

February 2024

# Liverpool Law

Liverpool  Law Society

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

## Newly Qualifieds celebrated as the future of the legal profession

article on page 20







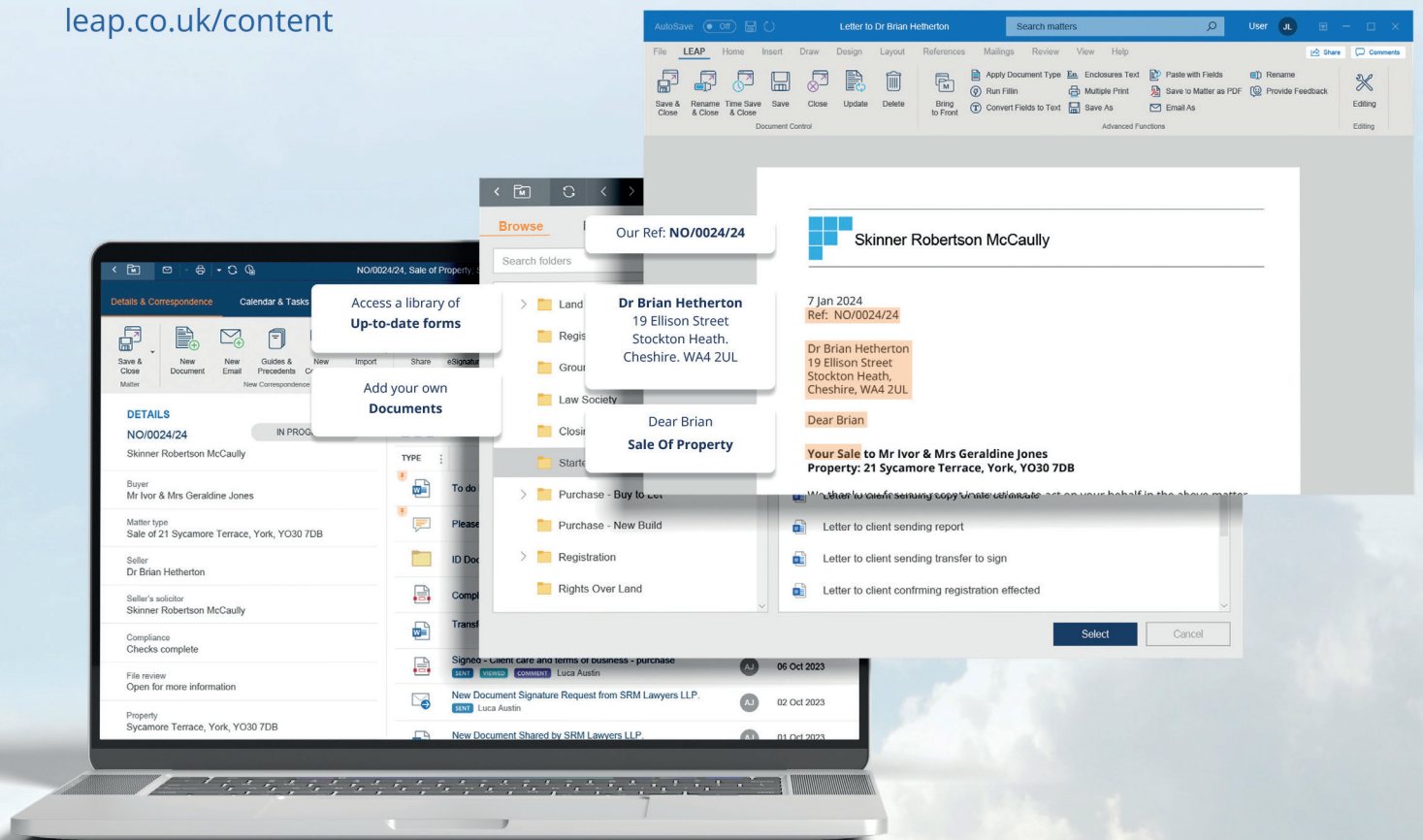
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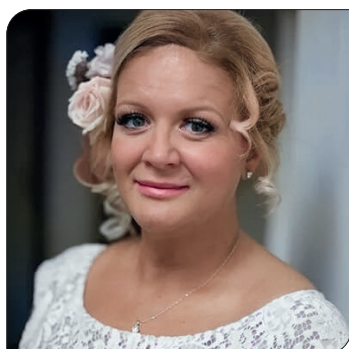


The Law Society



# February 2024

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Fri, 23.02.24  
Mon, 25.03.24  
Tues, 23.04.24  
Fri, 24.05.24  
Tues, 25.06.24  
Tues, 23.07.24  
Tues, 27.08.24  
Tues, 22.10.24  
Tues, 26.11.24



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liverpool-law-society](https://uk.linkedin.com/company/liverpool-law-society)





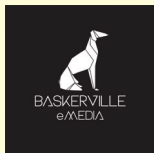
Liverpool Law Society Magazine is produced by and for Liverpool Law Society Members. This is our opportunity to share our news, events and celebrations with our friends in the legal community.

