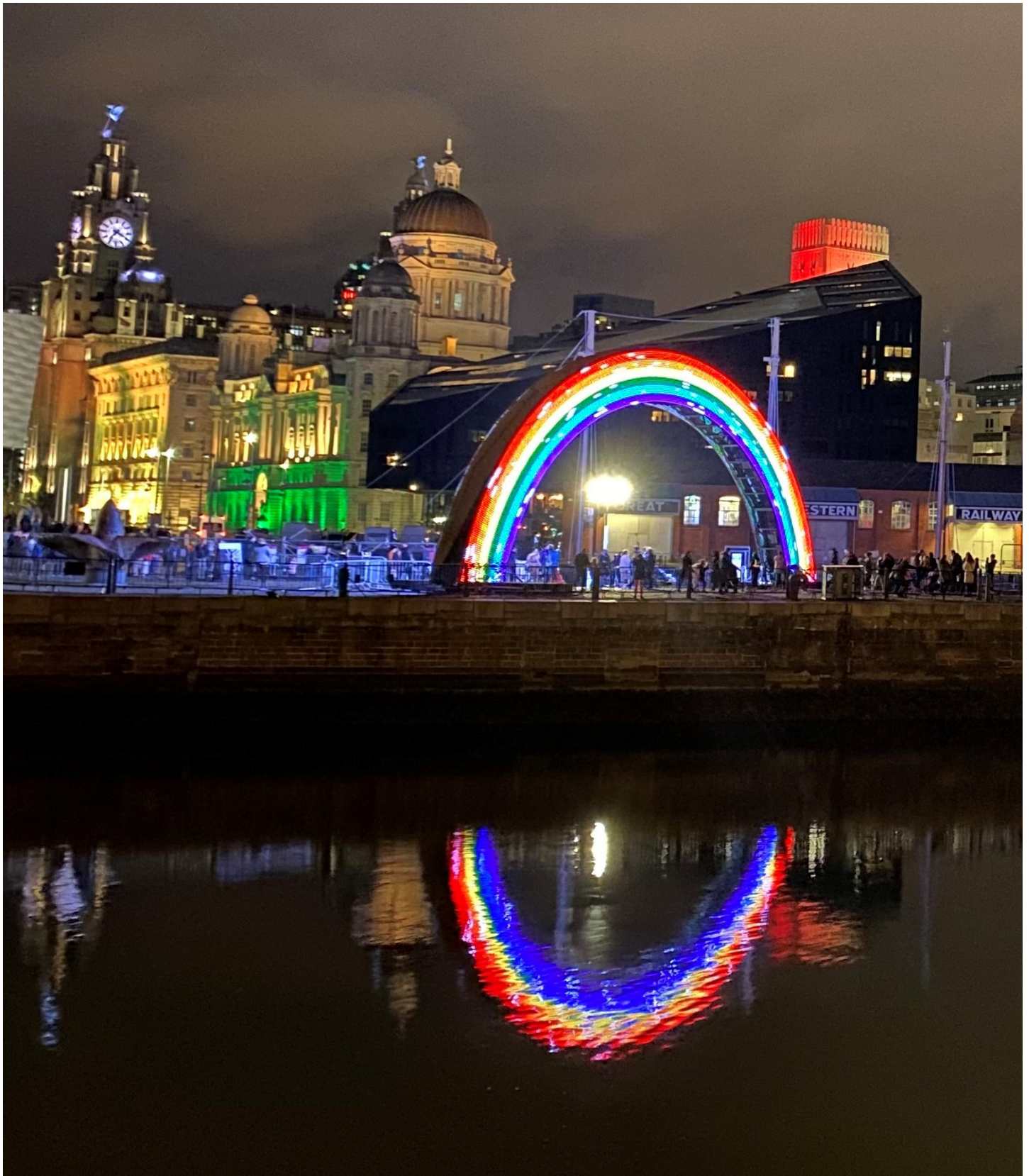


# LiverpoolLaw

May 2021

Liverpool Law Society

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



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## DEADLINES 2021

26th May

24th June

27th July

23rd August

24th September

27th October

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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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Published by

Baskerville Publications  
Apt 327 Holden Mill  
Blackburn Road  
Bolton  
BL1 7PN  
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## Welcome to the May 2021 edition of Liverpool Law

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

I hope you are all well and enjoying the warmer weather and easing of restrictions, things are slowly starting to feel 'normal' again. I hope it lasts this time!

This month we have a significant feature from our member firms on their plans to return to the office. Thank you all for your contributions. I note some of you have already returned, some not at all. Most seem to be waiting for further guidance from the Government and very much putting the decision into the hands of their staff and what they feel comfortable with. Please keep us posted on your plans. As discussed at the latest editorial committee meeting whilst we may be competitors in some respects we are one legal community and there is knowledge to be shared on how we are all coming out of this pandemic together.

The hybrid working feature also touches upon the mental health of staff and in

particular that of junior staff. The article by MJLD this month highlights how easy it is for junior members to react differently to the same situations and how this can escalate if left without support. Dealing with difficult clients and time management is a skill learned by observing colleagues and must be difficult whilst at home, potentially alone. Please reach out to all colleagues and check in on how they actually are, but in particular our junior colleagues who may need that extra support.

As always if there is anything you would like to see featured in the magazine please get in touch. We are trialling our editorial meetings at 11am rather than 1pm, if this is better for you and you would like to attend please let me know and we can send you the zoom link.

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

## 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:

04/05/2021 13:00	Employment Law Sub-Committee
06/05/2021 13:15	Finance & Policy Sub-Committee
11/05/2021 12:30	General Committee
12/05/2021 13:00	Education & Charities Sub-Committee
18/05/2021 11:00	Editorial Sub-Committee
19/05/2021 13:00	EDI Sub-Committee
20/05/2021 13:00	Future Planning Sub-Committee
25/05/2021 12:30	Finance & Policy Sub-Committee
27/05/2021 13:00	Civil Litigation Sub-Committee
27/05/2021 16:00	Criminal Practice Sub-Committee
03/06/2021 13:00	Access to Justice Sub-Committee
08/06/2021 12:30	General Committee

## Editorial Committee Dates

Tue 18/05/2021  
Tue 15/06/2021  
Tue 20/07/2021  
Tue 17/08/2021  
Tue 15/09/2021  
Tue 19/10/2021  
Tue 16/11/2021



# Closure of the Solicitors Indemnity Fund

The Solicitors Indemnity Fund (SIF) will stop accepting new claims after 30 September 2021.

Currently, SIF provides ongoing cover to firms once their mandatory six-year run-off period has elapsed. The closure means that solicitors may be personally liable for losses from any future claims that are made against firms that have been closed for more than six years.

It's important that you understand what this means for you in order to protect yourself against potential future claims. This is a short summary – links to full details are available at the end.

## What you need to do

You'll need to start by reflecting on your risk exposure. The first thing to consider is areas of work. Some work areas are at greater risk of long-tail claims, such as residential conveyancing, wills and trusts, child personal injury, and matrimonial property.

Secondly, you may be affected differently depending on whether a practice at which you were a principal or employee is now closed, and when the closure took place.

Below we have outlined four groups of members which will be affected differently and suggest practical steps you could take.

### Group A: Firms that closed on or before 31 August 2000

These firms are currently covered by SIF. As they closed before the profession moved to purchasing insurance on the open market, arrangements will be made for them to receive ongoing cover after SIF has closed.

#### *Suggested action*

If you fall into this group, you may not need to take any action.

### Group B: Firms that closed between 1 September 2000 and 30 September 2015

These firms are in SIF, or will be in SIF, by 30 September 2021. This is the group that we believe faces the greatest difficulties as a consequence of SIF's closure. For some time now, we have been actively pursuing options for this group and continue to earnestly engage with the insurance industry to find a solution. However, there are currently limited alternatives available.

#### *Suggested action:*

1. If you're aware of any matter which could give rise to a claim and can identify the former client who was affected, consider contacting that client (or their beneficiaries) and encouraging them to register a claim with SIF prior to 30 September 2021.
2. Gather and keep whatever relevant paperwork you still have available relating to your practice and indemnity insurance records, including previous applications and claims.
3. If you had a good claims history and paid your excesses and run-off premium, consider approaching your former broker or underwriter to see if they're willing to consider providing you with supplementary run-off cover. This would not have to be on the same terms as your original mandatory run-off cover.

4. If you were part of a traditional partnership, you may want to discuss with your former partners whether and how you would pay for any supplementary cover.

### Group C: Firms that have closed since 1 October 2015

These firms have closed, and they will never benefit from SIF because it will stop accepting new claims before their mandatory six-year run-off period comes to an end. Unless alternative arrangements are made, these firms will be left without protection once their run-off cover expires.

#### *Suggested action*

For former principals, we suggest that you take the practical steps outlined in points 2 through 4 above and preserve any records which may be of assistance in dealing with future claims.

### Group D: Existing firms

Unless alternative arrangements are made, existing firms will be left without protection once their run-off cover expires. However, there are still precautionary measures that firms can take to reduce their long-term exposure.

#### *Suggested action*

- Principals of existing sole practices or partnerships should consider incorporating as a limited liability company, as this will reduce personal exposure to claims arising from work carried out subsequent to incorporation. But you should take independent advice on this, as it may have other consequences for your practice.
- Work to improve risk management systems, and carefully consider whether you should stop taking on any new work in areas with a higher risk of long-tail claims. Retain records of any such work you've done previously, or do in the future, in order to defend any claims that may arise subsequently.
- Principals should also think about their likely need for supplementary run-off cover, and how they'll pay for it. Consider setting aside funds now or start to implement a plan to help you to pay for your mandatory and supplementary run-off cover in the future.

#### **To find out more about the SIF closure and register for updates**

- Visit [www.lawsociety.org.uk/SIF-closure](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/SIF-closure) for the full details on the closure of SIF, its impact on closed, existing and new firms, and practical steps to take for principals and employees.
- Sign up or log in to My LS and add the 'Solicitors Indemnity Fund' topic. Select 'Manage topics' and search for 'Solicitors Indemnity Fund'.
- Register interest in receiving further information by calling the Support Centre of the Law Society of England & Wales on 020 7242 1222 and leaving your contact information, or email [SIF@lawsociety.org.uk](mailto:SIF@lawsociety.org.uk) to be included in future updates.



# News from the Sub-Committees

## Non-Contentious Business

At the recent Non Contentious Business Sub-Committee held on 25th February the following matters were discussed:

### Urgent Matters relating to Covid 19

Nadya Makarova mentioned the stamp duty deadline and confirmed that this was likely to be extended to 30 June. Also, she suggested that conveyancers could be classed as 'key workers' with the right for emergency schooling if they had children.

John Paul Dennis highlighted the delays in probates due to the Crisis.

### Training and/or conferences

Jo Downey confirmed that training was being recorded with a link post event so that it could be watched again, providing flexibility

Jo asked for ideas for topics and speakers for the Private Client conference which is due to take place in October.

The Commercial Property Conference planned for 21 April and so far has about 40 attendees.

### Hot Topics – Charity Law, GDPR, Company, Property and Private Client

Moya Rogan confirmed that there were no developments on GDPR/ no need to vary clauses;

On Property there were increasing ground rents; cladding issues with leaseholders stuck in difficult situations; stamp duty changes expected for non-UK residents which would see an extra tax from 1st April.

1st time buyers discount for non-UK residents under £500K.

On Private Client, CGT rates were being changed meaning families were moving portfolios over before the rate changes.

Michael Sandys mentioned Intellectual Property remaining harmonised post Brexit with UK remaining party to EU Patent Convention, WTO and WIPO as well as the Paris, Berne and Rome conventions.

**Michael Sandys**  
Chair

## EDI Committee

The focus of this month's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion sub-committee meeting was primarily on the organisation of an event we are holding on Friday 28 May 2021. As mentioned in our previous update, this event will focus on allyship in the legal workplace. Most of you will be aware of the recent outcome of the trial surrounding the death of George Floyd – an American citizen who died whilst in police custody after a police officer knelt on his neck for 9 and half minutes. The sub-committee have chosen the date of this event as sadly it will be around one year since George Floyd's death. Lubna Shuja, Vice President of the Law Society, will be speaking on multiculturalism and allyship.

Within this event we are not solely covering allyship across races. We are also hearing from Hays as to why diversity is important; will have a speaker from the LGBTQ+ community and holding a discussion on being a gender ally. The highly emotive death of Sarah Everard, a young woman who went missing after leaving a friend's house in March this year and who was later found dead, has highlighted much of what we already knew – that gender allyship is fundamental in bringing about equality.

The details of the event will be available on the Liverpool Law Society website shortly and we hope you will all join us.

The national Law Society is holding a Diversity & Inclusion conference in September this year, and the sub-committee has been asked to take part in the opening night on mental health. This will be a panel discussion with members from the regional Law Societies attending to talk about lived experiences in mental health or work that they have specifically done in that area. Something that the sub-committee is keen to highlight within this panel discussion, is the work of mental health first aiders which many firms now have. Mental health first aiders being individuals stepping up to be a first point of contact to colleagues within their firms who are suffering with their mental wellbeing. Having such internal schemes in place has been fundamental in raising mental health as a vital issue that firms should be providing support for, especially given the high level of restrictions we have all been placed under over the past 13 months. Mental health first aiders not only lend an appropriate ear to colleagues, but also signpost to appropriate services. If you are feeling that your mental wellbeing is affected at the moment, we would encourage you to approach colleagues within your firms for support and not to suffer in silence.

We look forward to providing you with our next update, which will cover the outcome of the event on 28 May 2021, but we do hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend. This event will be held remotely via Zoom and during the lunchtime period.

**Rachel Kelly-Brandreth**  
Associate Solicitor  
Hill Dickinson LLP  
EDI Committee Member



**Rachel Kelly-Brandreth**



## Family Law Committee

Liverpool Law Society's family subcommittee has been very busy of late with a number of changes continuing to be made across the family justice system. The new DFJ for Cheshire & Merseyside, HHJ Parker, has held and is continuing to hold, regular meetings with all stakeholders to discuss barriers and delays to expeditious court proceedings. HHJ Parker has made it clear that remote hearings are here to stay albeit there will also be a return to in person hearings for those hearings where attending in person is appropriate. E-bundles are also here to stay and HHJ Parker wishes to get the message to all solicitors across the region that investing in e-bundle technology is essential. There are certainly many advantages to e-bundles with the technological cost being largely off-set by the savings in stationery and associated printing costs. However, a warning to all those that prepare an e-bundle and forget to ensure it is hyperlinked and searchable - expect the wrath of counsel and the judiciary alike if Twitter is anything to go by!

Recommendations have been made in public law proceedings and endorsed by the President of the Family Division. HHJ Parker has circulated a summary of these recommendations and there are a number of working groups set up to discuss how these recommendations can be implemented regionally. These sub groups report in to the Local Family Justice Board meetings and decisions made impacting on legal professionals will be circulated thereafter.

There is a lot of work continuing behind the scenes to ensure that our local family justice system is strong and responsive to our community. If any practitioner has any comments, ideas or feedback please do not hesitate to contact the Liverpool Law Society, come along as a guest or apply to join our Liverpool Law Society Family Sub Committee – the more voices we have and the broader our experiences, the better we will be able to represent Liverpool Law Society in these discussions.

There is an open forum led by HHJ Parker on 6th May at 4.30pm being held on Microsoft Teams. Please do attend if you can.

**Emma Palmer**  
Chair of Liverpool Law Society Family Sub-Committee



**Emma Palmer**

## Consultation Papers

The following sub-committee of Liverpool Law Society is considering responding to these consultation papers. If any member would like to send in a comment, please do so to [committees@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk](mailto:committees@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk)

Criminal Practice

**Independent review of criminal legal aid: Call for Evidence**  
Closing Date 7th May 2021

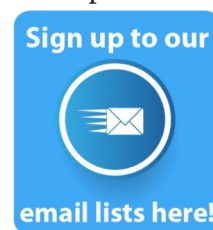
Civil Litigation/Crime/Employment & Family Business

**Increasing selected court fees and Help with Fees income thresholds by inflation**  
Closing Date 17th May 2021

## Enewsletter Sign Up

Subscribe to our email mailing lists to keep up to date with the latest news, legal training programme and other events from Liverpool Law Society.

Sign up here



### 'Proving your case'

with Professor Dominic Regan

Thursday 13th May, 12.30pm - 2pm

*Can't make the date/time ? No problem, booking onto this event (& any other events) means you will receive a link to access a recording of the event at your leisure!*

**There are so many twists and turns when it comes to evidence and proof. This detailed, wide ranging talk will consider, amongst other matters;**

- What should my witness statement contain?
- Do I need an expert?
- Problems with a single joint expert
- Documents and the notice of non admission
- What happens if the Judge can't make up their mind?
- Res ipsa loquitor
- The reluctant witness.
- Questions welcome!

