak in the world!

The only way to top off a perfect day in Japan is to spend the rest of the night drinking sake and singing karaoke with the locals.





**Rachael Payne**  
**Solicitor**  
**CEL Solicitors**



**Joshua Murphy**  
**Trainee Solicitor**  
**CEL Solicitors**

I would start with breakfast at Lucy in the Sky café in Liverpool. This would also be convenient as the next stop would be to the Docks to board a Disney Cruise.

I would like to cruise the whole of the Caribbean for the rest of my morning, enjoying some snorkelling and relaxation before travelling to New York. In New York I would have afternoon tea in the Palm Court at the Plaza. Following this I would do all of the top tourist attractions in the city including a Broadway show. Following this I would have unlimited spends at the Strand bookstore (18 miles of books). Thankfully I would have helpers carry my haul back to the cruise. Once back on the cruise we would travel to Disney World Orlando where all the parks would be visited before eating a 3 course meal in Le Cellier (Epcot – Canada) and then watching the firework show at the Magic Kingdom.

The night would then be finished by laying my head down in the Castle Suite of the Cinderella Castle. Perfection.

05:30am - Wake up to watch the sun rise over Angkor Wat, Cambodia.

6:00am - 7:30am. Gym workout with my PT Arnold Schwarzenegger in the mecca of all gyms, Golds Gym, Venice Beach, California.

8:00am. Have a nice healthy breakfast feast from Fit Food Shack, Liverpool.

9:00am - 12:00pm. Sunbathe and read on a hammock on Koh Rong Island, Thailand. Have a few drinks in the sun and a swim on the clear blue sea.

1:00pm - 2:00pm - Enjoy an authentic Italian pizza with my partner Sarah in Pantheon Square, Rome.


3:00pm - 6:00pm - Watch Everton beat Liverpool in the FA Cup final Wembley.

7:00pm - 9:00pm - Enjoy a steak at an Argentinian steak house in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

10:00pm - 11:00pm - Attend MGM Grand in Las Vegas to watch a heavy weight title fight between Anthony Joshua and Tyson Fury.

11:30pm - Fall asleep under the stars, watching the Northern Lights in Reykjavik, Iceland.





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# The Law Society

## Diversity and Inclusion

This month we would like to share with you an article by Louise Hanson, The Law Society's Executive Director Member Experience, on the successful work the society is doing on diversity and inclusion and how you can get involved.

In recent weeks, our members have reached out to us wanting to discuss and reflect on the issues raised by the Black Lives Matter movement. In response, we are developing additional support to help members explore the issues and identify changes that can be made to improve the experience of black solicitors in the profession. As an organisation, we are also looking inward to identify how we can improve and better support our black colleagues.

Momentous events shine a spotlight on diversity and inclusion, an area that needs and deserves to be a long-term focus for all businesses. In this article, I'll outline the business case for diversity and inclusion, what the Law Society is doing and how you can get involved.

### The business case

The benefits of a truly diverse and inclusive workplace include:

- The ability to attract the best talent – building your reputation as an employer of choice.
- Improved performance – drawing on the different perspectives, skills and experiences of your people for better solutions.
- A broader client base – improving your reach and appeal to a wider audience.

Don't just take my word for it. A recent report by McKinsey<sup>1</sup> looks at the business case for diversity and inclusion. It finds that 'the relationship between diversity on executive teams and the likelihood of financial outperformance has strengthened over time.' It also highlights the positive impact that a focus on inclusion can have on an organisation's ability to outperform.

In the solicitors' profession, we see a slowly improving picture in terms of diversity but there is still a long way to go. In 2019<sup>2</sup>, 52% of solicitors were female, 16% of solicitors were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, 5% were LGBT+, and 16% reported a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness. We have seen increases in the number of BAME and female solicitors but there is still under-representation at senior levels. We are proud partners of the recently published Legally Disabled research which highlighted the steps we still need to take to improve the experience of disabled legal professionals in our workplaces.

Through its work on diversity and inclusion, the Law Society aims to help the legal profession to be:

- Inclusive – creating environments and workplaces in which individuals feel accepted and supported.
- Diverse – reflecting the diversity of our society.
- Responsive – able to provide a sensitive, appropriate and highly professional service to all sections of society.
- Good employers – recruiting on merit and offering training and development opportunities to all employees regardless of background.

### What we are doing and how you can get involved

This is just a snapshot of the work that the Law Society is doing along with ideas on how you can get involved. The best way to stay updated is

to sign up to our monthly e-newsletter – go to [www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk), create a My Law Society account and choose 'Diversity and inclusion' within the 'Tell us your interests' section.

The **Diversity Access Scheme** provides scholarships for people from lower socio-economic backgrounds who want to join the profession. Contact the team if you are interested in sponsoring a student or could offer work experience.

Our **Social Mobility Ambassadors** share their experiences and practical information to support entrants to the profession from diverse backgrounds.

The application process for this year has now closed but please contact the team to express your interest and we'll let you know when applications open again.

We undertake and partner on **research** to highlight and address the issues faced by solicitors. We are currently conducting our own research into the experience of BAME solicitors.

We run a **Diversity and Inclusion Charter** for members who want to publicly commit to promote the values of diversity and inclusion throughout their business. We are currently reviewing the Charter so look out for future updates.

The **Women in Law Pledge** enables you to publicly commit to making a difference for gender equality. Sign up to the Pledge today at [www.lawsociety.org.uk/women-in-law-pledge](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/women-in-law-pledge).