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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#### Editorial Committee Dates 2024

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

20.02.24  
19.03.24  
16.04.24  
21.05.24  
18.06.24  
17.07.24  
20.08.24  
17.09.24  
15.10.24  
19.11.24

## Welcome to the February edition of Liverpool Law



This month we have decided to officially launch our new social media handles for the magazine alone, they are:

LinkedIn: [Liverpool Law E-Mag](#)  
X: [@LpoolLaw](#)

We will continue to post via our Publisher account's too, [@Baskervilleeme1](#), to allow a smooth transition but if you could please like/follow the new handles to ensure you are kept up to date.

The decision was made to have our own handles to ensure nothing is mixed up with other law societies whom our Publishers work with and also alongside those of Liverpool Law Society, again so no news is missed on those platforms. These channels will focus solely on our magazine content and will keep you up to date with deadlines and submissions we are seeking.

This is all new for us so your feedback and any ideas or suggestions are very welcome. Please also feel free to tag us in articles you would like to be considered for the magazine. In the meantime however, or in addition, please continue to send your articles to [editor@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk](mailto:editor@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk) to ensure nothing is missed.

You will see this month we have our first Leaders in the Law interview. This is something we started during COVID and we thought it would be interesting to see all the changes that have occurred since and how businesses coped. If you would like your firm to be included or if you have any questions you would like us to pose then please get in touch.

I had the pleasure of attending the LLS newly qualified event recently and you will see some of the great photographs on pages 20-22, and a link to the album. I try to make a conscious effort to attend this event every year as I think it is really important to support our junior lawyers. It is a really special event to go to and see the joy on those entering the profession. I enjoy hearing the different journeys they have taken and their plans for the future. It is strange to think their training will have been so different to mine as they may know no different than working agile with online meetings etc. but they have all transitioned seamlessly.

Many congratulations to all, including those still studying who received certificates for their fantastic achievements, and best of luck for your future careers.

Many thanks

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



# LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO RAISE THE BAR

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# From the President

## The latest from the President, Gaynor Williams

We have 'hit the ground running' at Liverpool Law Society ('LLS'), with a busy start to 2024.

The last event of 2023 was the Christian Lawyer's Fellowship Carol Service on 18 December 2023. **Jeremy Myers** read a lesson, as is customary for the Immediate Past President and **HHJ Menary KC** gave a very thought-provoking speech about the wonder and spirit of Christmas and childhood memories.

On 10 January 2024 LLS staff and Directors attended online cyber awareness training. This is a topic that is very important for lawyers to familiarise themselves with and to ensure that they put in place the necessary protections and I would recommend visiting The Cyber Resilience Centre for the North west at <https://www.nwcrc.co.uk/>.

On 13 January 2024 I visited Byrne Avenue Baths for an afternoon held to thank their Trustees and volunteers. Byrne Avenue Baths is a small community charity that I have chosen for my year. It is based in a beautiful Grade 2 listed building, that houses the original swimming pool from 1933. The work that the Trustees and volunteers do to help the community, and their unfaltering passion, is a credit to the charity.

We had a meeting with LLS Directors, Local Authority representatives and Councillors on 18 January 2024. Parliamentary Liaison Officer **Lauren Cannon** provided a very comprehensive and interesting update on new Acts and Bills, **Sarah Mansfield**, Joint Honorary Secretary gave an update on housing issues and **Jean-Paul Dennis**, the Chair of LLS non contentious business subcommittee, gave an update on delays in the Probate Registry, Land Registry, Court of Protection and Senior Courts Costs Office. Access to Justice was also discussed, and **James Mannouch**, Vice President and Chair of the Access to Justice Committee addressed the dire situation in the region, with demand for legal advice far exceeding supply, and the law centres working at maximum capacity. Although the general consensus



was that there was little good news to report, it is an important meeting to exchange information and to keep in touch with representatives from Local Authorities and councillors.