[Click here](#) for more info & to book







**The Society's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee  
invites everyone to attend**

# HOW TO BE AN ALLY IN THE LEGAL WORKPLACE

*This event will look at the challenges faced by colleagues  
and how we can all be allies to each other*

**ON ZOOM, FRIDAY, 28 MAY 2021  
1.00 PM TO 2.00 PM**

Limited places available - book early!

Kindly sponsored by HAYS

For more details, [www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk/events/](http://www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk/events/)



## Background

In light of recent events and tragedies, we have heard the word “ally” a lot. How can we be better allies in the workplace? What does allyship look like? Having conversations around allyship are really important.

Attend this event to hear from our speakers about their own experiences, hints and tips including how to open up conversations in workplace.

## Programme

- Welcome - Julie O'Hare, President, Liverpool Law Society
- Introduction to HAYS - Oliver Gibbons, Senior Business Director, Hays plc
- Why is diversity & inclusion important? - Yvonne Smyth, Group Head ED&I, Hays plc
  - Why a commitment to D&I is no longer a nice to have, but rather an essential part of planning for success
  - To what extent are the events of 2020/21 a catalyst for meaningful and sustainable D&I change
- How to support inclusion of ethnic minority colleagues - Lubna Shuja, Vice President of The Law Society
  - What are the difficulties faced by ethnic minority lawyers
  - How to be a leader and an Ally on race equality
- Issues a female in law may have faced - Alison Lobb, Managing Partner, Morecrofts
  - At a time when women have been significantly disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, it is more essential than ever that we support talented women to reach their potential in the workplace
  - Ideas to help and support women across training, recruitment & promotion, to help them reach their goals.
- How to be a LGBTQ+ ally - Victoria Jackson from BLM LLP
  - Understanding of what it means to be an ally to the LGBTQ+ community and why it's important to have visible and active allies in the workplace
  - Top tips on how to be a better ally
- Panel Q&A and discussion

## Speaker biographies

**Julie O'Hare** was elected President of Liverpool Law Society on 10th December 2019 and this position was renewed for another 12 month term in December 2020. Previously, Julie was Chair of Merseyside Junior Lawyers' Division. Julie is a Team Manager and practising Solicitor in the Defence department of Carpenters Group.

**Oliver Gibbons** trained with Eversheds Sutherland, qualifying as a commercial property lawyer in 1998 before joining Hays Legal in 1999. His career with Hays has involved both setting up and managing a range of offices outside London. Throughout this time the North West has remained his core market and Oliver has played a leading role in many high-profile partner/associate hires and team moves across the region. In addition, Oliver advises firms on their strategic direction and merger possibilities

**Yvonne Smyth** is Group Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for Hays and lead Hays' commitment to the active promotion and realisation of true business diversity and inclusion. She spearheads Hays' commitment to ensuring that our major recruitment linked activities and insights are designed to positively promote and create more diverse workforces and inclusive workplace cultures. Yvonne leads the expert Hays Human Resources and Hays Legal recruitment teams across the UK&I. Previous to her recruitment experience, she practised as a litigation lawyer with international law firm Norton Rose Fulbright.

**Lubna Shuja** is the Vice President of the Law Society of England and Wales. She will become the first Asian President in October 2022. She has been a Law Society Council member since 2013 and is the chair of the Law Society's Membership and Communications Committee as well as a member of the Law Society Board. Lubna is a solicitor with her own practice, Legal Swan Solicitors, in Birmingham. She specialises in professional discipline and regulation. She is also a mediator.

**Alison Lobb** is Managing Partner of Morecrofts solicitors, a multi service firm with 6 offices throughout the Liverpool City Region. She is a past President of Liverpool Law Society and has received significant recognition in the profession, including being named 'Woman Solicitor of the Year' at the Law Society Excellence Awards 2019, as well as other local business and legal awards. She is an Ambassador for Women in the Law UK, Chair of the Policy Committee at Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, Vice-Chair of the Liverpool branch of the IOD, a member of the LEP Professional Services Board, and a trustee of the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation.

**Victoria Jackson** is an Associate Solicitor and Co-Chair of BLM's LGBTQ+Allies Network. She featured in the Top 100 OUTstanding LGBT Future Leader's List 2020 sponsored by Yahoo and has been shortlisted as a Top 10 Future Leader in the 2021 British LGBT Awards. Victoria is heavily involved in the development of EDI strategies within her firm, Liverpool Law Society and the insurance industry. She works tirelessly to educate allies, raise awareness, and support those who identify as LGBTQ+.



# Business and Property Courts in Liverpool gear up for growth

The Business and Property Courts in Liverpool are gearing up for growth as Covid-19 restrictions ease.

In November 2020, Neil Cadwallader was appointed as Liverpool's first full time, Business and Property Court Judge for Chancery and Circuit Commercial cases, following a long and successful career as a barrister on the Northern Circuit. HHJ Cadwallader is authorised to hear High Court and County Court cases, right across the board (with a few minor exceptions), including Chancery, Circuit Commercial and Technology and Construction Court cases.

HHJ Cadwallader's appointment means that Liverpool is no longer dependent on other cities for the provision of specialist Circuit Judges to hear High and County Court cases. It also allows Liverpool practitioners to obtain, for example, urgent, corporate or insolvency relief locally, meaning that local practitioners can appear in a court which can be aware of and responsive to their needs.

"It has been said many times that no case is too large for the regions - and it is true," said HHJ Cadwallader.

"As well as hearing cases myself my role includes liaising with the Chancery Division and the Commercial Court in London to ensure that cases requiring the attention of a full High Court judge can get it - and get it in Liverpool.

"As part of ensuring that happens, I expect to be sitting in London about 6 weeks in every year once pandemic restrictions make that feasible."

Commenting on his first six months at the Business and Property Courts in Liverpool, HHJ Cadwallader said: "It has been pleasing to see an increase in the number of Chancery and Circuit Commercial cases issued in Liverpool. I hope this trend will continue, and that the opportunity for this jurisdiction to serve the Liverpool area in particular will increasingly be taken up.

"Looking to the future, my hope is that the Business and Property Courts in Liverpool continue to develop at a much faster rate, with a wider variety and larger number of heavyweight cases being heard."

The Business and Property Courts in Liverpool, which opened in February 2018, have also developed a range of new services for court users in recent months.

"An applications day is listed before me every Monday, just as, in the same way, an applications day is listed every Friday in Manchester," explained HHJ Cadwallader.

"Longer or more urgent applications will be fitted in at other times as necessary.

"Arrangements have been made for urgent out of hours applications to be heard by me, or in my absence, by other judges.

"A new team leader has also been appointed to the court office, to



**HHJ Cadwallader**

reflect the increasing importance of Business and Property Court work in Liverpool."

Continued HHJ Cadwallader: "In other initiatives, we have launched a Forum to increase contact between the judges and court users or potential court users. I am confident this Forum will grow and develop over the coming months."

Talking about the specific challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, HHJ Cadwallader said: "Our specialist District Judges have continued to conduct hearings with great efficiency both by telephone and online, as well as continuing to conduct hearings in person where appropriate and necessary.

"While remote hearings are certainly here to stay, as pandemic restrictions ease, I would expect the default position to revert to one in which hearings are held in person unless there is good reason otherwise. I certainly look forward to that time. However, the savings in time and costs in holding uncontentious or merely procedural hearings remotely strongly support the idea that such hearings are likely to continue to be held remotely unless there is good reason not to.

"Although remote hearings offer substantial savings in terms of costs and travel time, perhaps the most important thing which is lost, although the most intangible, is the felt sense of being really in the presence of the judge and of the other participants."

Looking to the future, HHJ Cadwallader concluded: "I am excited about the future of the Business and Property Courts in Liverpool.

"I invite legal practitioners and litigants to make confident use of the service which the Court can provide to resolve legal disputes, quickly, fairly, proportionately and correctly."





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# The Whiplash Reforms

## Glyn Thompson, Technical Lead for Motor Mainstream at Weightmans, outlines the Whiplash Reforms which come into force on 31st May 2021

The Ministry of Justice has finally published the suite of documents required to implement the long awaited Whiplash Reforms.

The reforms, which will now officially go live **for accidents on or after 31 May 2021**, are:

- Increase in the small claims track limit for most adult injury claims arising out of motor accidents so that the injury element must be worth over £5,000 to exceed that limit, up from £1,000
- Creation of the new Online Injury Claim (OIC) Portal through which small claim track value injury claims from adult vehicle occupants are to be processed with an accompanying Protocol
- New Practice Direction (27B) governing those OIC Portal claims that require Court adjudication
- Setting a tariff of compensation for whiplash injuries with a prognosis of less than two years

The other headline grabbing change is that all whiplash injury claims pursued by children and protected party, regardless of value, will be deemed Fast Track cases.

### The Tariff

The tariff for whiplash injuries – which the industry knew was coming - has been set slightly higher than the draft published some time ago and unexpectedly includes a table for ‘whiplash only’ and ‘whiplash plus minor psychological symptoms’ injuries as follows:

Duration of injury	Whiplash only	Whiplash plus minor psychological symptoms
Not more than 3 months	£240	£260
More than 3 months, but not more than 6 months	£495	£520
More than 6 months, but not more than 9 months	£840	£895
More than 9 months, but not more than 12 months	£1,320	£1,390
More than 12 months, but not more than 15 months	£2,040	£2,125
More than 15 months, but not more than 18 months	£3,005	£3,100
More than 18 months, but not more than 24 months	£4,215	£4,345

### Overview

The reforms retain the status quo as regards the recovery of litigation costs only for those injured claimants:

- considered vulnerable road users



Glyn Thompson

- incapable of conducting litigation themselves (children, protected parties, the deceased or bankrupts)
- pursuing defendants driving foreign registered vehicles

All remaining claimants - being ‘living adult vehicle occupants with full capacity who are not bankrupt’ - must have suffered an injury worth more than £5,000 (or have a claim with an overall value in excess of £10,000) to be processed via the RTA Protocol and allow costs recovery as now.

From May claims that value fall below that threshold will be small claims and be expected to be processed via the new OIC portal.

### The Process

Whilst there are some similarities to the existing RTA Portal, the OIC Portal is designed to resolve liability as well as quantum disputes.

The system allows for claims to come out of the OIC Portal process and go to court for any number of reasons – including liability determination hearings, quantum assessments, both, interim payment determinations and enforcement. It also looks to make indemnity issues a matter of little concern to the claimant.

## Costs and Conduct

No solicitors costs are recoverable for using the new OIC process. Indeed, there is almost no reference to costs penalties whatsoever but equally there is no cost benefit by not using it.

## The existing RTA Portal

Post May 2021, the existing RTA Portal will continue to process claims as it did before but for a reduced group of claims from:

- living adult non-vehicle occupants with full capacity who are not bankrupt with injury claims worth over £5,000
- children suffering either whiplash injuries of any value or non-whiplash worth in excess of £1,000

## Neither Portal

Equally, claims will continue to be processed outside of either Portal if:

- The claim legitimately started in either Portal but left that process due to a legitimate reason such as, for example, liability (existing RTA Portal only), fraud/fundamental dishonesty, complexity, value, causation or 'fall out'.

- It is a claim from or against a protected party
- It is a claim from a bankrupt or by the personal representative of a deceased
- It is a claim against a foreign registered vehicle
- The claim has an overall value estimated to exceed £25,000

Such claims are pursued in the traditional manner in accordance with the Personal Injury Pre-Action Protocol and the Practice Direction on Pre-Action Conduct

## Further Information

The Motor Insurers' Bureau (MIB), which designed and built the new OIC Portal, is working with the Ministry of Justice to inform the claims community about the new process and what the changes mean for Claimant and practitioners alike.

For further information, including to sign up for alerts and demonstrations, visit the MIB website.

## 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.

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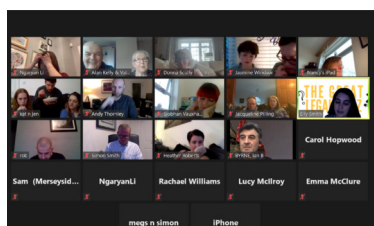


Vauxhall Community  
Law & Information  
Centre

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



Vauxhall Community Law & Information Centre recently hosted the Great Legal Quiz on behalf of the Access to Justice Foundation. Because of Covid restrictions the quiz was hosted online by Elly Smith from the Law Centre. The Quiz was a huge success and exceeded its target of £500 making it the most successful quiz nationally. Congratulations to the Team from Carpenters who won the Quiz. A big shout out to all who supported the Event and those who have donated, major thanks to Elly who showed infinite patience on the night performing the difficult task of hosting a quiz on ZOOM.



It's still not too late to donate, please go to [uk.virginmoneygiving.com/vlc2021](http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/vlc2021)

### Meet the funders

The Fourth in our series of meet the funders, giving background information on organisations who provide financial support to Vauxhall Community Law & Information Centre, enabling us to sustain and develop our services. The Community Justice Fund provided financial support for all Merseyside Law Centres and their support enabled our sustainability and enhanced our ability to continue service delivery during difficult times



### The Community Justice Fund

*Dealing with the impacts of COVID-19 is a defining moment in work to bring about a more just and fair society. A group of independent funders working in partnership with key representative umbrella bodies, have formed an alliance for social justice to create the Community Justice Fund. This fund will*

*support the key role that specialist social welfare legal advice agencies play in providing essential support to people and communities now and as we plan for life after the crisis.*

*The Community Justice Fund is a joint initiative between Advice UK, Law Centres Network and Citizens Advice and a group of independent funders (the AB Charitable Trust, Access to Justice Foundation, the Baring Foundation, the Clothworkers Foundation, the Dulverton Trust, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Indigo Trust, John Ellerman Foundation, The Legal Education Foundation, the London Legal Support Trust, and Therium Access). It is hosted by The Access to Justice Foundation.*

The support we received from the Community Justice Fund has been amazing for Vauxhall Community Law & Information Centre and we would like to convey our thanks to the many individuals and organisations who have made this Fund available to Law Centres, we appreciate it and your work. Thank you.

### Volunteering

The COVID pandemic has caused huge difficulties in us at Vauxhall Community Law & Information Centre continuing to deliver our services. Volunteers have been one of our key partners in the quest to provide improved services during these difficult times. We are always looking for volunteers without whom the Law Centre couldn't exist. If you or your organisation can help us, please contact us at [recruitment@vauxhalllawcentre.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@vauxhalllawcentre.org.uk) or you can call us on, on 0151 482 2540, we are a friendly bunch of people and all offers of help are much appreciated. Thank you

### Ready for Re-opening

Vauxhall Community Law & Information Centre staff are looking forward to re-opening the Law Centre in the not too distant future. We understand there are many clients' uncomfortable using new technology or phones to communicate, the Law Centre has a Covid safe environment The Law Centre premises have been refurbished and deep cleansed to enable a safe environment for our clients, volunteers and staff. We will be announcing our re-opening plans on Social Media in the near future. There has been a remarkable transformation and we would like to say thanks to the Community Justice Fund, Steve Morgan Foundation, Ian Byrne MP, The GMB and the many other organisations and individuals who have supported us to refurbish and make the Law Centre Safe.



Main Office



Interview Room



# News from Merseyside Law Centre

**Fighting for equality through social justice to combat poverty & homelessness**



## **ALL CHANGE AT MERSEYSIDE LAW CENTRE**

**A new financial year has brought about lots of changes at Merseyside Law Centre.**

**Law Society Diversity Access Scheme recipient becomes Director at Merseyside Law Centre.**

Janet Coe, who received the DAS Plus award of funding for a Legal Practice Certificate and a Law Centre Solicitor Training contract in 2016, will take up the Director post at the start of May.

The Law Societies Diversity Access Scheme (DAS) supports talented and tenacious aspiring solicitors from less advantaged backgrounds by providing funding, work experience and mentoring for successful applicants.

Further details can be found here <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/campaigns/diversity-access-scheme/>

Welcome to David Kenny who will join the MLC team as a caseworker with our very successful Our Liverpool project. David will work alongside the project coordinator, solicitor Tom Lavin. The project, funded by Liverpool City Council, delivers advice, assistance and legal representation ensuring vulnerable migrants, people seeking asylum and those with refugee status get access to justice. We are looking forward to the continued development and success of this vital work.

We also welcome Tracy Kofi as a caseworker in our busy welfare benefits team. We have seen a surge in online and telephone enquiries since the start of lockdown and are delighted to add this additional resource to the team.

Our sincere thanks to the Access to Justice Foundation Community Justice Fund for Supporting our work throughout the pandemic.

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

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

**Twitter:** @MerseyLawCentre

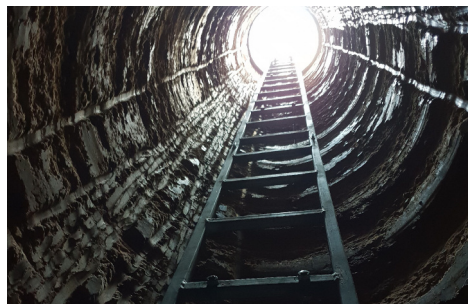
**Facebook:** Merseyside Law Centre

**Website:** [www.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk](http://www.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk)

**Tel:** 0151-709-0504



# Blow out: Catastrophic Mine Water Flooding hits Community



For many, Storm Christoph came and went with little incident in January, for some their houses were flooded by the nearby river in a fairly predictable manner like it had done in years past. But as Tim Champney, Managing Director of Future Climate Info reveals, for the residents of Skewen, near Neath in South Wales, the flooding came from underground, erupting out of manholes and forgotten shafts from the area's past coal mining heritage.