Working with the Judicial Appointments Commission and other bodies, we offer **Pre-application Judicial Education Programme** sessions to support lawyers from under-represented groups feel more confident in and prepare for the judicial application process.

We run complimentary **Becoming a Judge** workshops for BAME solicitors, giving this under-represented group practical advice on completing the application form and interview practice. We will run two sessions later this year.

We hold events where members can learn from best practice and the experience of others. For example, we recently ran virtual forums on menopause awareness and are planning more on other topics.

To find out more, visit our website at [www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk). To receive our monthly e-newsletter, create a My Law Society account and select 'Diversity and Inclusion' within the 'Tell us your interests' section. Email the team at [diversityteam@lawsociety.org.uk](mailto:diversityteam@lawsociety.org.uk).

We welcome your involvement. Together we can make the legal profession a more attractive and fulfilling career choice for a wider spectrum of people. To the benefit of our businesses and our clients.

<sup>1</sup> *Diversity Wins*, McKinsey, May 2020, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters#>

<sup>2</sup> *The Law Society's 2019 PC holder survey*, <https://beta.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/research/pc-holder-survey-2019>

# Council Member's Report



## Council Member Sarah Lapsley

Council are due to meet in July and a further report will follow. In the meantime, I thought it helpful to update you on the work that is currently being done by TLS on your behalf.

### Criminal Legal Aid

We are all aware of the looming crisis as the number of duty solicitors available across the country drops even more sharply. Additional funding from the Government has been directed to the CPS, young lawyers are rapidly steering away from this area of law, Legal Aid fees have been stagnant since the 1990's and there was a 10% drop in the number of Legal Aid firms practicing in 2019.

The MOJ is reviewing criminal Legal Aid and TLS has responded to the consultation in robust terms asking the Government to ensure that the cashflow problems caused by the LAA's system for payment are addressed as a matter of urgency, small firms are given business rates relief, the previous cut of 8.75% for criminal Legal Aid is reversed immediately and the issue of sustainability is addressed before there are simply no duty solicitors left in the country.

### Professor Mayson's review on regulation of the legal sector

I have written quite extensively on this subject before because I consider that our valued profession would be foolhardy to assume that the Government will not be influenced by Professor Mayson's findings. TLS has done a sterling job of responding in a constructive and comprehensive way to the initial reports and now, to his most recent review.

Current emphasis is placed on recovery not increasing the burden of more regulatory reform. Further, ensuring the survival of vulnerable firms in these difficult times

and optimising the use of the current regulatory framework rather than looking to change it. The proper resourcing of Legal Aid to ensure that there is access to justice for all remains a priority issue. Hard hitting stuff from TLS but necessary. Many solicitors need help at the moment not added pressures brought about by regulatory reform and that is the overriding concern.

### Covid-19

The majority of time and energy at (virtual) Chancery Lane over the past few months has understandably been channelled into mitigating the impact of the pandemic on the profession and the contents of TLS website, reflect that. There are excellent guidelines and resources available to help solicitors who have been affected.

New research suggests that 71% of high street firms believe that they may have to close their doors in the next six months because of the crisis. It is difficult to put into words how devastating that is and how worrying it must be for so many solicitors at this time. This is on account of various factors, some of the most significant being the reduction in the number of court hearings, the cessation of residential conveyancing and the challenge of taking instructions and executing documents whilst following social distancing rules.

The Ministry for Housing Community and Local Government (MHCLG) has announced plans to re-open the housing market and has issued a useful guide for the industry following a consultation across all interested parties ***"Re-opening the home moving market safely."***

TLS continues to liaise with the Government over some outstanding issues that require further consideration in the context of conveyancing transactions and I encourage members to look online at TLS website for further guidance.



The Government's approach to the increase in domestic abuse since lockdown with the "You are not alone" campaign is welcomed, but the feeling at TLS is that there is still much more to be done particularly in relation to funding.

### Judicial review and criminal justice

TLS is set to respond in the strongest terms to the Government's plans to accelerate reform to judicial review, viewed as a potential threat to the rule of law and to ensure that funding remains the number one priority issue in respect of the Commission's review of the criminal justice system, irrespective of the changes that may be proposed to the court system, the Police and criminal defence. TLS has a dedicated team of staff working full time on pushing back, challenging and seeking to influence those in power, in the best interests of the Profession.

### The CMA initial report on residential leaseholds

TLS has been effective in influencing the CMA and the initial report reflects a number of the concerns that were raised during the investigation. TLS plans to engage with the CMA in the next phase of its study. If this is an area of law that you hold a particular interest in then


please contact Liam McCafferty or Diane Latter at TLS.

Finally, two things to note: TLS have launched a new campaign #solicitorspirit to highlight the great work that the profession has been doing during the pandemic and constituents are encouraged to share their stories on Twitter.

A consultation with members has also commenced about a proposed reduction in the TLS portion of the practicing fee and you are encouraged to take part; details are available on the TLS website.