As I write this column, I am looking forward to attending the annual Celebration of new entrants to the legal profession on 24 January 2024 at Hard Day's Night Hotel. **HHJ Cadwallader** has kindly offered to present the Certificates to the newly qualified lawyers and professionals, and The University of Law have sponsored the event.

On 6 March 2024 I am chairing the Pathways to the Legal Profession event online, this is a popular event for local schools, and it is designed to offer help and advice for year 12 students. Advice is provided about the different avenues available to pursue a career in law, and I very much look forward to this event.





When I was Vice President one of my tasks was to chair the Future Planning Committee and to make plans for my year. I am excited about our first LLS Golf Day on 6 June 2024 at Caldy Golf Club, Wirral. If you have not already done so, please book a team because there are limited spaces available. It looks to be a fun filled day of golf followed by prizes and a dinner, and I expect there will be an air of competitiveness on the day. **James Mannouch**, Vice President, has taken over the Future Planning Committee chair now and I look forward to supporting his ideas for next year.

Looking further ahead, please note some dates for your diaries, we are in the process of organising the Conkerton Memorial Lecture, and pleased to report that **Sir Stephen Cobb** will be the speaker. The date is 10 October 2024.

We also have our main event of the year, the Annual Dinner and Legal Awards ('ADLA'). We have confirmed 14 November 2024 at Rum Warehouse, Titanic Hotel, Liverpool. I am honoured, and still pinching myself, that **Baroness Hale** has

agreed to be Guest Speaker for the Dinner. I am sure that the evening will be a great success, and tickets will be in great demand, so please look out for updates.

I am starting 2024 with a busy calendar, and I have lots to do and people to see, but I am very lucky to have the support of **Sarah Poblete**, the LLS team, Officers and Directors.

**Gaynor Williams**,  
President  
[president@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk](mailto:president@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk)

## LLS Meetings & events – Feb-March 2024

Start Time	Meeting/Event
08/02/2024 12:30	Joint V meeting (hybrid, Leeds)
13/02/2024 12:30	General Committee
14/02/2024 16:00	Family Business Sub-Committee
20/02/2024 13:00	Editorial Sub-Committee
21/02/2024 18:00	ADLA 2023 winners & sponsors celebration evening
27/02/2024 12:30	Finance & Policy Sub-Committee
29/02/2024 13:00	Non-Contentious Business Sub-Committee
06/03/2024 13:30	Pathways to the Legal Profession for Year 12s
08/03/2024 09:00	International Women's Day
12/03/2024 12:30	General Committee

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

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

# Consultation Papers

## Papers referred to committees:

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

Committee	Consultation Paper title	Closing date
Crime & Family Business	<a href="#">Defining child to parent abuse</a>	07.02.24
Regulatory	<a href="https://legalservicesboard.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/LSB-Draft-Business-Plan-2024-2025-Consultation-Document.pdf">https://legalservicesboard.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/LSB-Draft-Business-Plan-2024-2025-Consultation-Document.pdf</a>	12.02.24
Employment	<a href="#">Distributing tips fairly: draft statutory code of practice</a>	22.02.24
Non-Contentious	<a href="#">Storage and retention of original will documents</a>	23.02.24
Crime	<a href="#">Murder sentencing</a>	04.03.24
Civil Litigation & Non-Contentious	<a href="#">The Future Homes and Buildings Standards: 2023 consultation</a>	06.03.24

## Consultation Paper responses submitted by Committees:

As part of Liverpool Law Society's role to represent our members, the following committees have responded to the consultation papers listed below. The Society is very grateful to the committees for all their hard work, which is all done on a voluntary basis.

Committee	Consultation Paper title
Regulatory	<a href="#">Proposals to change how the English or Welsh language proficiency of qualified lawyers is assured</a>
	<a href="#">Changes to the rules on Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) exemptions</a>
	<a href="https://legalservicesboard.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/LSB-Draft-Business-Plan-2024-2025-Consultation-Document.pdf">https://legalservicesboard.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/LSB-Draft-Business-Plan-2024-2025-Consultation-Document.pdf</a>
Access to Justice, Civil Litigation & Family Business	<a href="#">TLS 21st Century Justice Green Paper</a>



Liverpool Law Society

ADLA

Annual Dinner featuring Legal Awards

14.11.24

SAVE THE  
DATE

**Annual Dinner and Legal Awards 2024**  
We are pleased to announce that  
Liverpool Law Society's Annual Dinner  
and Legal Awards will be taking place  
on Thursday, 14th November 2024.