A dramatic video, widely shared on social media, showed water erupting from the drains and flowing down streets and through houses and gardens directly in its path. Residents were powerless to stop the water flowing through their houses and covering possessions in thick ochre slurry.

Some 100 residents were evacuated as water poured through gardens, roads and pavements affecting eight streets. Dozens spent the night in temporary accommodation and were told they would not return for some days while Neath Port Talbot Council (NPT) and The Coal Authority (CA) investigated the source of the flooding.

## Groundwater leads to "Blow Out"

The high volume of rainfall had worked down into the hillsides above Skewen, which are pockmarked with mine shafts. Initial reports from the CA showed that water had found its way into the abandoned mine workings and into a specific shaft that emerged directly at the water table, as it found a natural point of weakness to escape.

Carl Banton from the CA indicated that there could have been a blockage in the drainage system which could have caused the mine shaft to "blow out", building up pressure behind the shaft entrance before it released a high quantity of water in a short space of time. The ochre colour of the water provided the biggest clue that it contained iron ores from the mine workings. CA officers had visually checked and drilled down into the problem mine shaft and others in the area to check for voids and were "not concerned" any would collapse. At the same time, they investigated whether groundwater was working its way through other mine shafts with the risk that it could emerge again from another location.

## Hidden History

Skewen has had problems in the past thanks to a high concentration of more informal, shallow coal mine workings and drift mines, where the entry or access is above water level and generally on the slope of a hill, driven horizontally into the ore seam.

Back in 2009, the surface of Ormes Road fell

around half a metre, resulting in cars and delivery vans no longer being able to get to some of the houses. This was considered to be due to the proximity of the Cmw Du drift mine which was left abandoned well before the CA took on responsibility for it. There were also concerns for the impact on local water pipes, which must have been affected by the subsidence, even though at the time Welsh Water said they weren't.

The mine water flooding in January occurred in the area of Goshen Park not far from Ormes Road and because the mines date from the early 1800s there are no details of how the shaft in question here was originally filled or capped if at all.

CA Data used as part of the FCI CON29M report shows, with black hatching, the areas it classes as 'development high risk areas' because of past shallow mine coal workings.



Image courtesy of Wales Online

The FCI CON29M report for a property in Goshen Park clearly identifies the presence of former coal mine workings dating back to 1929. It also specifically highlights the presence of shallow workings at or near the property. Both of these necessitate the need to undertake a more detailed ground survey to reveal the extent of any shafts or workings in the vicinity from which a similar mine water incident or potential collapse could occur.



## Residents Face Months Away from Home

Neath Port Talbot (NPT) Council leader Rob Jones expressed concern about the possible impact of the Skewen floods on the mental and physical wellbeing of its victims. The threat that further heavy rainfall accumulating in the hillsides above the town, meant that residents could live in fear of another shaft blowing out at any time. The build up had been happening for many years and it is almost impossible to predict where the next shaft blockage could occur. Some of the residents of Sunnyland Crescent could face months of waiting before they can return home. The gas and electricity supplies will

also need to be extensively checked to ensure they are undamaged. The wider area has also been affected by remediation work, as the CA started an extensive programme. Firstly, they needed to make the area around the blow-out safe, by stabilising the ground and capping the mine shaft to modern standards.

Secondly, they needed to prevent a reoccurrence with the installation of a mine water management scheme, to drain the water from the mines around Skewen. This is in progress and could take up to 6 months.

NPT councillor Jones said that despite the CA's intervention, the Council has commissioned an inspection of all coal tips in the county borough, owned by both the council and private companies, in order to trace accountability for the event. They will also launch a council tax exemption scheme for all properties affected by the flooding.

## Covering Mining Risks for Client Peace of Mind

It is a common misconception that the Coal Authority data relates only to coal mining. In fact, the data includes thousands of non-coal mining records including minerals such as iron ores, ironstone, flagstone and aluminium. Contrary to popular belief, many of these may not be covered under the Coal Mining Subsidence Act 1991, should they be the cause of subsidence damage to a property.

The FCI CON29M report and the FCI Premium Plus CON29M report provide a unique AA-rated Triple-Tier insurance protection for homeowners, homebuyers or sellers. This includes a Non-Coal Minerals Search Insurance, available exclusively with FCI CON29M searches. The £50,000 cover offers protection for loss in market value and the cost of repairs to a property where subsidence damage has occurred in relation to non-coal mining features recorded in the Coal Authority data+.

Additional protection comes from FCI's market-leading Coal Search insurance, which includes £100,000 cover for loss-of-value caused by historic coal mining features which were not recorded in the Coal Authority data at the time of reporting but are later revealed in any subsequent CON29M search+.

The FCI CON29M report and FCI Premium Plus CON29M report searches also contain a Cheshire Brine screen with an integrated insurance policy, providing additional peace of mind for homeowners, homebuyers, or sellers.

Make sure your clients can secure financial peace of mind for future unknowns if they are looking to purchase a property in an area affected by past coal mining. As our climate changes, the twin threats from subsidence and mine water flooding seen in the Skewen area are becoming all the more real.

For more information, visit [www.futureclimateinfo.com/category/coal-mining/](http://www.futureclimateinfo.com/category/coal-mining/), call 01732 755180 or email [info@futureclimateinfo.com](mailto:info@futureclimateinfo.com)

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**Available to order now.**

(\*) Insurance subject to specific Terms and Conditions. (\*) A Mine Entry Interpretive Report is provided where a mine entry is identified.



## Key Benefits



**Official CON29M:** Licensed by the Law Society to include all 11 Official CON29M Coal Search questions.



**Inclusive Triple-Tier Insurance Protection\* from Great Lakes SE, a subsidiary of Munich RE:**

- Market-leading Coal Search Insurance
- Unique, Non-Coal Minerals Search Insurance
- Cheshire Brine Screen, with Integrated Insurance



**Mine Entry Interpretive Report (MEIR)\*:** A comprehensive assessment included as standard.



**Development Considerations:** Identifies if the property is within a Development High Risk Area, where redevelopment ambitions may require specialist advice.



**Accessible to All Stakeholders:** Answers are put into context with unique explanation, reducing the frequency of queries from homebuyer's looking for clarification.

For more information or to order, please speak to your reseller or contact us directly on:

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# Back to the Office, or not?

As the lockdown restrictions start to ease, we asked member firms about their plans for returning to the office

## carpenters group

**Sarah Pickerill**  
Head of People  
Carpenters Group

Agile working had been part of Carpenters agenda pre covid, however, Boris Johnsons' lockdown announcement in March 2020 rather accelerated our plans! Back then our business continuity plans kicked into action and in a very short space of time we had everyone working remotely where their role physically allowed them to do so. This was only possible through the incredible work of the IT team as remote working was not common place for us pre March 2020.

The initial excitement phase quickly died down as reality set in that homeworking, Teams and only meeting people on screen was likely to be a more long term arrangement than any of us envisaged. We undertook a survey of our employees in July 2020 to see how people were coping and what their views on home / office working and their wellbeing were. At that time there was overwhelming support for a more agile approach to the working week. We already offered flexitime and this was a benefit which continued to be utilised by many to work around caring and other responsibilities to ensure work was completed but there was a greater flexibility by ensuring other areas of peoples' lives could be more easily managed within the existing pressures of lockdown.

Whilst there has been numerous benefits to the 13 month working from home project and technologically it is possible; reduced commuting time, reduction in carbon footprint, better work life balance for many, ability to still undertake the same level of productivity, it is likely that a permanent working from home for all arrangement would be unsustainable as a business model for us. As the summer months turned into winter there were more people struggling with working within the same environment that they were living in. Some of the issues cited were loneliness, poor mental health, missing the comradery of their colleagues, missing the spontaneity of a brain storming session, supervision and learning from more experienced colleagues was more difficult and some felt they were losing identity with the culture of our lively, fast-paced business. We opened up several wellbeing desks for employees to book in the safety of a covid secure office to allow those people with mental health and domestic concerns to be able to book desks back in the office. Our wellbeing champions, all mental health first aid qualified, became far busier and it is clear that the prolonged working from home has not benefited everyone and it is vital that we find a balance which works for our people and our business. We are currently undertaking our second employee survey to

gain views about agile working, we very much want our people to be central to our decision making around what is right for them to inform our decisions about what's the right model for our business. We are a flagship employer with over 900 people and pride ourselves on listening to the views of our employees. Whilst we await the outcome of this latest survey it is clear that we need to adopt a hybrid approach to home and office working, we cannot be too rigid in our approach and we recognise that what is the right environment for some, will not be for others. As we continue to discuss our post covid approach we will be focusing on the outputs of the role rather than where a person physically sits to perform that role. The next phase in this post covid working environment will no doubt be as much of a learning curve as the last 12 months, we will embrace it, be flexible in our approach and seek to ensure we provide stability and assurance for our fantastic teams to continue to grow our successful business and support the people within in it.



**Gaynor Williams**  
Solicitors and Partner  
Bennett Williams

As a small firm, we were able to adapt throughout the covid pandemic, and change policies and plans at short notice. We updated our technology, including the flexibility to work from home, approximately a month before the first lockdown. At the time we did not envisage working from home so soon, however when the lockdown commenced in March 2020, everyone was able to work from home with little disruption. As the covid pandemic spread, working from home became the norm and the firm carried on 'business as usual'.

With the success of the vaccine programme, and now that the Government is encouraging businesses to prepare to return to their offices, we have taken steps to phase people into returning to the office. We have checked and followed the Government

guidelines and safety advice throughout the pandemic, and we have found the information on the Law Society website to be helpful. At present, we are alternating the days that people work from home and checking who needs and/or wants to be in the office on certain days, to limit contact. The consensus is that working from home has been a positive development, and that it should remain an option. Although supervision and training is easier face to face, we intend to split working from home and working in the office for the foreseeable future, and will see what the future brings.



**Alison Lobb**  
**Managing Partner**  
**Morecrofts Solicitors**

Since we were able to return to offices in summer 2020 we have offered our staff the choice to work remotely or to work in a Covid-safe environment in the offices, where their role permits. We have enabled them to choose the way of working which best suits them, their teams, and their clients, and this has been very successful. Of course, the ability to work mostly or entirely remotely depends upon the type of work undertaken, and the type of clients served, and can vary across our branch office network, as well as our discipline-led teams. Now, as we all move towards the next stage of opening up society, we are talking to our people about the ways they want to work in the future. As in many firms, some have loved working remotely and have enjoyed an improved work-life balance, others are keen to get back to full time office working as soon as possible, and most fall somewhere in between. We are holding focus groups, discussing with teams, and surveying all our staff, to work out the best way forward for them and our business. We anticipate we will be offering the opportunity for remote working for many of our staff, apart from those important few whose jobs require them to be office-based.

I am a firm believer that the future of our profession, certainly for a multi-service firm like Morecrofts, lies in aligning and balancing the use of both internal and client-facing technology with a personal approach which suits our clients, and I am constantly looking for technological solutions which meet those needs. We were exceptionally fortunate that we had already invested in a full upgrade of our systems, had a robust case management system, and had introduced a full Cloud based telephony solution, which enabled us to transform a completely office-based workforce to a remote one within days, and continue our service to our clients virtually seamlessly. I have been inspired by seeing our team adapt to the challenge, embracing new ways of working, exploring new ideas, and suggesting opportunities for innovation.

Lockdown has given us the impetus to accelerate projects which were in the pipeline but not yet implemented. We have successfully transitioned our entire team to work on a paper-lite basis, even those who hadn't previously adapted. We have streamlined our archiving process and introduced facilities such as e-bundling to make our workflows more efficient. We have enhanced our use of AML identification technology and client onboarding processes, and rolled out our secure print technology across all offices. We have invested in more and better hardware to enable our teams, and particularly our advocates, to work effectively and securely from their homes, and we have of course increased our focus on cyber security, including training and awareness, across the whole of our business. Looking forwards, we are positioning ourselves to adapt further, as we see to what extent court hearings continue to be virtual, and clients want to continue accessing our services remotely.



**astraea legal**



**Matt Reynolds**  
**Director**  
**Astraea Legal**

Astraea Legal was already an agile, digital business prior to the pandemic. We utilised IT to allow flexible working between our office, home, court, police stations and client's businesses. So when the first lockdown hit, albeit things quietened down for a while, it was effectively business as usual. However, when we acquired Linskills in October 2020, we faced the challenge of taking over a 40-year-old practice, still reliant on paper files and that didn't have the ability for fee earners to work remotely.

It was obvious that more lockdowns were imminent and although classed as essential workers, it was imperative that we protected both our staff, our clients and the business itself from the effects of Covid and mandatory self-isolation, while still providing an excellent level of service to our clients. To that end, we invested heavily in IT hardware for the new team and implemented training and new systems to allow all fee earning staff to work remotely. This allowed us to conduct a great deal of court advocacy, client conferences and representation at the police station via video conferencing. That also meant that those support staff who we required to be in the office could be adequately socially distanced within that space, while able to communicate seamlessly with the rest of the team.

**continued overleaf**



The use of cloud-based case management systems meant that we were able to repurpose secretarial staff to fee earning and administrative roles based from home, creating greater efficiencies. In the last 6 months we have taken on 19 new staff members, expanded into the areas of commercial and commercial property, moved offices and managed two external audits, all while increasing productivity. Furthermore, our staff tell us that they are much happier with the current working model, that is more family friendly and cuts out unnecessary commuting.

As the lockdown eases, I expect that this mixed model of working will continue to an extent. We are extremely fortunate to have an experienced, resilient and hard-working team who have responded rapidly and positively to change. The team have demonstrated that they can work to a very high standard and fully service our clients, whether working from home or in the office. I expect that subject to the needs of the business, flexible working and in some cases, full home working will continue.

I can only imagine that if this dreadful pandemic had not happened and we had had to put in place plans to go from a paper to digital practice, invest in the IT infrastructure, repurpose staff and make changes to the firm's culture, systems and working practices, it would have been maybe a year or two to get to the position that we have done within a relatively short space of time in the face of Covid. We have managed to grow our team, streamline our practices and provide what appears to be a very happy, healthy, work life balance for our team – which for Astraea Legal has to be a Covid success story.



**Ruth Allanson**  
Solicitor  
Berkson Family Law  
Solicitors

Following on from Charles Peter's article in last month's edition, we are now planning and looking forward to a return to the office. All staff have been remote working since the original lockdown last March, with staff only using the office when required and for very limited purposes. As lockdown restrictions ease and with the roadmap ahead aiming for all restrictions to be lifted by the 21st June, we have taken that as our cue to plan a return to the office.

Initially and whilst the new normal slowly emerges, we will have a hybrid of home and office-based working. Each day there will be at least one supervisor, solicitor, trainee, clerk and admin support in the office. The plan from there is yet to be worked out and will be very much dependent on the direction of the pandemic, future government restrictions and extent of the use of

technology within the Court arena. Safe working is still paramount and whilst restrictions lift, the move back into the office is a cautious one. On a positive note, remote working has allowed flexibility for staff, particularly for those with children, and has been a positive change. It is, therefore, envisaged that to some extent, the format of flexible working and combination of home and office-based working is here to stay.

This new hybrid, of course, would not be possible without the wholesale shift in the firm's use of technology. As Charles referred to in last month's article, pre-pandemic we were paper-based and had a server in the office. The firm has improved and invested in cloud-based systems. Previously dialling in to work remotely caused no end of issues but that is no longer a problem and the remote platforms have meant that remote working is a choice open to the firm for the future, without compromise on efficiency. For now, the Court continues to list remote hearings and it isn't clear what lies ahead in that regard. We will cross that bridge as we come to it. As for client meetings, we now have the tools and resources that we had never previously considered to enable clients to instruct us entirely remotely if they wish.



means something better.



**Emma Carey**  
Managing Partner  
MSB Solicitors

When lockdown initially hit in March 2020, some of our teams were prepared for working from home, whilst for others this seemed like a mammoth task. I was delighted at the way in which each and every member of the MSB overcame any initial difficulties and we were very much working at full speed and productively at home from the end of March. We had already massively invested in technology and since 2014 I had been driving forward paperless working, so we were in a good position to make the transition.

While investing in technology is important, it isn't enough. You also need to invest in the people to support that infrastructure. In 2019 we employed an in-house Proclaim developer to join our IT team and during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have doubled our IT support team. Further to this, joining us this year is an IT trainer who will be responsible for training all of our staff on the technology we have invested in. We have also invested in a new IT system which will be rolled out and updated over the next five years. This is something that we are extremely excited about as it will enable our teams to work more efficiently and profitably.