Keep safe everyone

**Sarah Lapsley**  
**TLS Council Representative for Merseyside**  
**with Nina Ferris**  
**slapsley@excellolaw.co.uk**



Liverpool Law Society

### ONLINE: Divorce & Financial Orders Certificate

with Safda Mahmood  
on Friday 10th July, 10am - 4pm (inc breaks)

**The course will be of benefit to those delegates who seek to put the theory of family law into practice & will be of assistance to those who are new to this area of law & those who want a refresher.**

Covering:

- Domicile, Habitual Residence and Nationality
- How Can a Marriage be ended? – Breakdown of Marriage
- Void and Voidable Marriages
- Law of Divorce
- Bars and Judicial Separation
- Divorce Procedure and On line Divorce
- Changes to Divorce Law and Procedure
- Public Funding in Family Cases
- Drafting the Divorce Documents
- Financial Orders
- Type of Order and Procedure
- Financial Order Procedure – Family Procedure Rules
- Criteria for Financial Orders
- Consent Orders

**Competencies: B & C**

**[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)**



Liverpool Law Society

### Commercial Lasting Powers of Attorney

**Join Craig Ward online via zoom**

on Wednesday 8th July, 1.30pm - 4.45pm

**This course will show you how to;**  
**draft a commercial LPA, confirm mental capacity within a business environment, who to appoint as an appropriate attorney and choose which commercial LPA clause might be suitable for the business.**

Covering;

- Why make a commercial LPA
- Reviewing business structures
- Confirming capacity to make a commercial LPA
- Choosing a commercial LPA attorney
- Personal & commercial LPA clashes
- Drafting a commercial LPA

**[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)**

# Quill launches free industry analysis tool, Quilldex, to assist legal sector recovery

**Leading legal software and outsourced service supplier, Quill, has launched an innovative industry analysis tool, called Quilldex, giving free access to real-time-data charts depicting instruction volumes by specialism.**

The purpose of Quill's refreshed-daily reporting initiative is to empower law firms to gain accurate insight into sector activity, broken down into case types, as well as benchmark practice performance via reports extracted from their own case management systems compared against Quill's dataset which is taken from an anonymised, representative sample of software users; the total number comprising some 7% of all law firms across England, Wales and Scotland.

By sharing Quilldex with the wider legal community, Quill is demonstrating, for the most part, upward trends across all areas of law, particularly in conveyancing which shows newly created instructions back at the base level of January and February 2020. This is a clear sign of a reinvigorated property sector since it was allowed to open up again. Similar narratives relate to other areas, somewhat predictably in certain matters, family included, as the effect of coronavirus takes its toll and the marketplace becomes more universally open for business.

Amongst the multiple benefits of Quill's data-driven intelligence charts are the ability to pinpoint a return to near-normal market levels and identify commonality in experience with a significant proportion of the sector's businesses; both of which bring confidence for the UK economy's recovery of which legal services forms a major part.

Julian Bryan, Quill's Managing Director, comments: "While the adverse impact of coronavirus has been felt by us all and COVID-19 itself deemed an unwelcome catalyst for change, Quilldex is an informative up-to-the-minute data source proving that law firms have adapted well during these disrupted past weeks, and are in a position to get back to a strong semblance of normality with instructions on the rise and the future of their company more assured.

"At Quill, our aim has always been to assist law firms by supplying technology and outsourced services which optimise operating models and reinforce strategic plans, and, now, accelerate growth during uncertain times. Our Quilldex matter-creation tracker is yet another means through which law firms can better guarantee success henceforth by drawing upon its reliable facts and figures, and relating to their own day-to-day work.

"For existing Quill software clients, such powerful reporting capabilities are par for the course. Interactive is our legal accounting, practice and document management system, utilised by 7000 solicitors, managers, paralegals and administrators, which delivers a central dashboard overview of overall positioning against defined KPIs and whole multitude of reports, both readily available and bespoke, for on-screen analysis or export to Excel for further manipulation.

"Never before has the digitisation of traditional ways of working



**Julian Bryan**

been more in the spotlight. That's why it's important to note Quill supplies the complete back office setup to do just that with our software, outsourced cashiering, payroll and typing services, and now Quilldex. Law firms can choose a tailored combination of these various solutions and, of course, view Quilldex statistics for free, for long-lasting advantages; not just assisting rejuvenation now but setting themselves up for longevity."

To explore Quilldex, visit [www.quill.co.uk/quilldex](http://www.quill.co.uk/quilldex) on a daily basis as charts are updated each morning.



# Has there ever been a better time to start up a law firm?

**The thought of setting up a new law firm during a global pandemic may seem irrational, cavalier and high risk.**

However, in such a world-changing event, as with any global crisis, the winners will be those who adapt the quickest and realise the change rather than resist it. To paraphrase Charles Darwin, it is not the strongest of the species that survive, but rather, that which is most adaptable to change.

The motivation of most lawyers, whether they entered the profession to help others, for the career opportunities, intellectual challenges or for financial reward, is generally to become a partner and ultimately run their own firm. In recent months, given the current state of the world, I have seen practitioners weighing up their options, making initial enquiries and starting to think about what running their own legal practice would entail. Here is some advice about starting up.

## **Time to plan and prepare your venture**

As with any business plan you need a strategy, and this requires thinking time. Social distancing and isolation has given us time to think existentially about our current circumstances and priorities.

With social restrictions of some shape or form in place for the foreseeable future, whether you are working from home, saving time on commuting, or not working at all, many of us have much more time at our disposal.

There has never been a better time to implement or speed up your life plan. The heavy lifting such as SRA applications, researching the right PI cover and sourcing the best technology to ensure that your business is fully digital from the beginning can all be established and put in place.

## **Favourable market conditions**

This may seem strange with so much economic activity in lockdown at present, but the reality is that setting up a law firm has never been more affordable.

Interest rates on loans have never been lower and as we progress through this pandemic it would be fair to surmise that more government assistance and stimuli for start-up businesses may materialise.