Following the sold-out 2023 Dinner

and Awards, we are delighted to offer  
Liverpool Law Society members across  
the City Region and beyond a way to  
celebrate your work and achievements  
by holding the Legal Awards once again  
in 2024. The Annual Dinner provides an  
opportunity to come together to network

with your peers and celebrate being part  
of a proud and vibrant legal profession.  
The Legal Awards nominations will open  
in early July and close early September.  
Further details will be announced soon,  
but for now, keep the evening Thursday  
14th November 2024 free in your diary.

# Interview: Nichola Halpin



**Nichola Halpin, who is the General Counsel at Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, has been elected to serve as a Director of Liverpool Law Society for 2024.**

Nichola is originally from Ormskirk and went to school in Crosby before winning a place at the University of Sheffield, where she studied Politics. Influenced by the areas of Law studied during her Politics degree (gaining a 2.1), Nichola became interested in pursuing a career in Law.

After finishing at Sheffield University, she took an administrative post at Sheffield Magistrates Court, a job which cemented her desire to make a career in Law. With an initial plan to become a Criminal Lawyer, she enrolled at Nottingham Law School to study for the Graduate Diploma in Law and Legal Practice Course. During her time at Nottingham Law School, Nichola secured a training contract with Weightmans in their Liverpool office, bringing her back to Merseyside. During her training, Nichola spent two of her training seats in Weightmans' Healthcare team and was seconded to the North West Ambulance Service, giving her an insight into the workings of the NHS. After this secondment, Nichola qualified as a solicitor and joined Weightmans' Healthcare team.

Shortly after qualifying, another NHS secondment came up. This time it was with Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust where Nichola became the Head of Legal. After 18 months there, Nichola took up a permanent role with the Trust. In-house legal work meant she had to take on a large amount of responsibility at this early stage of her career, helping both the NHS Staff and the Trust, which she found really appealing.

Having joined the Trust permanently in

April 2015 and spending almost five years with them as Head Of Legal, the beginning of the Pandemic in March 2020 caused the everyday legal processes to slow down considerably, so she was asked to take a wider role which involved governance and patient safety. This involved visiting the wards and addressing any issues which had arisen, while her legal team were redeployed into mask fitting and testing.

Nichola held the position of Associate Director of Quality Governance and Patients safety for 12 months but missed the legal side of her work, so when an opportunity at Liverpool University hospital came up as the Associate Director of Legal Services, Nichola jumped at the chance. After successfully applying, she began her new job in April 2021 and in 2023 was promoted to the role of General Counsel. The most important part of the job is working with and looking after the healthcare professionals at the hospital, such as the Doctors, Nurses, Therapists etc. to assist them with any legal issues they encounter, ensuring they get full support during what is a daunting process for NHS staff, who already have stressful jobs.

Nichola and her team deal primarily with any claims that have been brought against the NHS, representing the Trust in Coroners inquests, and advising staff dealing with difficult patients in such matters as consent. It is vitally important to work with staff to defend claims where they can, but also offer compensation to patients if there have been failings in their care.

Liverpool University Hospitals, along with other NHS Trusts across Merseyside, are looking to expand legal services within the Health Service. Historically legal teams are usually small, but the NHS are now realising there is a greater need for legal support and Nichola is working with other NHS Trusts within the region to bring this about. NHS England are also supporting a project on collaboration of Legal Services across the NHS.

In April 2024, after 10 fantastic years in the NHS, Nichola will be returning to her old home, Weightmans, as a Partner in the Healthcare team. Re-joining the firm will provide Nichola with a great opportunity to use her experience to help Trusts grow, develop, and succeed, especially in respect of Legal Services.

Nichola is a relative newcomer to Liverpool Law Society, having recently joined the in-house Lawyers subcommittee, chaired by Rachel Stalker. Twelve months ago, Nichola was received onto the In-house advisory committee of the National Law Society. Her main goal being to raise the profile of Legal services within the NHS and to highlight the vital work they do for the medical profession.

Whilst at committee meetings with the national Law Society, she heard very good reports about how LLS were one of the best Local Law Societies in the country and became keen to get involved, reaching out to Rachel to join the in-house committee. Nichola hopes to bring her experience from the National Law Society to her role in Liverpool.

Nichola is also hoping to raise awareness of the opportunities of working in-house as a solicitor as another career option for junior solicitors and hopefully attract more to enter the sector.

As Director, Nichola would like to become the voice between Liverpool Law Society and the NHS trusts, to see what they can do to help not only junior Lawyers entering an in-house post, but also the wider public of Liverpool with medico-legal issues.