Alongside this, it's incredibly important that our team members

are given the tools to progress in their careers and lifelong learning is something that I have always been committed to. Our new Learning and Development Executive is looking at producing training programmes for all of our staff from the Reception team right the way through to Managing Partner. We intend to upskill our teams over the next 18 months by investing further in training and education, ensuring we are all equipped with the skills and knowledge we need to do our jobs to the best possible standard.

We are determined to take the very best from the past 12 months and introduce it into our working regime. That doesn't necessarily mean remaining to work from home after lockdown. Working from home in certain circumstances can be beneficial, but we cannot ignore the huge benefits of co-working spaces, being around people and supporting each other. This is certainly vital for the training of the next generation of lawyers. We intend to spend the last six months of this year bringing together our teams, integrating our people back into the office environment and working together as teams so that we can, as a firm, move forward as one.

In addition, training events will play a vital part, but we also intend to up our game with regards to corporate social responsibility and encouraging our teams to give back to our communities. Supporting causes that matter to us has always been at the heart of what we do at MSB, and this will only continue in the future. We will of course enjoy a few social events when we're able to, as well!

The key focus of our agenda moving forward is the upskilling of our teams. Technology forms a part of that but I believe training is key.

## Brabners



**Nik White**  
Managing Partner  
Brabners

While we've facilitated some limited office-based working to support colleagues where it has been needed, our plans to welcome teams back will rightly be shaped by government guidance. Even prior to Covid-19, our preference has always been to trust our teams to find a balance that's right for them and their clients. Given the pandemic has clearly had an impact on how and where people want to work, we're keen to encourage colleagues to adopt agile working in a manner that works for them and the people they collaborate with. The technology we've put in place will only improve that balance and will act to facilitate and support whatever agile working methods colleagues wish to embrace.

We are reflecting this approach in our upcoming office moves planned in both Manchester and Preston as well. The moves,

which represent the latest major investment in the firm's future, will help us create a more collaborative office environment, enabling us to embrace agile working more effectively when it is safe to do so. We hope that by taking this opportunity to re-define the purpose of our offices and adjust to the modern way of working, we can continue to inspire and provide our employees with the tools they need to forge successful careers.



**Esther Leach**  
Managing Director  
Jackson Lees Group

Like most businesses, the pandemic has profoundly affected the way we operate. However, a positive, among many, many challenges, is that it has allowed us to accelerate our plans to shape our ways of working for the future.

Our people have continued to adapt to an ever-evolving situation and their efforts have shown that we can make a positive difference to our clients, no matter where we are. Where technology has changed and new systems have been implemented, our people have adopted these and leaned into highly Covid-secure ways of working! We've had a year of tech and law working hand-in-hand, allowing us to build environments that allow our lawyers and solicitors to do what they do best.

Whether our people have taken to home-working like a duck to water, missed being in a thriving office, or felt themselves somewhere in between, our agile working approach is built around the innate variety of our people. With this in mind, we've developed our Walker House and Hoylake workplaces into hubs, designed to allow integrated teams to better balance remote and office working. Our continued presence in the Heswall and Hoylake communities has been essential, particularly in a time of uncertainty. Our aim is to counter the ongoing uncertainty in the outside world, by framing our business locations as bastions of support & service. Places that our clients can rely on and that are filled with people that support not just clients but each other. The emphasis on culture and flexibility has driven this change, with the aim of making a positive difference setting the direction of travel at all times. Something that's really important to us is that we don't treat our people as one entity: we have all kinds of different and wonderful people working in our teams, with different experiences and emotions! Where some people are chomping at the bit to get back into the office, others are feeling nervous about getting back on that train for the first time.

We're doing a number of things to help this, from opening up the office on Saturday to allow people to ease their way back into a once-familiar setting through to making videos to show what our newly-refitted office looks like, all to empower and support our people to make choices that make a positive difference to them,

**continued overleaf**



with everyone pulling together to make our offices Covid-safe hubs of activity. Whether our lawyers and solicitors are supporting clients from the office, from home, or a blend of the two, our agile working means that we are making a positive difference across the board.

Across Jackson Lees Group, we are excited to see what the future holds as the world settles down to its new normal. I'm especially looking forward to welcoming our teams into to their new work-homes to continue the incredible work they do in making a positive difference to clients across Liverpool, Manchester, the North West and further afield.

## HILL DICKINSON



**Carolyn Morgan**  
Director of HR  
Hill Dickinson

***"The Hill Dickinson working model was already very flexible but we're embracing this new way of working with open arms"***

I like to think we have always understood the importance of creating a working environment that works for both our people and the firm. Indeed many of our people were already benefiting from our flexible and agile working practices long before the pandemic hit, whether that meant working from home a few days a week, changing their working hours or making sure they were home in time for the school run.

### **We want our people to have a working pattern that suits their life**

Our view is that, as long as the needs of the firm and our clients are met, we'll continue to encourage our people to choose the working pattern that suits them. And I'm delighted that our efforts in this regard were recognised nationally in 2020 when Hill Dickinson won the 'Best for Flexible Working' award run by Working Families, the UK's work-life balance charity.

The fact that we already had comprehensive flexible working policies in place pre-pandemic meant that the enforced transition to home working was actually very smooth. We were also fortunate that we had been making sustained investment over a number of years in supporting IT infrastructure so we could work flexibly, whether from home or on the move.

### **Access to great technology and support was key**

Working from home full-time was still a major adjustment, of

course. All of our people received a financial contribution towards additional home-working equipment as well as a top-of-the-range headset. We also accelerated our planned rollout of Microsoft Teams to support communication. Teams has played a major part in both work and social interaction across our firm, ensuring that home working hasn't hampered team collaboration. By necessity, our events programme moved online, which opened our eyes as to just how successful that medium could be. We've reached more people in more countries and had access to a far wider range of speakers in the past 12 months than ever before and our future events model will be a hybrid of online and in person, when face-to-face activity eventually resumes.

### **We made good mental health our No 1 priority**

Our absolute priority in all this was our employees' mental health, a focus that has served us well. We ran lots of sessions to support our people through lockdown, including yoga, social activities, a winter wellbeing webinar with psychologist Dr Judith Mohring and a session on mental health resilience with members of the GB Taekwondo team.

For many people working from home can be very isolating so we wanted to make sure that our people still felt a part of the firm. We encouraged regular communication with teams and colleagues and used our internal weekly communications to update our people. As well as regular video updates from our CEO Peter Jackson on lockdown updates, changes to office working and what our future plans looked like in line with government guidance. This approach proved extremely valuable and was important in making our employees feel involved and informed.

### **Going back to the office - a change for the better**

So how will we transition back?

As far back as 2018 we were already working towards a reduction in overall office space and a rebalancing in favour of collaborative working. Like many other firms, the pandemic accelerated that process and space in our offices will now progressively reflect our increasingly flexible working model; a change our people have very much welcomed.

Colleagues will likely be in the office two to three days a week and the flexible working environment will allow them to choose days that suit their working pattern and the needs of the business. Designated 'neighbourhoods' for different teams will nevertheless ensure that team working remains collaborative and productive. Perhaps the most important decision we made early on was to give all of our people a say in what was happening. We consulted with everyone on our response to covid, we conduct regular employee surveys and have set up internal working groups where useful, ensuring that all decisions were communicated across the firm.

Our surveys show that, once office working returns, most of our people would prefer to split office working with two-three days working from home; a pattern we're happy to accommodate. Certainly this past year has made us all more appreciative of the benefits of a healthy work-life balance, and as a firm we wholly support that. Having a happy and motivated workforce has also benefited our business, so it's win-win. I can honestly say that we're embracing this new way of working with open arms.

## Liverpool Chamber Affiliate Membership



### How your membership will help you stay #WellConnected

Affiliate membership of **Liverpool Chamber** through **Liverpool Law Society** offers a suite of services to boost profile, gain valuable insights and enjoy reduced price attendance to a range of key events.

To request an **affiliate membership application form**, please email [contactus@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk](mailto:contactus@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk)

**Upgrade to full membership from just £295+VAT per year to access a wide range of benefits**

**For details on upgrading, and other plans available please contact the membership team via [jordan.rhoda@liverpoolchamber.org.uk](mailto:jordan.rhoda@liverpoolchamber.org.uk)**

#### Affiliate membership includes:

- 1** Company logo and profile listed on the Chamber website
- 2** Member discounts on attending selected Chamber events
- 3** Invitation to Chamber and LLS affiliated events
- 4** View latest member news and events
- 5** Digital membership certificate
- 6** Use of the Chamber logo on your business promotional material

**Liverpool Chamber.**



# Hobson's the choice for Morecrofts amid a raft of senior promotions

Morecrofts Solicitors has recruited highly-experienced employment lawyer Sarah Hobson as an associate and has also made several senior promotions and hires at its offices across the Liverpool city region.

Hobson arrives following a 13-year spell at Weightmans, where she worked extensively with in-house legal and HR departments. She is also an experienced advocate and has appeared at tribunals on behalf of clients across the UK.

Her role within Morecrofts' Employment and HR team will see her deal with a range of contentious and non-contentious matters, including settlement agreements, on behalf of employers and employees.

Among those earning promotion are Eleanor Cockrell, Kim Okell and Rhea Munro, who have each become senior associate solicitors. Michael Gossage and Simon Higgs have also been promoted to associate solicitors at the firm.

Secretary Tracey Winter has been promoted to the role of paralegal, while costs draftsperson Aimee Roberts has become team manager of the firm's Fee Unit. Meanwhile, two new paralegals, Ella Jackson and Kerry Bennion, have also been added to Morecrofts' award-winning family law team.

Speaking of her appointment, Hobson said: "As a lawyer working in and around the city for many years, I have been impressed to watch the continued expansion of Morecrofts' client services around employment and HR issues. This feels like a natural new home for me to further develop my career and broaden my experience of supporting clients in a range of complex and sensitive issues.

"I know clients enjoy the peace of mind that comes from having someone who can guide them throughout their case, including the advocacy stage, all the way to completion. I enjoy building those crucial bonds of trust with clients and I look forward to forging many new relationships at Morecrofts."

Alison Lobb, managing partner at Morecrofts Solicitors, said: "Our Employment and HR team continues to grow apace and Sarah is an excellent, high-calibre addition to our firm. She brings a depth of distinguished experience, not only in legal services but also in advocacy, and her skill set will be an invaluable asset to our clients in future years.

"Across the firm, we are constantly looking for ways to develop our service to clients and reward the efforts of our staff and this is reflected in the high number of promotions and new recruits in various teams.

"Those who have been promoted share 60 years' combined experience at Morecrofts. That's an incredible figure, almost unheard of at many law firms, which I believe is testament to the trust, investment and pathway we give to our younger lawyers from the outset and makes them choose to stay and build their careers with us."



**Sarah Hobson**



**Kim Okell, Eleanor Cockrell, Simon Higgs, Rhea Munro, Aimee Roberts, Tracey Winter and Michael Gossage**

## Record trainee retention at Brabners

Leading independent law firm Brabners has reaffirmed its commitment to developing young talent by retaining 11 newly qualified solicitors from its latest cohort of trainees.

The intake represents the largest number of freshly qualified solicitors that Brabners has taken on in a single year. The cohort also includes a record number who have come through Brabners' sponsored programme having previously been paralegals within the North West firm.

The news comes as Nik White, himself a former trainee solicitor at Brabners, has been re-elected, unopposed, as managing partner for a second three-year term. Nik, who last year celebrated 25 years with the firm, was appointed managing partner in May 2018 alongside chief executive Robert White.

Since then, under this senior leadership team, the firm has delivered a sustained period of growth despite the economic impact of Covid-19 and continues to attract a growing list of high-profile clients. It has also been named a Sunday Times Top 100 Places to Work firm.

Nik White, managing partner at Brabners, said: "Committing to retain such a high proportion of our trainee solicitors, so far in advance of their qualification later this year, demonstrates our confidence and willingness to invest for the future. We're delighted that this group have decided to stay at Brabners and we look forward to helping them to develop their talents further and supporting the progression of their careers."

"The last three years have been about developing a strong platform and bringing fresh energy, ideas, direction and momentum to the business. It's now time for us to be bold and ambitious as we look forward to building on the progress we have made since 2018. We're emerging from the pandemic strongly and are confident about the future as we continue to attract and retain the best talent within the region and from further afield."



**Nik White**

## Jackson Lees appoints new civil litigation lawyer

North West law firm Jackson Lees has announced the appointment of a new civil litigation solicitor to specialise in contentious probate issues.

Danielle Blaylock has joined the firm to build a team that will act for clients who are challenging or disputing wills.

With more than 13 years' legal experience, Danielle has spent her career focusing on civil litigation, having initially started her journey in personal injury and spending the last 11 years working within civil and commercial litigation, equipping her with the skills necessary to specialise in this niche area.

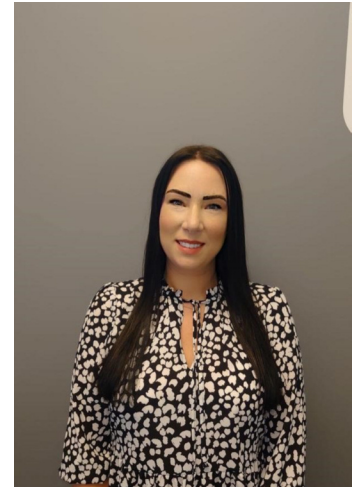
Now, she will help to bridge the gap between the Civil Litigation and Wills, Trusts and Probate departments at Jackson Lees.

Danielle, who is based at the company's Liverpool office in Walker House, said: "I'll be building a team of experts to support me in helping clients challenge wills for the best outcomes for all parties, working closely with the Wills department."

Danielle added: "I'm absolutely thrilled to be on board with the Jackson Lees team – it was clear that it's a firm committed to building the profile of individuals as well as the wider brand, so this really stood out to me."

"The idea of the Jackson Lees Foundation – set up to support disadvantaged groups within the community get access to justice – greatly appealed to me too, so I'm looking forward to getting stuck in and seeing how I can support the initiative."

Jackson Lees is committed to offering an accessible and friendly service for clients that



**Danielle Blaylock**

helps them to know where they stand in relation to legal services without unnecessary formality or confusing legal jargon.

Esther Leach, Managing Director at Jackson Lees Group, said: "We're delighted to welcome Danielle to the team and we're confident she will be a true asset to the firm. She brings with her an abundance of experience and industry know-how, making her the perfect fit to build a strong team within the Civil Litigation department."

"It's clear that, not only does Danielle have the skills and knowledge to do the job at hand but, importantly, she is already embedded in our core ethos of Making a Positive Difference. "We're looking forward to seeing her thrive in her new role and achieve the best possible outcomes for her clients."



## MSB Solicitors and Camp & Furnace make nightlife accessible

As we come out of lockdown, many people will be excited about the prospect of a night out with friends in the near future, whether it's going to the pub, a bar or to a club. However, for those with a disability, it isn't always something that can be enjoyed so easily, and the prospect of a night out can cause worry and anxiety.

In many cases, nightlife is not accessible for those with disabilities. This may be because of a lack of physical access, such as ramps and disabled toilets, or bouncers and bar staff not being trained to recognise, show respect for and speak appropriately to people who may need additional support. Sometimes, staff members even see disabled people as a problem.

Sarah Sharples, Paralegal at MSB, decided to take matters into her own hands. She wanted to make a change. Along with a friend, Sarah contacted Liverpool Labour Councillor Pam Thomas, Cabinet Member for Inclusive and Accessible City.

Together with Pam, in early 2020, Sarah met with the team at Baltic Triangle-based venue, Camp & Furnace, to discuss a way forward and talk about how they could support people with disabilities. Sarah's aim was to ensure that those with disabilities, including hidden disabilities, have the best possible time on a night out. At that time, Camp & Furnace did not have a policy for dealing with disabilities or for accessibility.

Recognising that by introducing a policy and working to make the venue more accessible they could not only increase inclusivity, but widen their audience and customer-base, Camp & Furnace has now created a comprehensive policy for staff and has significantly improved its accessibility.

Stuart Moore, Licensing and Compliance Manager at Camp and Furnace, said: "Camp and Furnace is a responsible operator in the night-time economy of Liverpool. We were made aware of the fact that our processes for dealing with the requirements of people with disabilities were not as good as they should have been. We engaged with Liverpool City Council and a company called "Attitude is everything" who specialise and support companies in

such matters and help them to reach and maintain an acceptable standard of compliance with regards to people with both visible and hidden disabilities. I am pleased to say that we are making great progress with this and we look forward to rolling out our new policies in the near future."

Sarah Sharples, said: "I'm a firm believer in equality and inclusion as well as standing up for what you believe in. I feel strongly that those with disabilities shouldn't be made to feel excluded, upset or treated any differently. Socialising should be an enjoyable experience for everyone, whatever their circumstances.

"By making venues so inaccessible, a whole group of people is being excluded. I'm incredibly proud to have played a part in improving accessibility. I hope that venues, not just in Liverpool, but across the country reconsider their policies and follow Camp & Furnace's leading example."