The question of demand is of course key when it comes to opening your doors for business. Small to medium sized law firms are reliant on an active and busy society. The drop in recent activity caused by the pandemic is creating a swell of demand that we have not experienced before and more legal service will be consumed across a variety of work types as a clean-up begins.

Many firms will have lost staff and will be running at limited capacity, unable to service the needs of their existing client base let alone take on new enquiries. These consumers will look elsewhere for the services of alternative providers. It is new agile law firms powered by digital technology which will be best positioned to attract and retain such consumers.

Society needs lawyers more than ever. As we come out of the pandemic law firms must be able to react to, look after and nurture their clients digitally. It is what the client will demand.

## **Legal Talent Transfer Window**

Attracting the best legal talent has always been a challenge, but the pandemic has created a window of opportunity with redundancies, lay-offs and short-term working likely to take place over the next six months. There has never been a more diverse, highly skilled pool of legal talent currently pondering their current circumstances and waiting for the right opportunity or partnership.

Surrounding yourself with the right people and the right business and

legal expertise and choosing the right mix of lawyers who can practice in the growth areas will be key to success.

## **A Change in Culture**

One of the biggest and most documented changes which the pandemic has driven is the switch to remote working and the acceptance of working from home.

Consumers no longer question conducting video meetings with their service provider and many may well actually prefer this to visiting offices.

The requirement of opening an office to launch your law firm is no longer a necessity and a client will no longer associate this as part of the value proposition for your firm.

Geography does not exist in the virtual world so attracting clients from further afield will be easier. Using the likes of Zoom & Microsoft Teams is becoming second nature to most, making communication and collaboration with clients and colleagues alike much simpler.

There is a new wave of smart start-up firms appearing, embracing innovation such as video calling, online digital payments, document sharing, e-signatures and document bundling solutions. It is this digital engagement that prospective clients will see as essential when choosing who to place future business with, and they market their firm on that basis.

## **Affordable Technology**

The first item on any new law firm's shopping list has changed dramatically in recent years and whereas it used to be the office lease, printing and copying machines or precedent guides, it is now, unquestionably in my experience, a case management and accounting system (CMS). The data held within the system ultimately represents the firm's most valuable assets. As well as a sophisticated CMS, technology-wise, all you really need to start your law firm is a good laptop, a subscription to Office 365 and access to the internet.

With the right practice management solution new lawyers can digitise all client matter communications, capture time and activities, share and collaborate on documents, bill and invoice in a few simple steps and perform SRA compliant accounting, and more -- all for the monthly cost of a romantic meal for two!

## **Adversity brings opportunity**

The pandemic has turned the legal service landscape upside down with larger, more established businesses finding it harder to adapt to the new requirements of both their workforce and their clients.

Often great things are formed in adversity and no matter how new they are, smaller, more agile businesses can react, adjust quickly and adapt to meet the requirements of a changing environment. With affordable, highly effective technology available to them, they can scale their firms to meet demand and best position themselves to profit through the unpredictability of the next few years.

Many of the barriers to entry in the legal industry have been blown aside. There has never been a better time to start a law firm.

LEAP has a heritage of supporting entrepreneurial lawyers and new start-up businesses throughout their journey and for one subscription provide start-up firms with everything they need to run a successful law firm.

**Download our start a law firm guide to begin your journey today.**  
Visit [www.leap.co.uk/get-started](http://www.leap.co.uk/get-started)

## Metro Mayor launches new LCR Future Innovation Fund to support the city region's most innovative SMEs

Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, has launched the £3m LCR Future Innovation Fund to support businesses in the region to adapt and innovate in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Delivered through Growth Platform, the new fund will provide grants to support SMEs that have reacted innovatively to the changed business environment created by COVID-19.

The fund is part of a wider response by the Metro Mayor and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, to re-purpose and re-shape the funding available for businesses. These funds are being made available via the Strategic Investment Fund to meet the needs of the city region's business community.

The first wave of the fund will provide £1m of funding and will be open for applications from today (12 June 2020), with grants of between £25,000 and £100,000 available. Subsequent releases of the fund will be shaped by learning from the initial scheme.

Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram, said: "Businesses in Liverpool City Region have shown an unbelievable ability to adapt and innovate their current business models to successfully weather these extremely challenging times. The overriding priority for us all has to be the safety of the people who live and work in the City Region

"We need to ensure those businesses are supported so that they can help drive our ambitions for inclusive growth in the City Region beyond the far-reaching impact of COVID-19.

"Our economy will need major financial support from central government to recover but we have to do what we can to support businesses in the here and now.

"This is a limited fund but I am sure that it will make a huge difference to businesses who have shown innovation, ingenuity

and agility in their responses to this terrible economic shock."

The grants will be awarded to businesses that can demonstrate alignment to the Local Industrial Strategy priority areas of:

Building a sustainable industrial future: manufacturing and engineering businesses that are adapting their businesses and processes to respond to new market opportunities and industry requirements.