Outside of work, Nichola has 2 children, Joshua who is ten and Isobel who is six. Her partner Silas is a Chief Executive in the NHS. They are keen Evertonians and enjoy cheering on the blues!

*We are delighted to have Nichola bringing her unique skills to the committee and wish her every success for the year.*



# Brabners further strengthens employment, pensions & immigration team



Dan Walker and Nik White, Managing Partner at Brabners

**Leading independent law firm Brabners has further strengthened its employment, pensions & immigration practice with the appointment of partner Dan Walker.**

Dan, having previously been a partner at Knights and head of the employment team at MLP Law in Altrincham, brings more than 15 years' experience supporting employer clients across a variety of sectors, including retail, hospitality, healthcare and pharma.

Dan joins Brabners' employment, pensions & immigration practice, which is a Tier 1 Legal 500 ranked department that works with household names across the private sector – with the team's biggest 20 clients boasting a combined turnover of £15bn and more than 45,000 employees. The team has a strong reputation for representing clients dealing with complex, high value employment related projects and disputes.

At Brabners, he will support and complement the firm's full-service offering across its four offices in

Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Lancashire, as it continues to act for clients with regional, national and international presence.

Dan's support for clients will include guiding senior executives through shareholder and director level disputes, restrictive covenant cases and high-level strategic decisions such as restructuring, contract renegotiations and the integration of employment practices as M&A activity accelerates in 2024. In addition, he will continue to ensure compliance for businesses operating in highly regulated industries, as well as advising on share options and long-term incentive plans that drive client growth.

Nik White, managing partner at Brabners, said: "The past few years have been challenging for employers as they look to deliver growth in a wage and cost inflationary environment and a demanding labour market. As businesses adapt and strategically review their models, we're seeing greater demand for the high-level expertise.

*"With that in mind, 2024 is set to be a vital year for our clients, and we're looking forward to Dan making a positive impact."*

Dan Walker, partner in the employment, pensions & immigration team at Brabners, added: "Having been part of the legal sector in the North West for almost two decades, I've seen the evolution of Brabners into a high-performing purpose-led firm. The employment team's 'tier one' status made it a huge draw, and I'm looking forward to my clients being able to benefit from the depth of expertise across the team.

*"Critically, it's a pleasure to be part of a firm that believes in and is committed to demonstrating that business can bring about positive change. This means making the difference to its clients, people and the communities it operates in."*

A B Corp-certified business, Brabners was recently recognised as the "Best Law Firm to Work For" in the UK by Best Companies and has also featured in The Times' Best Law Firms rankings.

# Leigh Day expands service with two new partners in the North West



Leanne Devine, Kevin Johnson & Joanne Candlish

**Law firm Leigh Day has welcomed two new legal partners to its rapidly expanding Liverpool and Manchester offices, strengthening its expertise in asbestos and human rights work.**

[Joanne Candlish](#) and [Leanne Devine](#) bring substantial experience and expertise to the firm, as it continues to expand its northern offering.

Leanne, well known for her work on the Hillsborough inquests, joins Leigh Day's new [human rights](#) team in Manchester. She has previously acted for many clients from the Merseyside region, including representing 22 families who lost loved ones in the Hillsborough tragedy.

[Leanne](#), who is from Liverpool, has made the move from Scott-Moncrieff & Associates where she worked as a consultant solicitor - regularly representing bereaved families in Article 2 inquests, and connected claims against public authorities. She is a member of INQUEST Lawyers Group and a panel member of Centre for Women's Justice. Leanne is based in Manchester at present, but will work with clients across the North West, including Liverpool.

From 2013 to 2016, Leanne worked as solicitor and senior investigator for the Hillsborough tragedy at Broudie Jackson Canter. Leanne led a team focused on the thematic area of emergency response, as well as providing client care to a number of families.

The families eventually secured a conclusion from the jury of 'unlawful killing' of the 97. Leanne went on to become a Director and Head of Civil Liberties establishing a team of inquest and inquiry specialists providing national expertise representing bereaved families.

[Joanne Candlish](#), from Merseyside, has over 30 years' experience in asbestos-related cases. She joins Leigh Day from Hodge Jones & Allen, where she was partner in the [asbestos team](#).

Joanne was previously an asbestos solicitor and department manager at 2020 Legal where she set up and managed a new asbestos department, including running all asbestos cases, recruiting and training, marketing and client development. Joanne is an APIL accredited Senior Litigator and Asbestos and Occupational Disease Specialist.