Councillor Pam Thomas, added: "It is pleasing that Camp and Furnace have taken this action. Disabled people face discrimination in most areas of life, because we are not taken into account, are overlooked and excluded by systems and practices. So, when we do turn up it can come as quite a surprise to those who do not expect us to be there. They may not know what to do to make sure we are welcome along with our friends and family.

"For many disabled people this creates such a hostile environment that we do not even want to go to places anymore. By taking part in training that identifies and remedies disabling barriers in systems and practices the Camp and Furnace are showing that they welcome disabled customers, our families and friends, they have set an example that others in this and other sectors ought to follow."

Emma Carey, Managing Partner at MSB, said: "At MSB, we're passionate about ensuring everyone is given a platform to be able to stand up for what they believe in. It's inspiring to see our junior team members championing justice to make a difference in our communities."

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## Excello Law launches national residential development team to support housebuilders, developers and landowners

Excello Law has launched a new national residential development team of over 20 lawyers providing services to housebuilders, private and public sector developers and private landowners on land acquisition, development and disposal, environmental and planning advice.

The move follows a number of high-profile hires across the country of senior lawyers with expertise in transaction structures, acquisition of strategic land options, planning permissions and appeals, contract drafting and negotiation, managing conservation and environmental issues, and property dispute resolution and litigation.

The team also has expertise of working with registered providers of social housing and charities including Community Land Trusts providing bespoke housing in rural areas.

Regional director and real estate lawyer Richard Osborn

commented, "We have brought our collective experience together under the umbrella of our new residential development group, providing services to clients nationally from a team of over 20 specialist lawyers. Our business model means that clients have the benefit of working with senior lawyers able to operate with a freedom and flexibility that traditional firms just cannot offer."

Nigel Turner, co-ordinator of the new team and formerly company solicitor with Redrow Homes (South East) Ltd, who joined Excello last year, said: "We are already working with national and regional housebuilders, developers and landowners. Our national approach and lawyers' wide range of skill sets make a highly effective team, while remaining friendly and approachable. We would be pleased to speak to prospective clients and contacts to explain what marks us out from so many of our competitors."

## Building regulations & planning permission for conveyancers with Richard Snape

Thursday 17th June, 1pm - 4.45pm

Building regulations continues to be a major area in relation to conveyancing and planning permission has changed significantly in the recent years.  
The course aims to look at the changes.

Topics covered include:-

- Building regulations enforcement periods
- The Lenders Handbook
- Specific current areas of interest in relation to building regulations
- Gas safe regulations changes
- Planning enforcement periods
- Changes to permitted development
- Community infrastructure levy; the latest

& more...

Competencies: B

Kindly sponsored by:



[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)

## Working with the SRA Accounts Rules 2019 with Linda Lambert

Tuesday 22nd June, 2pm - 4pm

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

**Internal controls, the COFA both the role & report, and a comprehensive Accounts Manual for procedures, are all a part of ensuring proper compliance. These are even more important since the 2019 Rules are now in place.**

Topics to be covered will include:

- Holding of Client monies including Third Party Money Accounts
- Recording & Usage of Client Monies
- Billing and disbursements
- Interest on Client funds
- COFA role including Bank Reconciliations
- Accountant's Report



[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)

## The CPIA and Disclosure – Recent Developments with Clive Smith

Thursday 24th June, 1.30pm - 4.30pm

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

**This course is aimed at anyone wanting to update their knowledge generally on disclosure, and for those who would like to get a better understanding of the law relating specifically to sexual offences.**

What this course will cover:

- Brief refresher on CPIA duties
- Defence disclosure requirements – can inferences be drawn under s. 11?
- Disclosure of digital evidence generally
- Disclosure in sexual offences
- What is a reasonable line of enquiry in a sexual offence case?
- What if the complainant doesn't want to disclose evidence – is that the end of the case?

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)

## Drugs Offences, Evidence & Sentencing

Thursday 27th May, 1.30pm-4.30pm

With the Sentencing Council having recently published new sentencing guidelines in relation to drugs, this presents the perfect opportunity to update your knowledge around drugs sentencing. Before getting to sentence however, the issue of evidence in drugs cases will be covered.

Clive Smith will cover:

- Drugs offences – what is the law around psychoactive substances?
- Admissibility of phone evidence – guidance from the Court of Appeal
- Possession – what constitutes possession and what "knowledge" is required?
- Joint possession – multiple defendants in a car: who is in "possession"?
- Aggravation of supply offences – drug dealing around schools
- New sentencing guidelines – "spice", synthetic opioids and the issue of "harm" under the new guidelines

[Click here](#) for more information and to book



# Bell Lamb & Joynson Solicitors appoints fellow Liverpool business MHA Moore & Smalley Chartered Accountants

Bell Lamb & Joynson Solicitors has announced a new partnership with leading independent accountancy practice MHA Moore & Smalley who will act as the firm's official accountant.

The legal firm, which is celebrating its 200th year in business in 2021, has joined forces with the accounting, business advisory and wealth management provider as part of ongoing company growth.

The relationship will see the two Liverpool based businesses working together in a bid to support the city's growing corporate scene.

Mike Leeman, Managing Partner of Bell Lamb & Joynson Solicitors said: "We're very excited to have partnered with MHA Moore & Smalley, who are offering a range of services that will help us in our ongoing company development. It was important to us to work with an accountancy firm that align with our way of thinking, with innovation at the forefront. We are strong believers in working outside of the box and often work outside of our remit to ensure the best client experience possible, and we felt that the team at MHA Moore & Smalley share that view.

"We're looking for more forward-thinking firms to partner with and MHA Moore & Smalley certainly fit the bill, as well as having the added benefit of being local. Liverpool is continuing to dominate the North West and our business community is continuing to excel despite the obvious challenges as a result of the pandemic. Since MHA Moore & Smalley have a Liverpool office as part of their regional network, they really did tick all of the boxes for us and we are feeling very positive about working with them going forward, particularly as we continue to grow and develop."

MHA Moore & Smalley Chartered Accountants recently expanded



**Karen Hain and Mike Leeman**

their North West presence and opened a Liverpool office in the city's commercial district in 2018.

Karen Hain, Partner at MHA Moore & Smalley Chartered Accountants said: "After being aware of Bell Lamb & Joynson for quite some time, it is great to announce our working partnership with them, supporting their accountancy and business advisory needs at a time of unprecedented growth for the firm. As a Liverpool based business ourselves, it's always good to add to our increasing portfolio with fellow local businesses, in addition to the global clients we look after as part of Baker Tilly International."



### **The Complete Legal Aid Supervisor**

Friday 21st & Monday 24th May, both 2pm - 4.45pm

This course covers everything supervisors need to know & include case study examples. Attending this course will qualify a new supervisor who hasn't supervised before under Standard Contract Specification requirements for both the Civil/Family Standard Contract 2018, Crime Standard Contract 2017 & Specialist Quality Mark requirement D3.2.

It is also a useful refresher for experienced supervisors.

Vicky Ling will cover:

- Latest developments in legal aid – including COVID-19 related amendments
- Relevant SQM and Lexcel provisions
- SRA Competence Statement requirements for supervision
- How supervisors qualify and maintain status
- The main types of legal aid audit, including Contract Manager visits and peer review
- The LAA's timetable for resuming audit and contract management activity
- Characteristics of good supervision
- What supervisors need to look for in file reviews

& much more

[Click here](#) for more information



### **\*NEW\* RTA Claims in 2021: The New Landscape for Low Value Claims with Jeff Zidani**

Wednesday 19th May, 1.30pm - 4.30pm

*Can't make the date/time? No problem, booking onto this event means you will receive a link to access a recording of the event at your leisure! (as with all online events).*

Covering:

- New Whiplash regulations, CPR and Practice Direction changes and New Protocols for SCT Cases
- Civil Liability Act 2018
- The New Tariff Figures
- Mitigation?
- Key Exceptions: From Kids to Vulnerable Road Users
- Medco: How this Will Work in Practice
- Small Claims Limit for RTA claims and How this Will Work
- New Court Procedure
- Making this Work Profitable: New Retainer Models
- Further Reforms

[Click here](#) for more information

## 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



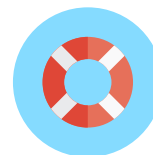
#### Give Back

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

## HELPLINE SUPPORT **0800 279 6888**

365 days a year

9am – 7.30pm weekdays, 10am – 4pm weekends and Bank Holidays

You can find useful information and resources on our website,  
as well as download our factsheets [www.lawcare.org.uk](http://www.lawcare.org.uk)



# Council Member's Report

## Council Member Nina Ferris



At last we seem to be turning a corner, and the warmer weather has brought renewed hope for many inside and away from Chancery Lane that life can start to return to some kind of normality.

Law Society Council continues to meet virtually for shorter meetings every month or so, although we now have our first hybrid meeting scheduled in July with some people finally being allowed back into Law Society HQ subject to easing of Covid restrictions. Hybrid meetings will, in my view, be a welcome development for TLS engagement. Less reliance on members being available to travel to London means those from the regions who have valuable contributions to make can be included more easily. I hope that the hybrid model will remain into the future to encourage more regional members to participate either on the revamped Council as a work type member or to participate in other practice area committees, developing policy and working to support the solicitors profession.

### SIF closure

TLS has warned that solicitors should prepare to protect themselves against future claims ahead of the closure of the Solicitors Indemnity Fund (SIF) on 30 September 2021 – a move that could leave former owners of law firms that shut in the past two decades liable for losses for any new claims.

SIF has provided supplementary run-off cover for firms that have closed, ensuring ongoing protection for clients, partners and staff once their mandatory six year run-off period has come to an end. SIF was originally due to close to new claims from 30 September 2020, but the Law Society successfully lobbied the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) to delay for a year. There are now less than six months until the new closure date.

As things currently stand, after the closure of SIF, if a firm ceased trading without a successor practice and its run-off cover has expired, and the former principals haven't made alternative arrangements, then any new claims will be uninsured. There is a significant risk of claims arising more than six years after firms cease operations, with data suggesting over 10% of claims are made outside the SRA's mandatory run-off period. In areas such

as conveyancing, wills and trusts, child personal injury settlements or matrimonial property, claims can occur decades after work was completed.

TLS current advice is that firms that closed without successor practices after 31 August 2000 should consider their exposure and – if warranted – investigate the possibility of alternative cover. It is appreciated that this may be difficult in the current market. TLS is making every effort to find a workable alternative. However, the problems are serious, complicated, and difficult to overcome, especially because – as the representative body for the solicitor profession – we have no powers with regard to matters of indemnification.

Members can sign up or log in to My LS and add the 'Solicitors Indemnity Fund' topic to keep informed on developments. Select 'Manage topics' and search for 'Solicitors Indemnity Fund'.

### Regulation and consumer information

The Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) 2020 progress review, recommended improving the transparency of information on service quality for consumers. The oversight regulator is considering the possible measures to make it easier for consumers to obtain quality indicator information.

TLS has said that it is in the public interest for regulators to set standards, rather than leave it to consumers to work out the quality of a solicitor or law firm in its response to the Legal Services Board's (LSB) Quality Indicators discussion paper. TLS president I. Stephanie Boyce said: "High professional standards, honesty, integrity and high-quality legal advice lie at the core of our profession. Solicitors strive to meet the highest standards of service, which explains the high level of client satisfaction compared to other professions. Our research has found that 90% of people are pleased with the service they received from solicitors. TLS helps to drive up standards in the profession and demonstrate quality to consumers through the accreditations we offer to legal practices and individual solicitors.

Regulators should exercise their powers to ensure that consumers can have confidence in the quality of legal services

that a regulated provider is likely to provide, rather than leave it for consumers to gauge ways to assess quality standards as best as they can. The regulatory system and minimum entry standards should also provide assurances around the quality of legal advice. It must also improve awareness of these among consumers, and it should be a crucial part of developing the overall strategy on quality indicators.”

There is already a range of mandatory and self-regulatory quality marks in the legal sector, including the Law Society’s accreditations, and the LSB should examine how to enhance the level of consumer engagement with existing quality schemes, before considering any new measures.

## Covid

TLS has continued to support members through the resources available on member safety and ways of working. Materials for the reset, resilience, recovery campaign remain available on the website.

## Climate Change Working Group

TLS green credentials are being improved via the working group, whose work includes promoting improvements in law relating to climate change and sustainability, supporting solicitors practising law in those areas, developing guidance for the profession in understanding developments in those laws and improving their direct impact on the environment.

## Criminal Legal Aid reform

Criminal Legal Aid focus groups have been taking place throughout April to gather evidence on several topics including the impact of Covid on working practices and processes, barriers for women working in criminal legal aid and BAME practitioners working in criminal legal aid. Evidence will be used to input into the independent review being carried out by Sir Christopher Bellamy QC during this year.

## SQE

Only 5 months to go until training changes come into effect and the SQE replaces the LPC and the Qualified Lawyers Transfer test. Resources on the SQE, what it will cover and the transitional can be found [here](#).

## Long Service Certificates

In recognition of practitioners who have served the profession for over 50 years and to mark these significant milestones, TLS offers certificates on request for members celebrating 50, 60 or 70 years on the Roll of Solicitors. To request your 50, 60 or 70 year certificate, email [president@lawsociety.org.uk](mailto:president@lawsociety.org.uk) including your full name, year of admission, email and telephone number. There is no cost for this service.

As always if you have any queries or matters that you consider TLS should be focussing on please contact either myself or Sarah Lapsley.

**Nina Ferris**  
Council Member

## Insolvency Update

On Friday 14th May, 12.30pm - 1.30pm

With Chris Beanland

In this course we will review important developments in insolvency law over the last few months. As ever, emphasis will be placed on matters which have an impact on day to day practice.

### Chris will cover:

- Dangers of proceeding with misfeasance claim against non-active director: Re IT Protect Ltd (in liquidation) [2020] EWHC 2473
- Challenging appointment of administrator as being for an improper purpose: Re Hat & Mitre plc (in administration) [2020] EWHC 2649
- Interaction between Insolvency Rules 2016 and CPR: Wolf Rock (Cornwall) Ltd v Langhelle [2020] EWHC 2500
- The rule in Exp James and its application to officeholders: Lehman Brothers Australia Ltd (in liquidation) v Macnamara [2020] EWCA Civ 321
- Bankruptcy restriction orders: Official Receiver v Baxendale-Walker [2020] EWHC 195
- Secured creditors presenting bankruptcy petitions: State Bank of India v Mallya [2020] EWHC 96

[Click here for more information](#)

## Residential Conveyancing: Completion Day Nightmares

Tuesday 18th May, 2pm - 4pm

This is an intermediate webinar aimed at transactional property lawyers ([both residential & commercial property lawyers](#)) exploring what can go wrong at completion and how to deal with those problems.

### Ian Quayle will cover:

- Practical problems: what to do when something goes wrong – avoiding complaints and potential claims
- Notices to complete – tips and traps
- Contractual remedies – contractual interest, rescission and damages
- The Vendor/Purchaser Summons
- What happens to the deposit – Section 49 Law of Property Act 1925
- Lessons from case law

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# The Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill a path to avoid climate catastrophe

Climate change is the defining crisis of our time. The United Nation's *Making Peace with Nature*, published earlier this year, explains that 'securing [nature's] health and building on the critical and undervalued benefits it provides are key to a prosperous and sustainable future for all.'<sup>1</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic exposed humanity's vulnerability and yet 2021 can emerge as a new turning point from which to build a more sustainable and inclusive world for all.

The climate crisis has moved centre stage for most businesses in the last 18 months, and is no longer the sole preserve of environmental lawyers and sustainability teams. Ringing in the New Year, Larry Fink, CEO of BlackRock, penned his annual *Letter to CEO's* in which he explored the ambitious net zero commitments made by governments and businesses. This corporate shift in thinking is coupled with the increasing pressure for measurement and transparency, and is reflected in the significant reallocation of capital towards sustainable assets seen last year: from January to November 2020 investors in mutual funds and ETFs globally invested \$288 billion in sustainable products, a 96% increase over the whole of 2019.<sup>2</sup> The United Kingdom emerged as a pioneer in sustainable legislation when in 2019 we set a world-leading target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions across the UK economy by 2050.

2019 was a significant year for making declarations. In May, the UK became the first national government to declare a climate emergency, closely followed by the European Parliament in November; and the Oxford English Dictionary chose "climate emergency" as the word of the year in 2019. However with little over six months to go before the UK co-hosts The Conference of Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, progress has stalled. The Environment Bill is held up yet again in committee and many of the build back better funds and initiatives have yet to bear fruit. This is why over 100 MPs, from eight political parties have given their backing to a new bill: The Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill (CEE) which is set to expand on the goals of the Climate Change Act 2008 and calls for more far-reaching and quick-acting legislation be introduced in order to tackle the climate crisis.