***Open health innovation: businesses with opportunities to support the health and wellbeing of LCR residents and nationally/globally, during and following the pandemic.***

***Global cultural capital: businesses with opportunities to support the resilience of LCR's cultural vibrancy during and following the pandemic.***

***Zero carbon economy: businesses pioneering sustainable approaches to living, travel and doing business in a post pandemic world.***

***Tech for good: businesses that use technology and data to improve society, including but not limited to smart city applications, pan-sector digitalisation and AI diffusion.***

***Digitalisation: business initiatives in any sector that will yield a clear improvement in business productivity, adaptability and/or diversification.***

Eligible companies must be a registered SME, operational before 1 January 2020 with headquarters or significant operations in the Liverpool City Region. For further eligibility details and information on how to apply please visit: [www.growthplatform.org/future-innovation-fund/](http://www.growthplatform.org/future-innovation-fund/)

# Future Innovation Fund

supporting businesses to adapt and innovate



# Liverpool BID Company

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

We represent over 800 businesses in Liverpool's Commercial District, it's one of the most important engines in Liverpool City Region's economy. Now, more than ever, as we begin to come out of lockdown and we begin our strategy for recovery, the influence and success of business is going to be key if we are to return to a sense of normality.

From professional services and hospitality, to creative and digital industries, we have seen sectors coming together like never before to share knowledge and expertise, to work for the future hand in hand. The global crisis we find ourselves in is challenging, but we will face it together.

Along with our partners, we will always work to champion our Levy Payers and help to create a place in which they can not just survive, but thrive. Our work does not stop. MIPIM might have been delayed in 2020, but we continue to promote the Commercial District and the wider city as a place to do business, and identify what the area needs to help it to grow and play its unique role in the city region's economy.

How we use, spend leisure time in and move around the public realm will be increasingly important as we adjust to a post-lockdown city. The work we undertook with the Commercial District SRF (Spatial Regeneration Framework) ahead of the crisis will help us to continue this vital work in making the city accessible, easy to use and navigate. Moving around easily helps us to do business, to continue to do our daily work and to make us an attractive place for investment.

The Commercial District is a place with a thriving hospitality offer, especially around its restaurants and bars and we want it to stay that way. We are working with them to navigate the future and play their role in Liverpool's recovery. Art and animation will play an important role in generating confidence, and we continue to work with Liverpool Biennial and dot-art to create a space to both inspire, that is accessible and welcoming to all. The joint work with our sister BID Retail & Leisure and partners across Liverpool City Region has been instrumental to mitigate the impact of this crisis.

Within the board I chair we have the skills, abilities and experience to help support the Commercial District as we strive to recover and rebuild but we could not do any of this without the support, passion and investment of our levy payers. We have seen them give time, energy and enthusiasm over the past few months. We are honoured to work among such a committed neighbourhood of people and businesses, and it puts us in a strong position as together we work to the future. We are here to support you and happy to welcome ideas and suggestions to continue protecting businesses, employees and the Commercial District.

Twitter - @LpoolBIDcompany  
 Facebook - LiverpoolBIDCompany  
 Instagram - LiverpoolBIDCompany  
 LinkedIn - Liverpool BID Company



**Julie Johnson**

## TRAINING SEAT EXCHANGE

Liverpool Law Society has a Trainee Seat Exchange service. The purpose is to assist member firms and member in-house legal departments interchange trainees. The aim is to provide more training contracts on Merseyside and beyond by facilitating an exchange between firms and in-house departments who may otherwise find it difficult to offer their trainees the requisite number of seats in both contentious and non-contentious work.

The Training Seat Exchange, which is open only to members of Liverpool Law Society, is a free, online service. Details of what seat a member firm can offer and what seat they are seeking appears. The exchange must be discussed and agreed between each member firm on an individual basis.

If you would like to appear on the list, please complete our online form at [www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk/training-seat-exchange-form](http://www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk/training-seat-exchange-form) and the Society will be in touch with you.

# Regulation Update

## The latest regulation news from Michelle Garlick of Weightmans LLP

**I hope you are all keeping safe and well? Whilst lockdown starts to be relaxed, those responsible for compliance cannot afford to do so. Issues of supervision, health and safety of staff, data protection, cyber attacks and increases in AML risks continue to be at the forefront of risk managers/COLPs minds. If we can help in any way, please don't hesitate to get in touch.**

Here is an update on what has been happening in compliance over the past month or so.

### **Professor Mayson review of legal services regulation issued**

A review of legal services regulation by Professor Stephen Mayson has been published. During his 2 year review and consultation, he found the current 10 front-line regulators to be cumbersome and recommended that this be replaced by one independent regulator which could ensure a common and consistent approach across the whole sector. He found that the current reserved legal activities should be reviewed and replaced with legal services that require prior authorisation based on their public importance or risk level to consumers. Those offering services deemed a low risk to consumers would only be required to register

without additional regulatory conditions.

He found that many consumers wrongly assume that all legal services providers are in some way regulated and that relevant protection is available. But that, of course, is not the case with many providers working outside of regulation, including services such as will-writing and estate administration.

He said in his report "The current regulatory structure provides an incomplete and limited framework for legal services that is not able in the near-term and beyond to meet the demands and expectations placed on it, particularly with the emergence and rapid development of alternative providers and lawtech. The recommendations in this report seek to create a level playing field for legal services and enhance consumer protection, through targeted and proportionate regulation."

The report has been submitted to the Lord Chancellor for consideration although it isn't clear whether there is any appetite in government for an overhaul of legal services at this time.

I think they might have other more pressing areas of focus at present, don't you?!

That certainly seems to be

the view of The Law Society which responded by saying "the immediate focus of policymakers should be thinking about how to make better use of the current regulatory framework, deliver effective public legal education, resource legal aid properly and ensure the survival of the vulnerable parts of legal services..."

Other regulators were more welcoming of the review, the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives in particular agreeing with Professor Mayson that "activity-based regulation is a reform that is long overdue..."