Joanne brings valuable expertise in asbestos and occupational disease-related claims. She is an experienced [industrial disease](#) solicitor, regularly recovering six figure settlements, as well as future treatment orders and hospice costs. She was involved in acting for asbestos sufferers in the high profile 'Trigger Issue' litigation.

The team of expert asbestos solicitors at Leigh Day specialise in bringing claims on behalf of people who have been exposed to asbestos in many walks of life. They are experts at identifying where any exposure took place and achieving the right level of compensation for those affected.

[Kevin Johnson](#), Leigh Day asbestos partner who heads the firm's Liverpool office, said:

*"We are delighted to welcome both Joanne and Leanne to Leigh Day. Joanne is highly regarded in asbestos-related personal injury claims, and it's fantastic that we have been able to add her expertise and*

*experience to the team in Liverpool.*

*"Leanne also brings a wealth of legal experience within Liverpool and the surrounding area, which will no doubt aid the firm in its efforts to improve access to justice in the North West."*

The Leigh Day [Liverpool office](#) opened in 2016 to serve local Merseyside residents and beyond, particularly in compensation claims for industrial disease. The two new appointments will strengthen the firm's presence in Liverpool, with both bringing strong connections to the area.

**Leanne Devine** said:

*"Being Liverpool born and bred, it was a privilege to have represented bereaved families in the fresh Hillsborough inquests. That really emphasised for me the need and the ambition of local lawyers to provide that assistance to people in our communities.*

*"I was attracted to Leigh Day due to the outstanding reputation it has for taking on challenges on behalf of everyday people whose lives have been impacted by inequalities and injustice in our society. There is an amazing vibe within the firm of people wanting to do the right thing. There are few firms which resonate with my values, and Leigh Day was at the top of the list for me."*

**Joanne Candlish** said:

*"I am delighted to be joining Leigh Day's renowned asbestos team, which is leading the way in fighting for justice for those exposed to this dangerous substance.*

*"Leigh Day has always taken on difficult, challenging and ground-breaking cases and I have made it my mission to fight for victims and their families for over 30 years, so it was a perfect fit. A strengthened presence in Liverpool will ensure people continue to have access to high quality and specialist legal representation locally."*



# Elevating Excellence: Tom Prince promoted to Partner in CG latest strategic move as they expand into larger offices



Louise Myers & Tom Prince

North West commercial law firm CG I has announced the promotion of Tom Prince to Partner whilst also kicking off the year moving to larger offices in Liverpool.

Prince is based at CG's newly expanded offices in the Royal Albert Dock, and works across the North West heading up CG's commercial contracts team. CG's move to new offices comes after

a dramatic increase in team numbers working out of Liverpool for the rapidly growing law firm.

Founder and Managing Partner **Louise Myers** said: "Since Tom joined us three years ago, he has grown the Commercial team by 400 percent, has played a major role in expanding our client base and his role at CG has been fundamental to our rapid growth.

"After opening our Liverpool office 18 months ago we've received a tremendous welcome in the city and seen our client base as well as our team grow substantially. This is why we've moved to bigger offices, and I think it demonstrates our appetite for growth and commitment to the vibrant business scene in the city, which has to be good news for the region as a whole.

"Tom exemplifies CG's expertise and enthusiasm, and places the clients' needs at the centre of everything he does. He has worked incredibly hard, and this promotion is well deserved."

CG recruited **Tom** not only to grow and develop the commercial contracts

workstream but, also, to play a key role in galvanising and growing its presence within the Liverpool City Region.

Liverpool born and bred, **Tom** trained and has worked in Liverpool for most of his career and has developed a reputation for technical expertise and commercially focused advice.

**Tom** said: "I'm incredibly proud of what we've achieved at CG. Our unique approach and delivery of legal services have an immense impact for clients, and we've demonstrated how beneficial it is not just for clients but also for CG as a firm.

"CG is definitely leading the way in how law firms do business and I'm looking forward to playing my part in growing the firm even further."

Along with CG's founding partner **Louise Myers**, **Tom** has consolidated himself as the leading figure in establishing CG's Liverpool office as a major player on the Merseyside business scene attracting not just high calibre lawyers but also a vast range of enviable clients which has led to the move to larger office space.

## Astraea Linskills invited to 10 Downing Street



**Nama Zarroug** and **James Roochove**, founding directors of one of Liverpool's leading law firms Astraea Linskills were invited to an exclusive reception at 10

Downing Street last week hosted by the Lord Chancellor Alex Chalk KC MP.