Introduced into Parliament in September last year and sponsored by Caroline Lucas MP, the CEE Bill emphasises the interconnected nature of the climate and the natural world. The far reaching and ambitious bill seeks to tackle not only the inequities caused by climate change, but also to enshrine into law an urgent reduction of emissions to net zero in order to limit warming to 1.5 degrees, in line with the Paris agreement. The proposals in the bill include a recognition that we must measure the full greenhouse gas footprint including emissions, from the production and distribution of all goods and services consumed in the UK. We currently omit nearly half (46%) of our actual greenhouse gas footprint associated with outsourced production of goods of UK imports. This focus on consumption emissions extends to a call to include emissions from international travel – aviation, passenger shipping and land based transport.

The CEE Bill extends reaches farther than current legislation,

viewing the ecological and climate emergencies as connected. It is not enough to decarbonise the economy but neglect the natural world around us, the Earth's natural systems will not be saved. Moving beyond existing policies, the CEE Bill makes the UK Government fully accountable for both the protection and restoration of UK nature, focusing on biodiversity, soils and natural carbon sinks, and the international focus of the Bill also makes the Government responsible for its entire UK and overseas carbon footprint. However, these ambitious goals cannot be achieved without support across business and society. Lawyers have a unique position in tackling climate change; laws both influence behaviour and provide justice to those who abide by them. Lawyers also work across the corporate spectrum, serving as more than trusted legal counsellors, but trusted business advisors too.

So, what can you do to help? Law firms can sign up as businesses to support the CEE Bill; as a mutual supportive alliance, your firm's commitment would demonstrate strong ESG credentials to clients and your firm's logo will also be displayed on the CEE Bill Alliance website. Interested individuals are also able to engage with the CEE Bill: you can register on their website and work with the strong local alliances which are emerging. With over 75 supporting organisations and 10,000 individual members, our collective voices are the only way that this Bill can have the most meaningful and significant impact.

To find out more and join the CEE Bill Alliance, visit their website ([ceebill.uk](http://ceebill.uk)). Planet Pod, the environmental podcast hosted an in-depth discussion with Caroline Lucas MP and Dr Richard Benwell, (Wildlife Countryside Link) on both the bill and the Environment Bill which you can download on all podcast apps or from their website - [theplanetpod.com](http://theplanetpod.com). If you want to know more about COP26 then catch the podcast series *The Climate Papers* which explores key themes that will shape the policies and recommendations discussed at COP — from a net zero recovery from COVID-19 to nature based solutions.

Finally, the Legal Sustainability Alliance, the leading sustainability network for law firms in the UK is here to support your firm with all your sustainability needs. Feel free to drop me an email if want to find out more.

**Charlotte Williams**  
Legal Sustainability Alliance Membership Intern  
[charlotte@legalsustainabilityalliance.com](mailto:charlotte@legalsustainabilityalliance.com)

1. <https://wedocs.unep.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/34948/MPN.pdf>
2. <https://www.blackrock.com/us/individual/2021-blackrock-client-letter>



# Brabners joins United Nations Race to Zero Campaign

Brabners marked Earth Day (Thursday 22nd April) by becoming an official member of the United Nations (UN) Race to Zero campaign.

The firm, which employs almost 400 people across offices in Liverpool, Manchester and Preston, has become a member of Business Declares – a not-for-profit collective comprising businesses committed to addressing the climate emergency. In becoming the first UK law firm outside of London to join Business Declares, Brabners is to build on its carbon-neutral status while officially declaring a climate emergency.

Business Declares, which is backed by organisations including The Body Shop, Unilever and The Eden Project, is an official partner of the UN's global Race to Zero campaign being delivered ahead of COP26 – the UN's annual climate change conference which will take place in Glasgow this November.

Brabners became carbon neutral for the first time in 2020 and currently offsets any emissions it generates in partnership with woodland creation and carbon capture specialist Forest Carbon. Led by the firm's Sustainability Environmental Green Group (SEGG), it continues to make carbon reductions across its operations – including using 100% renewable energy and reviewing its travel and real estate strategies to improve environmental performance.

The commitments form part of Brabners' wider sustainability strategy, which closely aligns with international goals set out by the UN. These include reducing poverty through its charitable arm, the Brabners Foundation; ensuring all suppliers pay the real

living wage; and supporting local communities through its employer-backed volunteer scheme.

Robert White, CEO and member of Brabners' Sustainability Environmental Green Group (SEGG), said: "In joining Business Declares and the UN's Race to Zero campaign, we formally recognise that urgent action is needed to address the global climate emergency. While the pandemic has given us an opportunity to reduce our environmental impact temporarily, we know we need to do more to bring about long-term positive change to protect the environment.

"Through SEGG, we intend to make Brabners' a more sustainable business each and every day – not just in terms of climate change but in addressing all areas of Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG). Our plan, which will be subject to regular review, will involve working with our clients, engaging with local initiatives and regional projects as well as empowering our colleagues to choose sustainable options both at work and at home to create a better future for all."

Ben Tolhurst, director at Business Declares, said: "The climate and ecological breakdown is the defining moment of our time. It is, in the words of the UN's secretary-general Antonio Guterres, an existential threat. Business Declares believes that businesses can be a force for good in making a difference to tackle this crisis, and we have created a network of businesses who are sharing ideas and practical actions for how to do just that. We are delighted to welcome Brabners to our network as a forward-thinking organisation committed to tackling the climate and ecological breakdown and we look forward to working together."



## Dealing with Resistance to change with Fran Costello

Tuesday 8th June 11am - 1pm

**Attending this session will give you an understanding of change models, what to use when to create the most effective change, and an increased understanding of how to make change a successful process for organisations.**

**Aimed at:** leaders, Practice Managers, Senior Partners, HR Managers, Team Leaders etc who need to enhance their expertise in dealing with current and future organisational changes.

### Covering:

- What blocks successful change in organisations?
- Understanding of the behaviours that prevent change and personal behaviours to adopt to ensure the change goes smoothly
- Tools and processes to ensure successful change outputs for the organisation

[Click here](#) for more information and to book



## Residential Conveyancing for Support Staff (2 Day Course) with Ian Quayle

Day 1: 10th Jun, 9.10am till 4.55pm  
& Day 2: 11th Jun, 11am till 4.55pm

### Delegates will learn:

- The conveyancing process from receipt of instructions to file closure
- Preparing the contract bundle including drafting the contract
- Dealing with searches and enquiries
- Client inspection, surveys and acting for lenders
- Exchanging contracts
- Acting for the seller after exchange
- Acting for the buyer after exchange
- Completion
- Post Completion
- What can cause complaints and negligence claims

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# Liverpool Law Society back free business support initiative to help employees get healthier and happier

Evidence shows that an active workforce improves business performance:

27% fewer sick days are taken by staff who are physically active

91% Liverpool organisations reported improved staff communication and morale when taking part in the previous Liverpool Active Workplaces programme

- reduces turnover and improves Corporate Social Responsibility

Although we are in unprecedented times and in economic uncertainty with the impact of Covid-19, the health and wellbeing of employees is an even greater priority for employers.

We know that employees working in professional services industries have had to juggle working from home, home schooling and adapting to new technologies and ways of working over the last 12 months - we recently surveyed businesses in Liverpool, with 91% reporting that staff health & wellbeing has reduced as a result of Covid-19, and 85% said that staff don't feel as connected to each other.

As we move through the different phases of the lockdown and easing of restrictions, there is a real opportunity for businesses and employees to start to adopt new behaviours that could result in better productivity, healthier staff and a greener environment.

Liverpool Active Workplaces is here to support your organisation, and by signing up your organisation will receive a free package of support that includes:

*Resources, activity challenges and group activities[1] for employees to help encourage them to be more active, and more active whilst working from home*

*Workshops for managers about how to improve staff health & wellbeing, and peer support training for colleagues*



**Workplace Toolkit – a practical guide to implementing workplace activity initiatives and signposting to sources of support**

**Access to the Liverpool Active Workplace Conference, learning events and further staff consultation support**

Becoming an active workplace is quick and simple – join in with the growing network of organisations across Liverpool who have signed up to the initiative, supporting Liverpool to become the most active core city in England.

**Sign up to the Liverpool Active Workplaces programme**

Coming Soon...



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**The Compliance Conference 2021** on Wednesday 9th June, 9.30am - 3pm\*

**This conference will be your one-stop shop for best practice legal regulatory compliance and will give you practical support to help you stay ahead.**

Speakers confirmed so far; [Pearl Moses - The Law Society](#), [Natalie Darby - Solicitors Regulation Authority](#),  
[Frank Maher - Legal Risk LLP](#) and [Iain Miller - Kingsley Napley](#)

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

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

# Leading Liverpool welfare lawyer warns of mental health crisis

## Steven Lunt, welfare lawyer with Astraea Legal is urging those facing welfare challenges to seek specialist assistance

Anxiety levels among people claiming benefits are soaring with the Government still resisting claims despite the devastating effects of the pandemic, a leading Liverpool lawyer says.

Steven Lunt, a specialist lawyer at fast-growing Liverpool law firm Astraea Legal, says he and his team are dealing with not just the legal fallout from the COVID crisis, but also the massive impact on peoples' mental health as they struggle to meet basic needs.

"We have seen people who have worked all their lives suddenly thrust into the benefits system because their job has been swept away by the pandemic," said Steven. "That itself is a massive psychological blow. Then they have to deal with a welfare system that is geared up to resist claims. It's no wonder anxiety levels are through the roof."

A welfare specialist for 25 years, Steven says he has never known things to be this bad, not even following the financial crisis of more than a decade ago. He added: "We may get back to some form of normality this summer, but many people will face hardship for a long time to come."

One year on from the first COVID-19 lockdown, Steven and his colleagues at Astraea are dealing with a growing number of clients who find themselves lost in a benefits system that is designed to frustrate rather than help.

A study from the British Academy, set up last year by the Government's chief scientific adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, has just published its initial findings and they make stark reading. It brings together hundreds of research projects and more than 200 experts.

It warns that a failure to understand the scale of the challenges the UK faces as it looks to recover from the pandemic could lead to a significant rise in poor health and widening inequality. It urges a major investment in public services to repair the "profound social damage" caused to the economy and to people's mental, physical and financial wellbeing.

Steven urges people in Merseyside who find they are struggling to get the help they need from the welfare system to get in touch. He explained: "We are here to help. When you are struggling to feed yourself, your family and keep a roof over your head, having to then fight the welfare system just to meet your basic needs is exhausting and demoralising.

"In March 2020, the Government did introduce a safety net for existing claimants of benefits in severe financial difficulties. But the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) continued to send claim forms to claimants to be reassessed resulting in benefits being disallowed. It creates a climate of hopelessness.

"In the past two years, the DWP has spent more than £120m to



**Steven Lunt**

fight disability benefit claims. However, it lost three quarters of those tribunal appeals. With the right representation, people can extract what they need from the system.

"During the past decade of austerity we have seen sharp rises in homelessness, in child poverty, in the numbers of people using foodbanks. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the problem. The British Academy report is right on the money. We need a massive investment into not just infrastructure, but into the wellbeing of millions of people.

"In the meantime, our message to the people of Merseyside is please don't despair. If you find yourself bewildered by the morass of regulation of the benefits system then do reach out. We are ready and willing to offer the help you need."



## Running out of money to fund care with Caroline Bielanska

Tuesday 15th June, 10am - 12.15pm

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

The course follows a case study, of Elizabeth who was self funding her care in her own home with a wrap around package of care which is no longer affordable or sustainable. Aimed at private client lawyers who either act as an attorney or deputy, or advise lay people who act as attorney or deputy, about what support is available if the person runs out of money to fund their current care package.

### It will include:

- How to involve the local authority
- The needs assessment process
- How to work out if needs are eligible
- When are the local authority under a duty to meet needs
- Limits on provisions to meet needs
- Financial support and financial contributions

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

## Managing alcohol & substance misuse by employees with Emma Tegerdine

Wednesday 16th June, 10am - 12pm

This course will tackle substance misuse by employees, including whether it should be dealt with as a health or disciplinary issue, and when it is lawful to carry out drug and alcohol testing.

### What this course will cover:

- How to spot alcohol and drug misuse by employees who are coming in to the workplace, or working from home
- Whether substance misuse is a health issue, or a disciplinary issue
- Is alcohol or drug addiction a disability?
- The lawfulness of alcohol and drug testing
- Tips on developing an effective substance misuse policy
- Practical guidance on how to manage suspected alcohol or drug misuse

Competencies: A2, 4, 5 & B3, 4, 6, 7

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)

## Social media misuse by employees: the risks and how to minimise them with Emma Tegerdine

Wednesday 16th June, 1pm - 3pm

**The course looks at the risks associated with the use of social media by employees, the practical steps employers can take to protect their business, and what action employers can take if employees use social media inappropriately.**

### What this course will cover:

- **The risks associated with social media use**
- **Monitoring and dealing with excessive personal use of social media during working hours**
- **Do employees have a right to privacy?**
- **The impact of improper social media use by employees**
- **Damage to reputation and disciplinary action**

Competencies: A2, 4, 5 & B3, 4, 6, 7

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)

## A Leasehold Dwellings Update with Richard Snape

Thursday 17th June, 9.30am - 12.45pm

Leasehold conveyancing continues to cause problems and is a very rapidly developing area. The course aims to look at some of the problems and their solutions.

### Topics covered include:

- The latest on ground rents
- Problems with leasehold extensions
- Recent case law on service charges
- Latest on the removal of cladding and the EWS1 certificate
- Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation
- The validity of S.21 notices after the Court of Appeal case Trecarrell v Rouncefield (2020)

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

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)



# LEAP strengthen business intelligence and CRM capabilities

LEAP, the leading practice management software provider, is delighted to announce a new partnership with business solution specialist Red Rain, creator of the RedView suite of products.

Seamlessly integrated with LEAP, RedView provides law firms with a range of capabilities that enhance and supplement their day-to-day operations, assisting them to grow their business while allowing them to make informed and strategic decisions across the practice.

There are three elements to the RedView integration that will benefit LEAP clients:

## Powerful CRM

RedView CRM centralises and automates new business enquiries, seamlessly integrating with a law firm's website to pull enquiries directly into the system for optimising follow up. Also, integrating with Outlook, RedView helps to easily capture email enquiries into the system, while a mobile app allows new opportunities to be immediately logged when out of the office. The ability to capture and manage all enquiries in one place ensures efficiencies, oversight and helps grow the business. Advanced mailing list functionality further enhances this, providing the ability to use LEAP card and matter data as the basis for targeted marketing campaigns.

## Business Intelligence

The RedView Acuity dashboard can be tailored to suit firm

needs, displaying relevant LEAP data in an actionable, insightful, and intuitive manner. RedView Acuity takes LEAP data and presents performance metrics in easy to comprehend graphs (there are over 150 different reporting options available) providing clarity and focus on how a firm is performing. Designed to work seamlessly with LEAP, RedView Acuity affords an unparalleled understanding of the business intelligence required to run a successful legal practice.

## Custom Reporting

RedView Custom Reporting offers a specialised and custom-built report development service, making it possible to utilise and analyse all the LEAP data you need in the way that you need it.

Craig Taylor, Director of relationship development at LEAP comments "We are delighted to introduce the powerful analysis and new business prospecting capabilities of RedView to LEAP clients. This partnership will enhance the visibility a law firm has over its performance and prospects, and will help drive business forwards."

Stephen Butler, CEO of Red Rain comments read "We have worked closely with LEAP internationally for many years and are delighted to bring this partnership to the UK. LEAP's rich API technology allows third party providers such as ourselves to become a part of an ecosystem of integrated solutions that helps clients. LEAP's approach means that the sum is much greater than the parts!"

# The case for digital onboarding

**Adaptability and resilience are two of the greatest assets businesses and individuals have had to display in recent times. Change has been inevitable, technology has been the greatest facilitator for keeping transactions moving, and after a lull during the national and regional lockdowns we saw the biggest property boom in a decade. 2020; we really have seen it all.**

From the acceptance of digital signatures for witnessed deeds to the adoption of new cloud technologies to keep teams connected from home, the conveyancing landscape looks different. Technology has empowered firms and given them the ability to thrive, now and beyond.

We've seen firms maximise the systems they already had in place by fully utilising their existing integrations. By taking a holistic approach towards technology use within your firm, you can tap into opportunities that not only generate greater efficiency but also provide a single source of truth.

Data visibility has been crucial throughout the last year. With teams based remotely, platforms that offer insight into workloads across the firm can help decision making and improve risk management by automating compliance. Firms now expect the same visibility throughout the client onboarding process. Often a fragmented process that demands bank-grade security and a seamless 'Know Your Client' experience, electronic client onboarding creates huge opportunity to improve processes and

solidify digital trust.

Following the same path towards the move to digital, onboarding will be a key space for growth, development and evolution over the coming year. Digital client onboarding gives firms access to a virtual front office. Connecting essential forms, KYC tools, and more, electronically, will not only increase transaction speeds, it will also enhance the customer experience.