### **SRA issues consultation on its 2020/2021 business plan**

The SRA has for the first time issued a consultation seeking the profession's views on its 2020/2021 business plan. It runs until 26 August 2020 but also runs alongside the Law Society's consultation on the level of the practising certificate fees for 2020/2021 (the deadline for this part of the consultation expiring on 10 July and it is proposed that the fee remains the same as last year). The SRA has set out 3 key areas of focus/objectives:

1. Setting and maintaining high standards for the profession and themselves
2. Technology and innovation
3. Anticipating and responding to change



**Michelle Garlick**

Of most significance from a compliance perspective is the proposed expansion of SRA AML visits to visit all high-risk firms on a 3 year rolling basis, along with visits to a sample of lower risk firms. They will be calling in and analysing firms' AML policies, procedures and controls and risk assessments and will also be undertaking a thematic risk review into tax advice.

The rolling programme of visits reminds me of Practice Standards visits of the past but specifically focussed on AML procedures. Firms will need to be well-prepared for such visits and desktop reviews so if you haven't reviewed your policies/risk assessments/audited against them recently and need some help, do get in touch.

### **Law Society issues Return to Work Toolkit**

During the crisis, the Law Society has been issuing



regular practice notes and guidance on practical issues, a recent one being a Return to Work toolkit which includes a risk assessment template, posters and a useful flowchart to help employers decide which employees should return to work when re-opening offices. It is well worth looking at if you haven't done so already.

## SQE to be introduced in 2021

The SRA has submitted its proposals for the SQE to the LSB for approval and subject to this approval being granted, will come into force on 1 September 2021. The SRA stated that it had considered whether there was a case to delay until 2022 in light of Covid but decided against delay, saying that "there is a clear public

interest in terms of assurance of competence and public protection for the SQE to be introduced as soon as possible".

## Disciplinary cases

### Baker McKenzie sexual harassment decision

Probably the biggest SDT case since the Leigh Day Tribunal has reached a conclusion with the case against Gary Senior, the former Baker McKenzie London Managing Partner, for professional misconduct for attempting to kiss a junior associate found proved. He was fined £55,000 and ordered to pay the SRA's costs. The firm itself, a partner involved in the internal investigation of Senior and the former HR director were cleared of the charges against them. Whilst

arguments were put forward that the SRA pay their costs (of an eye-watering £3m) given the failure of the allegations against them, the tribunal made no order as to costs.

### "Shambolic" firm shutdown

A sole practitioner was suspended for a year after what the SDT described as a "shambolic" closure of his firm which left files and clients at risk. It found that the solicitor had buried his head in the sand when things started spiralling out of control.

A timely reminder of the importance of managing an orderly wind down if, as is feared as a result of Covid-19, an increased number of firms will be forced to close.

## Solicitor's failure to warn of off-plan property risks results in fine

Firms/solicitors acting for clients in high-risk property development schemes, often involving buyers from abroad paying high deposits of between 40-80% of the purchase price for as yet unbuilt units, should take note of this disciplinary case which found a solicitor in breach of his professional obligations in a number of respects for failing to adequately advise purchaser clients of the high risk of investing in such schemes. The solicitor reached an agreed outcome with the SRA to pay a fine of £10,000 and £15,000 costs.

**Michelle Garlick**  
**Weightmans LLP**

## Illegality Defences & Allegations

### in Personal Injury

On Wednesday 22nd July, 2-3pm

### With Nicky Carter, who will cover:

- ⇒ Ex-turpi always a full defence?
- ⇒ When will this be a feasible defence for a defendant?
- ⇒ What should you look out for- problem areas?
- ⇒ Joint enterprise *Walleth v Vickers*[2018] EWHC 3088 (QB)
- ⇒ What effect does an allegation of ex-turpi have on an admission?
- ⇒ How does ex-turpi impact in an MIB case?
- ⇒ Fatal accident Claims and ex-turpi

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)

## ONLINE: Insolvency Update

Join Chris Beanland online via zoom

on Friday 17th July, 1pm - 2pm

This main focus of this course will be the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Bill which is shortly to come into force.

The Bill has some provisions which are temporary and Covid-19 related and some provisions which are permanent.

### The Bill is the biggest change in insolvency law since the Enterprise Act 2003.

The course will be split into three parts:

Temporary provisions of the Bill  
Permanent changes to the law effected by the Bill  
Recent case law (if we have time)

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)

## MSB Celebrates Mandela Week with Mandela8's #My67Minutes Programme

2020 has been a year of unprecedented global crises with Covid-19 transforming the way we live our lives. The death of George Floyd at the hands of police-brutality in the US has sparked a global reaction of solidarity, protest and riots in a desperate demand for justice. Momentum and support continues to gather for the Black Lives Matter movement. However, this crisis is not unprecedented. This is a highlighting of a painful history, an unacceptable, unequal present and a determination that the future must eradicate centuries old, systematic racism. There is perhaps no better figurehead or icon to represent this needed change than Nelson Mandela.