**Nama Zarroug** said "I began Astraea Linskills at my kitchen table during maternity leave and it is a career highlight to be recognised at the highest levels of government for the work we do".

Astraea Linskills, endorsed by the Legal 500 & Chambers and Partners, was founded in 2016 and went on to acquire leading law firm Linskills Solicitors in 2022. The award-winning law firm purchased offices in the heart of Liverpool's business district in 2022 to

house it's growing and successful team.

**James Roochove** said "I deal with politicians regularly but it's not every day you get to walk through the door at No 10. It was also a great opportunity to spend time with other leading legal practitioners from across the country. It was also great to hear directly from people in government, such as Lord Harrington who headed up the Homes for Ukraine scheme."

2024 is an exciting year for Astraea Linskills as they continue to expand and grow in the Liverpool market and beyond.

# Bermans Solicitors appoints two Partners as firm continues to grow



Laura McMorland, Jon Davage and James Whittaker

## Bermans solicitors is delighted to announce the promotion of two Partners.

The Northwest based law firm, which has offices in Liverpool and Manchester, announced that **Laura McMorland** and **James Whittaker** would be taking on their new roles, effective from January 2024.

**Laura** joined the Corporate team at the start of March 2023 from FourSynergy Group where she was head of legal transactions. **Laura** has very quickly become a key member of the corporate team and has led a number of notable transactions - The standout deal being lead adviser to SCG Packaging Public Limited Company on its acquisition of Law Print and Packaging Limited. Her

technical expertise, direct approach and sense of humour has been warmly received by the team and clients alike.

**James** has been with the company since 2019 and has made a significant contribution to the success of the insolvency team over the last few years. He has also been given Legal 500 "Rising Star" status, which stated: "*James Whittaker is a standout individual. He has in-depth legal knowledge and excellent judgment*".

**Jon Davage**, Managing Director and Head of Corporate, said: "*I am delighted to announce the promotions of James and Laura. They have proven to be technically excellent, loyal and committed members of the Bermans team. I have no doubt they will achieve great things*

*during 2024, which looks like it will be a year of significant growth for the firm. After a very buoyant Q4 in 2023 across all practice areas, the workflows and pipeline are looking very healthy for Q1 in 2024. Our focus is on the SME market in Manchester and Liverpool and we look to create opportunities and add value to all our client relationships. We are always interested in adding to our legal offering and we are looking at ways to deliver this better, including in new geographic areas.*"

With the backing of MAPD, Bermans has plans to grow the firm significantly while retaining its brand and keeping in line with MAPD's philosophy. The recent promotions are just one small part of Bermans ever growing firm. In 2023, the company saw 14 new starters join the team.



# Strategic sectors drive dealmaking growth at Brabners



Mark Rathbone

**The corporate team at leading independent law firm Brabners has seen a 50% increase in annual dealmaking volumes, having advised on £789 million-worth of deals in 2023.**

Brabners' 67-strong corporate team is one of the largest and most active in the North, contributing to the wider firm delivering a sixth consecutive year of profitable growth. Last year's dealmaking activity, which covers over 190 transactions, was driven by the purpose-led firm's teams in Liverpool, Manchester, Lancashire and Leeds – supporting the M&A and exit strategies of clients in a number of the North's strategic growth sectors including technology, healthcare, nurseries and manufacturing.

In a period of significant achievements, where the B Corp certified firm grew its revenues by 15% to £46.8m during the financial year ended 30th April 2023, Brabners acted on a broad range of national and international deals.

This included advising Liverpool based software games developer Lucid Games on its acquisition by Lightspeed, part of one of the world's largest multimedia companies Tencent, for an undisclosed amount. The team also supported Happy Days Day Nurseries with its strategic growth plans, completing two acquisitions in a consolidating market. Its dealmakers also continued to support a number of private equity transactions including advising specialist bicycle and e-mobility insurer Bikmo on a £3.4m investment round, led by Puma Private Equity, and retail and hospitality sector digital solutions expert Evoke on multi-million-pound investment from BGF.

Brabners also completed 18 deals enabling companies to become employee-owned, helping facilitate the growing trend for businesses to retain their culture and independence through the establishment of Employee Ownership Trusts (EOT). These included Rochdale sustainable furniture manufacturer and

fellow B Corp, Crystal Doors, Manchester architects Jon Matthews Architects and national law costs firm, The John M Hayes Partnership. Analysis by Experian found Brabners to be the most active legal adviser in the EOT advisory market in 2023.