Services were forced to become digital in 2020, a change that should not revert once life resembles some sense of normalcy. Home movers have been delighted by firms who have offered digital alternatives such as online form filling, electronic signatures and apps that provide key stage updates. To continue with this action and bring client onboarding in alignment with the other areas of conveyancing that have seen a digital upgrade will be essential for futureproofing firms.

The last remaining major component in conveyancing that is overdue a digital injection, electronic client onboarding will have a lasting impact on supporting the reduction of transaction times. In a period when firms are at breaking point with caseloads increasing exponentially, embracing a virtual front office will be the solution that ties the entire digital conveyancing process together.

**Bronwyn Townsend, Senior Marketing Manager, InfoTrack**



# 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**

This month Liverpool BID Company launches its ballot for the Commercial District BID and our proposal includes an extended BID area, from the Waterfront to St George's Quarter. That extended BID area will be renamed the Culture & Commerce BID, celebrating our city's pillars of strength. As Chair of the Commercial District BID, I am excited for our plans and what it means as part of Liverpool's recovery.

The £7 million of investment would be directed into Liverpool city centre, helping to make it more resilient, bringing its community together and improving its connectivity. Over five years, the work of Liverpool BID Company will continue to ensure the city centre is welcoming, both to business, visitors and workers.

A Public Realm Fund will be established to improve the city centre and focus on its civic squares. Derby Square, by the law courts, needs improved wayfaring, fewer darker corners and a more welcoming environment. St John's Gardens similarly needs more investment and improvement to make one of the city centres green spaces safe and secure. Exchange Flags, long a centrepiece of BID's Commercial District, has hosted a Liverpool Biennial installation. Animating this square helps both the hospitality businesses in its surroundings, makes it more attractive for pedestrians and makes the public realm safer.

Cities like Liverpool thrive when each of their industries is strong. Liverpool BID has proposed creating a Subvention Fund, which is supported by ACC Liverpool, to attract conferences, business events and major events to the city. When conferences come to Liverpool, it benefits the accommodation sector, hospitality, retail and culture as well as the businesses involved and engaged. By supporting this with a dedicated fund we can help to grow this sector and make Liverpool an attractive destination for business and events.

Connectivity is vital as we travel around the city, on foot, on public transport and in cars. Improving connectivity and pedestrian access helps to ensure it is safer and easier to walk across Liverpool. Improving pedestrian access also supports accessibility. An extended BID area would help Liverpool BID improve the connectivity from the Waterfront up to Lime Street, and out across to the west of the Commercial District.

Working with Merseyrail and Liverpool's bus providers the gateway access to the city centre will be improved. Making it welcoming, safe and secure helps visitors to feel a sense of warmth when they arrive, but it also improves the day to day wellbeing of those of us who work in the city centre.

Liverpool's cultural heritage is one of the ingredients making



**Julie Johnson**

the city so special. Carl Jung described the 'Pool of Life' in Liverpool and providing a focus for this creative heritage, from William Brown Street, through Whitechapel and Matthew Street, down to the Waterfront and Royal Albert Dock,

Animating the city centre, particularly at Christmas, is such an important time for our Levy Payers and our visitors and Liverpool BID Company will continue to lead on this, working with local producers, artists and creatives.

The successful BID Police Team and BID Street Rangers who work to keep Liverpool city centre safe, clean and welcoming will be extended, supporting the city for everyone who uses it.

The ballot is open to both existing and new potential Levy Payers in May, with the new BID coming into force in early June if the ballot is successful. Over the past 16 years, Liverpool BID Company has been at the heart of the city centre's transformation and these plans help to ensure the environment and condition of Liverpool stays strong, competitive and resilient as recovery begins.

You can read about the Culture & Commerce BID ballot here [www.liverpoolbidcompany.com/ballot/](http://www.liverpoolbidcompany.com/ballot/)

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

# Monthly Costs Update



**Welcome to our new monthly update in which we discuss recent trends and developments in Costs Law and Practice. If you feel that there are costs related issues of interest, please feel free to contact us!**

Most firms do not need us to tell them that the world of whiplash claims will change for all time at the end of May 2020. The new rules flow from the changes set out in the Civil Liability Act 2018. As far as costs are concerned the major changes concern the Small Claims Track. The upper limit for damages in RTA cases rises to £5k, and to £2k in other personal injury cases. The new limit sits alongside draconian reductions in the levels of recoverable damages that are set out in a tariff. The maximum recoverable for general damages for a whiplash injury under the tariff is £4,345. You don't need a degree in maths to see that the combined affect is that almost all whiplash cases will be allocated to the Small Claims Track, making it virtually impossible to recover costs.

It is worth noting that the new rules only apply to accidents after 31st May 2021 and not claims after that date. So, for up to three years, there will still be a significant number of cases being brought under the existing regime.

This is leading many firms to consider moving into different areas of work. One area that is becoming popular is housing disrepair or more accurately housing conditions since the enactment of the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018. This work does have costs rules that make the work attractive.

CPR 26.6 provides that a case will not be allocated to the Small Claims Track where a tenant is claiming against a landlord in relation to housing conditions. If the tenant is seeking an order requiring the landlord to carry out works then the case will be allocated on the fast track if –

1. The cost of outstanding works exceeds £1k or
2. The value of other claims exceeds £1k

Note that in both cases, there must be an ongoing claim for Specific Performance.

If the claim is limited to damages only, then the usual small claims limit of £10k applies.

What about cases that settle before proceedings? S11 of the Pre-Action Protocol for Housing Conditions Cases entitles the tenant to costs.

***“If the tenant's claim is settled without litigation on terms which justify bringing it, the landlord will pay the tenant's reasonable costs.”***

One problem that can arise is there repairs are done after a letter of claim that reduce the value of the case below the small claims limit. This scenario was dealt with by the Court of Appeal in **Birmingham City Council v Lee [2008] EWCA (Civ)**. The council carried out the works and refused to pay the tenants costs. She was awarded costs to the date the repairs were completed –

***“The tenant who has a justifiable claim for disrepair needs legal assistance in advancing it. He must initiate it in accordance with the protocol. If the effect of the claim is to get the work done, then providing that the landlord was liable for the disrepair the tenant ought to recover the reasonable costs of achieving that result.”***

What is necessary in a case of this kind is that the claimant should, providing she is right about liability, recover the reasonable fast-track costs of advancing the claim by way of letter under the protocol, and thus getting the work done. In this case the work was completed by 26 September 2006. We would accordingly replace the order made by the judge with the following:

***“Pursuant to CPR 44.9(2), the claimant shall have her costs in the cause on the fast-track basis up to 26 September 2006.”***

We anticipate a huge growth in this work over the next year or so.

As we head towards an unknown future we will continue to monitor changes and are available to assist any firms that require our help.

**If you require help in relation to any costs issues contact Robert Cook at [robert@cook-legal.co.uk](mailto:robert@cook-legal.co.uk) or Mike Yassin at [mike@cook-legal.co.uk](mailto:mike@cook-legal.co.uk)**



# Regulation Update

## The latest regulation news from Andrea Cohen of Weightmans LLP



Andrea Cohen

The sun is shining, beer gardens are open, the shops and gyms are back. Life is looking a little bit more normal and hope and excitement fill the air. Here is an update on recent regulatory developments to read whilst waiting in line for your hair appointment, vaccine or pint - there is no judgement here.

### Cyber-loss insurance

The SRA is asking for feedback on a proposal to add a clause making cover for cyber losses explicit in the minimum terms and conditions of PII cover, so that it is clear what is/is not covered in the event of a cyber-attack. The SRA reports that cybercrime accounted for £2.5 million of reported losses to firms in the first half of 2020. The consultation closes on 24 May.

### SRA technology and innovation survey

In independent research to be carried out by the University of Oxford, a survey will be sent out on behalf of the SRA to every law firm asking about their use of technology and innovation, particularly during the pandemic, to be followed by wider research and interviews, with the ultimate aim to find out what has worked and what will be used in the future, and to amend regulations to reflect that, possibly including removing some regulatory barriers.

### AML

Will there ever be an update that makes no mention of AML? In its recent webinar, the SRA again confirmed its

rolling programme of thematic reviews, to include those firms now within scope as they come under the definition of 'tax adviser', requests for information and visits to firms in relation to risk assessments, PCPs etc., and the requirement for independent AML audits.

The Law Society has recently published a list of high risk third countries for AML purposes against which enhanced due diligence (EDD) must be applied, and reminding practitioners that from 1 January 2021 the UK has had its own standalone list and any amendments made by the EU to their list do not have effect in the UK. <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/anti-money-laundering/high-risk-third-countries-for-aml-purposes>.

### Witness statement changes in the Business and Property Courts

The recent changes to the preparation of witness statements signed on or after 6 April 2021, for use at trials in the Business and Property Courts, may bring with them increased risk of claims and reputational issues.

There are no new requirements in the new rules in relation to content, but witnesses will need to state, in their own words, how good their memory is and whether it has been "refreshed" by reviewing documentation, and a list of those documents will need to be included with the statement. The changes are, however, significant and may well be challenging in relation to: the taking of witness statements; listing of documents; certifying

of compliance (for both witnesses and solicitors), e.g. a relevant legal representative (most likely the partner responsible for the matter) has to confirm, as an individual, that the necessary requirements have been complied with, and the sanctions for non-compliance.

Firms will need to develop skills in relation to the amount of drafts issued (the requirement is that there should be as few drafts as possible), how to cost matters and which documents are put to the witness. A witness can only speak to matters which they have first-hand knowledge of, but omissions to the document list may be more telling for the other side than what is included.

Failure to comply with the rules could result in the witness statement being struck out or redrafted, adverse costs orders being made and witnesses ordered to give evidence in chief orally. There could also be reputational risks for the signing 'relevant legal representative' which in turn could have a wider impact for the firm, in relation to potential claims, additional supervision requirements and, potentially, regulatory sanctions, so firms need to be aware of the changes and take the appropriate steps.

### Non-UK resident SDLT surcharge

From 1 April 2021 an additional 2% surcharge will be applied on existing SDLT rates to freehold and leasehold properties in England and Northern Ireland purchased by non-UK residents, which will

also apply to some UK companies controlled by non-residents.

This could be another concern for conveyancers, on top of the pressure arising from the SDLT 'holiday' and firms should ensure relevant clients are advised of the changes at the start of the retainer and in advance of completion.

### Standard NDA

A number of law firms and in-house counsel are working together on the OneNDA project, trying to create a standardised template for standard commercial NDAs. If successful, it could reduce delays and resistance when commencing relationships. Will this be the start of standardised documentation or the start of multiple versions and revisions? Clients will hope for the former, lawyers may secretly wish for the latter.

Litigants in person cannot expect special treatment. In a move that may bring terror to any litigant in person (LiP), and possibly some relief to the legal profession, a defendant LiP was ordered to pay almost £100,000 in interim costs in relation to an invalid request for copies or inspection of documents, which the court ruled was not made for a proper purpose. The Judge said his conduct of the claim was not normal, with attempts to include irrelevant documents, unsupported allegations of fraud and false accounting and being a litigant in person does "not excuse him".

### Unanticipated benefits to remote hearings?

In a recent High Court trial regarding the validity of a will, held remotely due to the pandemic, a defendant witness admitted that his affidavit saying he witnessed the will was not true, as a result of which the judge ruled that probate of a £3.2m estate should be revoked. It makes one wonder whether remote trials put barriers up or bring them down due to familiar surroundings? The judge speculated that it may have been easier for the witness to admit the truth when he was not in the same courtroom as the other defendant. Either way, it serves as a reminder for the profession to ensure that witnesses understand the need for honesty and the consequences of being dishonest, the judge having referred the case to the DPP on the basis the defence was false and had been supported by false evidence by the two 'witnesses' to the will.

### Disciplinary Decisions

#### Struck off for forging colleague's signature

A junior solicitor has been struck off for forging a qualified solicitor's signature on a number of conveyancing documents, which included undertakings, during her training contract. She admitted she had signed the documents in the licenced conveyancer's name, but the SDT did not accept her claim that she was authorised by her colleague to do so, or that she believed she could replicate a signature. During the hearing, she said she preferred the term 'imitated' to 'forged'. The firm discovered the issue after she was admitted, terminated her employment and reported the matter to the SRA. The Tribunal decided that even though the character evidence indicated she would be a successful solicitor, her actions showed a clear lack of integrity and was dishonest. She was struck off and ordered to pay costs of £15,686.

The decision is being appealed, so watch this space. This is the second report of an appeal being made by a junior solicitor against strike off in as many months, the first being made possible following the raising of funds through crowd-funding.

#### Strike off avoided where lie told when 'blinded by panic'

The SDT said there were exceptional circumstances and spared a newly qualified solicitor from strike off, despite her admitting dishonesty, taking the view that such a sanction would be disproportionate. She told a litigant in person that an email, which included sensitive data, must have been blocked by a firewall, when she had actually sent it in error to a third party. Within an hour, she admitted what she had done to the head of HR and COLP, who reported the matter to the SRA and ICO and gave her a first written warning. In an agreed outcome, approved by the SDT, the SRA said the misconduct was 'a moment of madness', she had admitted it almost immediately and there was no evidence it would be repeated. She was suspended for 6 months and ordered to pay £5000 costs.

#### Reeling in a lawyer

Unfortunately, as we are only too aware, solicitors are not immune to phishing attempts. A senior solicitor, with 50 years PQE, has been fined £10,000 and costs of £16,000 for paying £290,000 of conveyancing proceeds to a third party, and multiple solicitor accounts rules breaches as a result of relying on handwritten methods and inadequate processes. In relation to the email fraud, the solicitor had received an email asking him to transfer the money to a different bank account. He replied by email asking for telephone confirmation but then relied upon an email response confirming he should use the

new details. The SDT accepted he had taken steps to remedy the breaches, co-operated with the SRA investigation and previously had 'a long unblemished disciplinary record'.

A salutary reminder to ensure all necessary checks are undertaken before parting with any funds.

#### Fine for acting in sale at undervalue

In an agreed settlement with the SRA, accepted by the SDT, a solicitor was fined £8000 and costs of £4000 for acting on behalf of both a 78-year-old vendor and the purchaser, her 34-year-old boyfriend (whom, it was later discovered, had previous convictions for fraud against another elderly woman). The property was sold for £70,000 in 2012, having previously been bought by the vendor in 2006 for £238,500. The issue came to light when the vendor's daughter raised the matter with the SRA in 2018 following the death of her mother, having earlier been told by the solicitor that she was satisfied her mother had full capacity when selling the property. In 2019 the transaction was set aside by the High Court on the basis of undue influence, the Court finding that no effort was made to find out whether the vendor had mental capacity.

The solicitor had been aware of the risk of conflict, setting up a 'Chinese wall' with two other fee earners apparently acting, but that was ineffective as she carried out some of the work and supervised a junior fee earner.

The solicitor admitted acting where there was a conflict or significant risk of a conflict and failing to take adequate steps to ensure either client received independent advice. While there was no evidence of dishonesty, this was found to be an isolated incident and the solicitor co-operated with the

SRA, the SDT found she was "highly culpable" as there was a clear conflict of interest and the challenge to the sale was foreseeable, which led to stress and expense for the daughter.

#### Drink driving conviction not an automatic breach of principle

The SDT has ruled that a solicitor convicted of drink-driving did not automatically undermine public trust and allowed an appeal in part against a fine of £2000 imposed by an SRA adjudication, reducing it to £600.

The solicitor pleaded guilty to driving with excess alcohol in November 2015, was banned from driving for 16 months and fined £1,500, but did not notify the SRA. He moved abroad for a couple of years and on his return successfully applied for a practising certificate without declaring his conviction. He then self-reported it two months later, but did not declare it when renewing his practising certificate some time later on the basis that he thought the conviction was spent. The SRA adjudicator found that he had breached principle 6 of the SRA Principles 2011 (behaving in a way that maintains the trust the public places in you and in the provision of legal services), and principle 7 (co-operating with the regulator) by failing to inform the SRA of his conviction promptly and when applying for his practising certificate. The tribunal found that on the balance of probabilities the approach to deciding there had been a breach of principle 6 was wrong, but upheld the decision in relation to a breach of principle 7.

**Andrea Cohen**  
**Compli**  
**Weightmans**





# News from Merseyside Junior Lawyers Division

## Diary of a Junior Lawyer

By Samantha Rymer and Chelsea Kearns (MJLD)

The 16th March 2021 marked 12 whole months since the UK was plunged into lockdown. Shops, bars and restaurants closed, kids were sent home from school and professionals all over the country were faced with the exciting new prospect of “working from home”. For so many of us Junior Lawyers, this was a terrifying thought which disrupted routine, professional development and social lives.

Junior Lawyers are crucial members of legal teams who will essentially develop to lead the industry in years to come and so just as this time away from school is crucial for our kids, time away from the office can be just as detrimental to us! Professional development and networking are just two things that have been affected to a point of concern and so this month, we took the time to discuss with some of our members both their positive and negative experiences in working from home and some of the challenges they have faced.

After plenty of discussions with our members we have put together two short extracts of our days for our members to understand both the positive and negatives of working from home.