Often it is declared that initiatives, 'have never been more important'. But this can now be stated with huge emphasis, it is truly palpable. The life and values of Mandela are crucial for anyone who stands for social justice. Charity Mandela8 work to honour the life of Mandela through educational projects. Their work will include the installation of a memorial to Mandela in Princes Park at the heart of Liverpool 8, Britain's oldest black community. The memorial will be an outdoor classroom for all schools in the Liverpool City Region, truly embedding Black culture in the curriculum. The site has been visited by Nelson Mandela's daughter and Granddaughter, who will visit again next year to officially open the memorial. MSB are sponsors of the Charity and Managing Partner Emma is a patron in addition to Solicitor Melissa Bosoboe



### MSB celebrate Mandela Day

sitting on the Steering Group. Emma says, 'we were naturally compelled to get behind Mandela8 from its inception. Mandela was a lawyer and a hero of social justice. We are so proud to be sponsors and we wholeheartedly support the aims of the charity.'

Each year, Mandela8 coordinates the #My67Minutes programme. Mandela spent 67 years of his life struggling for social justice and the charity encourages the wider community to spend 67 minutes during Mandela Week on actions in the spirit of Mandela. Last year, MSB spent 67 minutes of acts of giving to charities and foodbanks across the city; delivering donations and taking the time to see their work and promote their causes on social media. Organisations included Asylum Link, Centre 56 and The Cotton Street Project.

This year #My67Minutes is focused on remembrance, recognition, hope and healing. MSB have committed to expanding their efforts. Covid-19 may be a barrier to physically connecting, but we are determined to honour Mandela and support Mandela8. MSB staff will be taking part in 67 minutes of virtual yoga and meditation. Our staff will be involved in a social media campaign to display iconic quotes from Mandela and encourage participation in #My67Minutes during Mandela Week. We will also be working with foodbanks on safe, contact free deliveries.

Mandela Week 2020 falls on 13th – 20th July. Show your support and get involved. Visit [www.mandela8.org.uk](http://www.mandela8.org.uk) for more information on the charity and creative ways to spend your #My67Minutes.



### The Mandela Family



# News from the WLD

## 2020-2021 Committee

MWLD will be holding their Annual General Meeting shortly. This was due to take place on 23rd April 2020 however due to the current climate it has been postponed. Further details will be shared as soon as possible however in the meantime, if you would be interested in joining the Committee in a specific role or as a general member please contact us at [kirstie.bork@simpsonmillar.co.uk](mailto:kirstie.bork@simpsonmillar.co.uk) for more information.

## Sponsorship

MWLD organises a wide range of events throughout the year including socials, networking and educational events such as financial seminars and career progression seminars. The committee is open to suggestions from members, partnerships and sponsors for new events which we may not have hosted previously.

MWLD relies on sponsors which have included law firms, chambers, recruiters, financial advisers and costs draftsmen to fund our events. We are therefore always interested in hearing from local and national businesses who may wish to sponsor our events.

Our events are well attended by a wide range of persons including solicitors, barristers, judges, costs draftsmen, recruiters and financial advisers. Our sponsors benefit from free tickets to attend the event they are sponsoring, presenting and distributing their promotional materials at the event as well as being included on all of the material when we are advertising the event.



If you would like to be involved in sponsoring an event please contact our sponsorship coordinator Amelia Hayden ([amelia.hayden@brabners.com](mailto:amelia.hayden@brabners.com)).

## What's Coming Up?

Our next event is our Annual General Meeting. This was due to take place on April 2020 however due to the current climate the date has been postponed. We will be releasing further details about the AGM once a date has been confirmed via our mailing list, website and social media so keep an eye out for how to get your tickets!

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Liverpool Law Society

**ONLINE: The Care Act, Care Funding & Care Homes: the impact of Covid 19 & the Corona Virus Act 2020**

**This seminar will focus on some of the issues affecting clients currently receiving care and support under the Care Act 2014 during the pandemic or who may need care and support in the future.**

*Covering:*

- Changes to LA/NHS duties to assess/deliver care packages
- Retrospective charges for funding care:  
who is entitled to the money?
- Contractual issues for attorneys and deputies funding care packages
- DHSC guidance on delivery of services :  
can you still complain ?

**To see more information, [click here](http://www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk)**

## Can we Build Back Better? You bet we can ...

By the time this edition hits your inbox, the most severe of the lockdown restrictions will be eased. We will have had Super Saturday when a visit to a pub or a cinema is allowed, although bowling and swimming still seem to be off limits. The recent fine weather has meant that many of the social distancing measures appear to have been abandoned by beach goers and park dwellers alike, as the country emerges from what the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson called its 'hibernation'. I was excited to hear this, not so much at the prospect of a pint in the pub, but more for the analogy of coming out of hibernation. As animals emerge from hibernation, they need a world full of nourishment, food and water, early spring warmth and a safe places to rest as they work hard to get their body weight up to normal. A healthy, clean environment where wildlife of all kinds flourishes. One very much like that which many of us observed in the early long weeks of lockdown.

Back in April and May, among the awful news of the increase in Covid cases and the rising death toll, there was a lot of conversation about how extraordinary it was that nature had 'bounced back' or emerged from the shadows – mountain goats wandered the streets of Llandudno, herds of deer grazed on deserted lawns in the East End. Further afield dolphins and whales appeared in inland water ways in Canada and jellyfish swam through uncharacteristically clear canal waters in Venice. We marvelled at the clean air in India and at the end of our own streets, families became amateur naturalists overnight as we watched wildlife in our gardens or parks that was always there we just never took the time to stop and stare.

But now as we are on the cusp of the return to the 'new normal' how close we are to forgetting all this? Flights may still be few and far between, but the roads are much more crowded, carbon emissions are creeping back up and all too quickly we are abandoning our sense of wonder of the natural world in favour of getting back to work. We are in danger of losing this once in a lifetime opportunity to rethink. To rethink our relationship with the planet, to rethink how we use resources human and otherwise and for what, to rethink how we could seize the opportunity for a 'green and resilient recover' post Covid so we halt global heating and slow down the destruction of ecosystems and habitats.

Lockdown was a period of great sacrifice, strain and anxiety for many millions, those of us who lost loved ones are scarred by not being able to say goodbye or have a proper funeral, for others job insecurity and poverty have become everyday worries. Children and young people have missed exams and rites of passage such as school leaving proms or services or graduation ceremonies. It's been very, very tough - for many working at home has meant juggling care and work demands, coping with not enough space or competition for the internet while trying to deliver a school curriculum or care for a loved one who is shielding. No one wants this to go on for any longer than it has to or for it to ever happen again.

What very many of us do want is to make sure that we don't lose the chance to build back better, as the hashtag says, to make sure that all the suffering and pain is offset in some small way by a better future. To not lose the sense of wonder at the wildlife in our streets and to keep the clean air, and quiet skies. Calls for a green recovery are coming from all quarters and they don't just focus on the pressing need to keep global heating to 1.5 degrees or below. Taking a more balanced approach could help ensure we are more resilient to future pandemics, reducing destruction of habitats and changing our relationship with the natural world might help prevent the rise of zoonotic disease such as coronavirus in future. We need to be more mindful and more careful of our planet – not just because that is the right thing to do but because it makes good economic sense. A green recovery is an affordable sustainable recovery.

In its recent Annual Report to Parliament, the independent NGO, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) called on ministers to seize the opportunity to turn the Covid-19 crisis into a defining moment in the fight against climate change. The Committee Chairman Lord Deben said "the steps that the UK takes to rebuild from the Covid-19 pandemic can accelerate the transition to a successful and low carbon economy and improve climate resilience". While Dame Julia King, Chair of the Adaptation Committee puts it more bluntly ... "Covid-19 has shown that planning for systemic risks is unavoidable. We have warned repeatedly that the UK is poorly prepared for the very serious impacts of climate change, including flooding, overheating and water shortages."

The Report doesn't just contain dire warnings of trouble ahead, it is far more practical than that and it mirrors and echoes the demands coming from other groups such as the UKSSD in their letter to the Prime Minister signed by over 150 CEOs and leaders from across the UK including Senior Partners as Freshfields, Slaughter and May, Pinsent Mason, DLA Piper, Herbert Smith Freehills as well as the Chairs of the Legal Sustainability Alliance. The letter set out three main calls for action for Government to use the Sustainable Development Goals to

- unite all sectors behind a plan to build a stronger and more resilient economy
- prioritise the most vulnerable in our society
- build coherent policies for a healthy planet and to aid the transition to net zero

The CCC report puts more economic flesh on the bones of the UKSSD calls, by highlighting five clear investment priorities in the months ahead:

- Low-carbon retrofits and buildings that are fit for the future
- Tree planting, peatland restoration, and green infrastructure
- Strengthening energy networks
- Infrastructure to make it easy for people to walk, cycle, and work remotely
- Moving towards a circular economy

The CCC identifies further opportunities to support the transition and the recovery by investing in the UK's workforce, and in lower-carbon behaviours and innovation through reskilling and retraining programmes, leading a move towards more climate positive behaviours that emerged during lockdown and vitally by providing more targeted funding for science and innovation in low carbon and adaptation technologies.

None of this is easy but it is possible and with a consensus across all sectors and with support from innovative thinkers in the legal profession who enable their clients to invest, manage and adapt we have a workable blueprint for a way out of the pandemic to a healthy planet supported by a healthy economy and healthy population. Now is really the time to BuildBackBetter.

**Amanda Carpenter is CEO Achill Management and host of the successful environmental podcast Planet Pod – visit [www.achillmanagement](http://www.achillmanagement) or [www.theplanetpod.com](http://www.theplanetpod.com) to find out more.**





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|-------------|---|-------------------------|---------------|
| 08-Jul      | Commercial Lasting Powers of Attorney   | Craig Ward              | S4430         |
| 10-Jul      | Divorce & Financial Orders Certificate  | Safda Mahmood           | S4361         |
| 13-Jul      | Managing Teams Remotely in 2020   | Candy Bowman            | S4470         |
| 14-Jul      | The Costs & Funding Update 2020   | Professor Dominic Regan | S4469         |
| 15-Jul      | The Care Act, Care Funding & Care Homes: the impact of Covid 19 & the Corona Virus Act 2020 | Helen Clarke            | S4468         |
| 17-Jul      | Insolvency Update   | Chris Beanland          | S4471         |
| 22-Jul      | Illegality Defences and Allegations in Personal Injury                                      | Nicky Carter            | S4472         |
| 29-Jul      | Admissions of Liability - From Portal to Part 7   | Nicky Carter            | S4473         |
|             |   |                         |               |
| 15-Sept     | Developments in Domestic Abuse  | Safda Mahmood           | S4385         |
| 16-Sept     | <b>Residential Property Conference</b>  | various                 | S4293         |
| 17-Sept     | Civil Litigation Update   | Helen Swaffield         | S4410         |
| 18-Sept     | Personal Insolvency: A Practical Guide  | Chris Beanland          | S4322         |
| 23-Sept     | Finding of Fact Hearings in Children Proceedings  | Anthony Hand            | S4416         |
| 30-Sept     | <b>Family Finance Conference</b>  | various                 | S4294         |

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