### AM

8:00: My alarm went off 20 minutes ago, but since I am working from home today (as always), what is the point in getting out of bed so early? I lie in until 8:55am.

9:00: I check in with my Manager so she knows I was logged on, on time and spend 20 minutes talking through a task list which I was ready to start yesterday whilst I assess the chaotic state of my email inbox (HELP!)

10:00: What better way to start the day than with a call from a very angry client ready to complain about the way her case is being handled? After almost 30 minutes of panic and anxiety trying to contact a manager for help with handling the situation, I have to pass the burden to a more senior member of staff.

11:00: I dismiss the reminder to attend a Training Course in my Outlook calendar because how can I possibly waste an hour listening to an external speaker when my task list has only grown in the past 2 hours!!

### PM

12:00: After a morning of absolute chaos, lunch is out of the question. I grab a quick snack and eat whilst sat at my desk.

2:00: A second dismissal of an Outlook reminder! I certainly don't have the time to 'Catch Up' with my team and especially not via Zoom.

3:00: How is it possible I have only done 25 units?! I haven't left my desk all day and I spent so much time handling the angry client, my chargeable time has taken a hit! The panic sets in as to what my manager will be thinking when she sees.

4:00: An Associate on my team asks me to take on another bulky task which needs completing as a matter of urgency. If I say no then there is NO CHANCE I'll secure a Training Contract when the time comes! Surely it won't take too long?

5:00: I have definitely bitten off more than I can chew and asking a more senior staff member for support is out of the question (especially since my Supervisor hasn't text me back in 2 days). I am left with no option but to work late until my chargeable hours are up and I have somehow figured out how to overcome the task I am faced with.

### AM

8:00: I set my alarm early so that I can take some time for me before my busy day. I go for a short walk in the time that I would usually take to commute to work. The walk lets me clear my head and once I return home I make sure I have some breakfast.

8:30: I log onto work slightly earlier today, we have flexi-time in work and so I can finish at 4.30pm later today. I take the time to go through my emails before my supervisor starts at 9:00.

9:00: I have a quick chat with my supervisor, I have went through all of my emails and organised my tasks for the day.

10:00: Oh no! I have a very angry client shouting at me down the phone about her case. I thought my day was going well. I call my supervisor for assistance who talks me through how to handle the situation. I call the client and resolve the issue myself. I take the opportunity to learn from this experience and how to approach distressed clients in the future.

11:00: A reminder pops up in my diary for a training session I have been looking forward to. I feel as though I have fallen behind due to dealing with an angry client, however I know that training sessions are important for my personal development and take an hour out of the day to attend it. The training session was really informative and I can see that majority of my team attended too.

PM

12:00 I had my breakfast earlier than usual and so I make sure I take some time out to have a decent lunch as well as a cup of tea. I chat to some of my housemates whilst they also make lunch to break up my day.

2:00 Another reminder for a 'catch up' with the team. I am a little fed up of zoom calls but I know it's important to take a moment to get updates from the team. Additionally, I have been quite productive after my break at lunch and so I feel I can make the time to attend. My supervisor praises me for how I handled the angry client earlier that day and tells me that I must log off at 4:30pm.

3:00 I have only completed 25 units today, which I am disappointed about. However, I have dealt with a difficult client today which did take up a lot of time! My manager is aware of the situation and told me to log off at 4:30.

4:00 An associate in the team has asked me to take on a huge job however, I am due to finish at 4:30. I speak to the associate telling them that I am due to finish at 4:30 and if the matter isn't urgent can I start it tomorrow? The associate was fine with me working on the matter tomorrow!

4:30 I have organised my tasks for the following day to suit the job the associate sent me today and I am ready to log off for the day!



**Sam Rymer**

It is understandable that not every working day is the same and that people react differently to different situations. However, we have taken examples of ways in which situations can be dealt with positively and negatively to explore examples of how junior lawyers and employers can overcome workplace challenges. This diary reflects how small positive changes can make a huge difference to an individual's working day and the working relationship employers have with their staff.

The purpose of this article is for both employers and employees to see what can be done better to improve productivity and increase professional development in the industry at present. These reflections have been pieced together from various member's own working experience.

Given the unprecedented circumstances of the last 12 months it is not surprising that legal professionals are facing challenges they never expected during their legal career. We ask both employers and employees to put some extra focus into the junior lawyers in their firm in order to ensure they are not feeling isolated, overworked or dormant in their legal careers. We can all take the time to consider what we can do better to support our junior lawyers.



**Chelsea Kearns**





## Reclaim your lunchbreak and recharge in nature this Mental Health Awareness Week

Many of us have lost our connection with nature, spending most of our time indoors, at home, in an office or in a car. Sometimes even having a lunchbreak seems luxurious – most of us bolt food down at our desks so as not to miss a minute of the working day. However as humans we aren't meant to spend so much time indoors. Our ancestors were hunter-gatherers spending most of their time outdoors amongst trees, by water, studying plants and animals, in all seasons and weather. Could our health and wellbeing be compromised because we spend less time outdoors? There are many powerful reasons why we should down tools and step outside once a day, so this week try and use your lunchbreak to get outside.

### Being outside can help your productivity

We often think we don't have time to take a proper break during the working day but having a break outside can make all the difference to your productivity and give you perspective on a work issue. Researchers found that time spent in nature can renew our attention spans when they are flagging after a hard day's work or an extended period staring at a screen – this is known as Attention Restoration Therapy (ART). This is supported by research from the University of Madrid and Norwegian University of Life Sciences that found seeing natural landscapes can speed up recovery from stress or mental fatigue.

### Contact with nature reduces anxiety and stress

Being anxious, stressed or depressed can mean you don't want to go outside, preferring to hunker down indoors. Whilst this may be your natural instinct, going outside and being with nature can reduce your anxiety and stress. There is scientific evidence that we feel calmer when we look at trees for example, this is known as biophilia. Forest bathing or Shinrin-Yoku, the Japanese practice of spending time slowly and quietly in forests, is proven to lower the stress hormones of cortisol and adrenalin, suppresses the fight or flight instinct, lowers blood pressure, boosts the immune system, and improves sleep. Not only that but the activity of white blood cells known as natural killer (NK) cells increases when humans spend time in woods. You don't have to visit a wood or forest every day – these biochemical benefits last for up to a month.

In addition there is evidence that exercise outside can be more

effective than antidepressants for those with mild to moderate depression and research from the University of Exeter showed that the presence of birds in a landscape can help to lift depression. It is also well known that time spent with animals, or gardening has a positive impact on your mental health.

### Time outside can effect the chemical make up of our brain

There are several physiological and neurological changes that take place when we go outside which can boost the happiness chemicals in our brain. Serotonin is a compound that carries signals between nerve cells in our brain and there is link between the levels of serotonin in our brain and our mood. Time spent in the natural world and particularly in sunlight triggers an increase in serotonin. Exploring a new environment outside and foraging, collecting shells, leaves, blackberries, releases dopamine which helps regulate movement, attention, learning, and emotional responses. Cold water swimming is shown to boost serotonin, oxytocin (the love hormone) and endorphins which reduces pain, relieves stress, and enhances pleasure. It also helps to control our fight or flight instinct.

### Nature can help you learn mindfulness

Meditation, or mindfulness, is proven to reduce stress, however some find it hard to get to grips with. Nature offers many ways to be mindful without even realising, whether its bird watching in your garden, watching a sunrise or sunset, looking at a bee buzz round a flower, star-gazing at night or listening to the sound of the sea, these are all ways to help you be calm and still and focus on the present moment which can help you maintain good mental health and wellbeing and keep stress at bay.

**LawCare provides emotional support to all legal professionals, support staff and their concerned family members. You can call our confidential helpline on 0800 279 6888, email us at [support@lawcare.org.uk](mailto:support@lawcare.org.uk) or access online chat and other resources, including Mental Health Awareness Week materials, at [www.lawcare.org.uk](http://www.lawcare.org.uk)**

# Charity Spotlight

## Rainbow Hub – a charity that is changing lives

For those who don't know Rainbow Hub, it is an amazing charity – a sentiment echoed by the parents whose children they support. The charity's aim is to ensure that each child achieves his or her individual potential – in most cases, these are things the majority of us take for granted like walking, speaking, playing and feeding ourselves. And Rainbow Hub provides a lifeline for the parents as well.

Based in Mawdesley, nr Ormskirk, the centre supports children and young people from across the North West and is entirely funded by grants, donations from businesses and individuals and fund-raising events.

The centre has a unique range of outstanding facilities where the "Hub" has light, bright rooms housing large equipment for conductive therapy and a trampoline for rebound therapy sessions. There is gym equipment for the young people and a private room with a specialist physiotherapy bed.

In another building there are interactive sensory/active movement and early years/communication rooms. During the new communication group, a team

member will read stories, teach sign language and encourage participation using a variety of different methods. Rainbow Hub believe this is the first group of its kind to be used to assist children with their communication skills.

Outside there is a vast area with an accessible nature playground, a replica of a community including traffic lights and kerbs, a sensory garden, nature trail and wooden cabin.

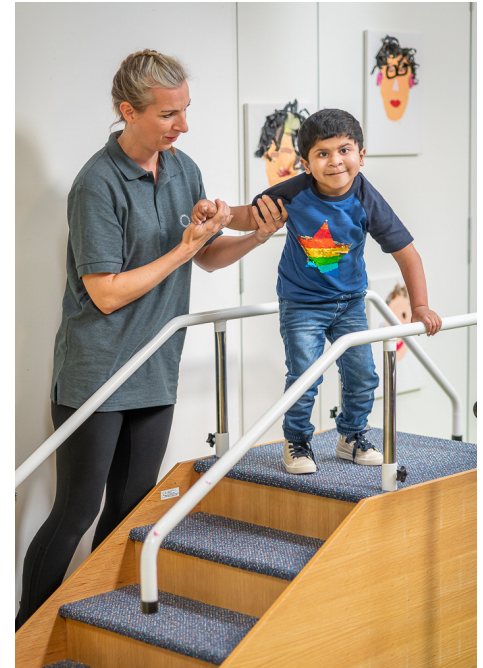
A team of highly trained specialists offer a holistic approach to the health and well-being of each disabled child with a combination of therapies resulting in a higher level of independence. Imagine standing on your own two feet or climbing stairs independently; signing your first word or not always coming last.

And learning does not always take place in a classroom. There is a wheelchair accessible kitchen with height adjustable hob for some practical life lessons. And it's open to all, so parents can get to know each other and relax and chat with the Parent Support worker.

The diverse range of services are aimed at improving the lives of children with complex needs and supporting and helping to improve the quality of life for all the family.

During the pandemic the charity had to close due to the extreme vulnerability of the children but they set up online videos, one to one virtual sessions and advice for parents so that the children could maintain some of the therapies at home that make such a difference to their lives. It worked well but it was amazing to see the beautiful children back at Rainbow Hub.

When the centre was able to reopen, the family of Scarlett Price from Chorley who attends Rainbow Hub, said, "For the first time in months we felt like we were coming home, we've missed the staff and kids so much! Rainbow Hub is such a huge part of our lives as a family."



But Rainbow Hub has no statutory funding and has to raise all of the money it needs to provide the services vital to the children it supports. The pandemic has made things much harder with a shortfall of around £100,000 predicted due to cancelled events in the past year and foreseeable future. The team constantly seek new ways of raising funds and are extremely grateful for the support they receive from local businesses and individuals.

If anyone would like more information on the work of Rainbow Hub or to support them, please go to the web site [www.rainbowhubnw.org](http://www.rainbowhubnw.org) or on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram @rainbowhubnw



**RAINBOW  
HUB**





# April Social Media Highlights

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

**LiverpoolLawSociety**  
@LpoolLawSociety

Our directors recently met with local MPs to discuss issues affecting members and constituents. Read the full report from LLS's Parliamentary Liaison Officer Paddy Dwyer here

Tweet your reply

**Merseyside JLD**  
1,552 Tweets

**Merseyside J...** · 18/03/2021 ...

We'd like to say a massive thank you to the 22 students who attended our Mock Assessment Day with @Weightmans today.

We've already had such amazing feedback and can't wait for our session next week. The future of the legal sector in Merseyside is so bright!!

Great News!

Like · 1 | Reply · 1

**Emma Rittenberg** · 1st  
PR, Communications & Brand Executive at Carpenters Group  
4d ·

Today was my first day in the **Carpenters Group** office!

Never been more excited to get to work, I felt a little kid on my first day of school! Nothing beats meeting people in person, here's hoping we're back to normality soon enough

51 2 comments

Like Comment Share Send

**Donna Scully** · 1st

**LiverpoolLawSociety**  
4,814 Tweets

**Tweets** Tweets & replies Media

**Liverpool Ch...** · 01/04/2021 ...

**FUNDING NEWS**

Applications are open to @skeltoncharity for 2021.

Lancashire, Greater Manchester & Merseyside (including Blackpool, Blackburn, Warrington & Halton) can apply for £500-£3,000 for one off projects of capital expenditure. Deadline 28 May. [lcv.s.org.uk/grants/theskel...](https://lcv.s.org.uk/grants/theskel...)

1 1

**LFC Foundation**  
6,932 followers  
4d ·

32 years ago today, 96 children, women and men lost their lives at Hillsborough. ...see more

**MerseysideL...** · 08/04/2021 ...

Since last March we have represented over 70 clients at tribunal and assisted many more before this stage resulting in financial gains for the most vulnerable of over £1.3 million!

Our Impact in 2020 - 21

70+ clients represented at tribunal

£1.3 MILLION! in financial gains for the most vulnerable

**CEL Solicitors**  
1,461 followers  
2d ·

We had our Friday talk today from Marta, talking all things Poland! From the Christmas tradition of ...see more

**Morecrofts LLP**  
5,240 Tweets

**Tweets** Tweets & replies Media

**Morecrofts L...** · 08/04/2021 ...

Congratulations to Partner Angela Eaton, who celebrates 35 years with Morecrofts this month.

Angela qualified as a solicitor in 1985 and has developed several specialities including children cases and adoption.

Happy anniversary to Angela from all of us!  
#MorecroftsPeople

**Vauxhall Law Centre**  
993 Tweets

**Tweets** Tweets & replies Media

**Vauxhall Law...** · 08/04/2021 ...

We are proud to be working with @IanByrneMP in his relentless battles against poverty

**The Bi...** · 07/04/2021

The Right to Food campaign, led by @IanByrneMP, could make it easier for the Government to be hel...

1 13 28

**Vauxhall Law Centre** Retwe

**Ben Claimant...** · 07/04/2021 ...

**Carol Hopwood**  
@LawMum

Great to have been able to meet up with some of our @HeadwaySefton friends for a socially distanced beach walk. Have missed everyone and 🙌 for a pathway back to normality

12:47 · 14/04/2021 from Seaforth,

Tweet your reply

**Bell Lamb & Joynson Solicit...**  
1,342 Tweets

**Tweets** Tweets & replies Media

**Bell Lamb & Joynson...** · 6d ...

We want to extend a huge welcome to Charles Lawrence who started with us this week. He joins us as a senior solicitor in our award-winning conveyancing team

It's great to have you with us, Charles!

#ByYourSidefor200Years

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

Attend from anywhere via Zoom software.

**Can't make the date/time or need to revisit the training? No problem!**

**Booking onto any of our training seminars & conferences means you will receive a link to access a recording of the event to watch at your leisure!**

Some of our forthcoming events are below – for full details, visit: [www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk](http://www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk)

Date	Title	Speaker
13-May	Proving your case	Prof. Dominic Regan
14-May	Insolvency Update	Chris Beanland
18-May	Residential Conveyancing - Completion Day Nightmares	Ian Quayle
19-May	RTA Claims in 2021: The New Landscape for Low Value Claims	Jeff Zindani
21 & 24-May	The Complete Legal Aid Supervisor	Vicky Ling
27-May	Drugs Offences, Evidence and Sentencing	Clive Smith
08-Jun	Dealing with resistance to change	Fran Costello
09-Jun	<b>2021 Compliance Conference</b>	<b>Various</b>
10 & 11-Jun	2 Day Residential Conveyancing for support staff	Ian Quayle
15-Jun	Running out of money to fund care	Caroline Bielanska
16-Jun	Managing alcohol and substance misuse by employees	Emma Tegerdine
16-Jun	Social media misuse by employees: the risks & how to manage them	Emma Tegerdine
17-Jun	A Leasehold Dwellings Update	Richard Snape
17-Jun	Building Regulations & Planning Permission for Conveyancers	Richard Snape
22-Jun	Working with the SRA Accounts Rules 2019	Linda Lambert
24-Jun	The CPIA and Disclosure – Recent Developments	Clive Smith
29-Jun	Service Nightmares & How to Avoid Procedural Death - Update on Service Rules & Court /Trial Fee Traps	Jeff Zindani
30-Jun	<b>Employment Law: Summer 2021 Update</b>	<b>Various</b>
02-Jul	How to deal with and prevent an SRA Investigation	Robert Blech



# Focus on the matters that matter most



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