**Mark Rathbone**, partner and head of corporate at Brabners, said: *"Many M&A strategies held firm in 2023 as businesses pushed forward with their plans for innovation, expansion and progression – despite facing high input costs, an uncertain political backdrop and increased interest rates.*

*"We've supported change-making organisations UK-wide and are pleased to have helped innovators in emerging industries to attract early stage, scale-up and growth funding and exits to multinational buyers – bringing in strategic investment that will accelerate the creation of skilled jobs. We've worked with owner managed businesses on their exit strategies, with management teams on their management buy-outs, with established businesses on growth by acquisition and with multi-national businesses on international acquisitions and joint ventures.*

*"With plenty of dry powder in the market and valuations re-aligning, we're looking forward to a further uptick in activity in 2024 as we help clients to attract and deploy risk capital into entrepreneurial ideas, scalable ventures and innovative spin outs."*

As well as recently being recognised as the "Best Law Firm to Work For" in the UK by Best Companies, Brabners has recently grown to over 500 colleagues. The firm has also been ranked in The Times' Best Law Firms rankings, and was named as Firm of the Year at the Liverpool Law Society Awards.

**For more information, visit:** <https://www.brabners.com/>

# Weightmans awarded UK Top 10 employer status

National law firm Weightmans, headquartered in Liverpool, has been recognised as a Top Employer in the UK for the 17th year in a row – and has entered the top ten rankings once again in 2024.

The Top Employers Certification programme – run annually by the Top Employers Institute, a global body – recognises and celebrates outstanding people-centric policies and practices that have created positive workplace environments around the world.

Organisations are assessed on the results of a HR Best Practices Survey, which covers six HR domains and 20 individual topics, including people strategy, work environment, talent acquisition,

learning, diversity, equity & inclusion and wellbeing.

Weightmans' success in the rankings follows a year of continued growth, which saw the law firm increase total revenues by 22%. This has been supported by the firm's merger with RadcliffesLeBrasseur in 2022, which has seen it successfully integrate teams and embed new technologies. The firm also continued to champion colleagues' professional development – with 22 people promoted to partner or legal director.

In September 2023, Weightmans also hired the Pierre Thomas Law team – specialists in international personal injury claims and the defence of accident claims across Europe. This saw the arrival of

eight new colleagues to the firm's London office and expanded its cross-border offering and international reach.

Weightmans HR Director, **Helen Taylor** said: "We are immensely proud to be certified as a top employer for the 17th year in a row, and to once again be in the top ten in the UK.

*"It's a direct reflection of the investment we continue to make in our people and processes. But ultimately, it's down to the support, engagement, hard work and dedication of every one of our colleagues across the business – those who make Weightmans a fantastic place to work and allow us to continue to see the possibility in all we do and inspire our clients and our people."*

# Brown Turner Ross appoints Family Solicitor Graham Twist to the Board of Directors



Graham Twist

Liverpool and Southport based law firm Brown Turner Ross are pleased to announce the appointment to the Board of Directors of Family Solicitor Graham Twist.

**Graham**, age 36 from Liverpool was previously a Solicitor/Director of a Liverpool based law firm before joining Brown Turner Ross in 2022 as an associate solicitor, specialising in Divorce, Matrimonial Finances, Children Act Proceedings and Injunctions and is a valuable addition to the Brown Turner Ross growing Family Law team.

**Sam Bushell**, Managing Director said "Graham is a welcome addition to our Board and our Family Law team and brings with him a wealth of experience and knowledge. A tough negotiator coupled with a compassionate nature has earned Graham an extensive and loyal client base".

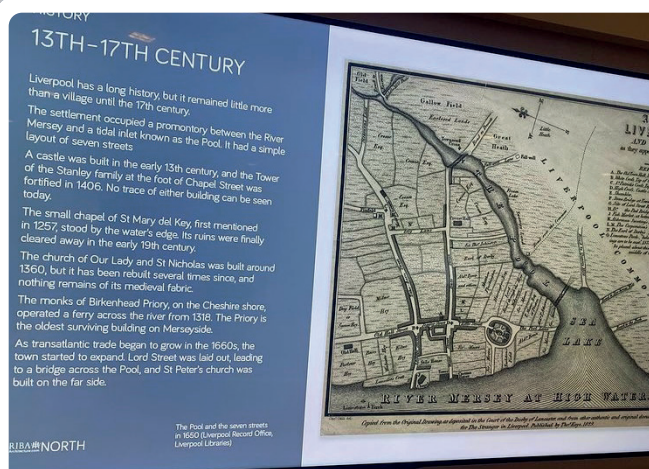
**Graham** said "I am delighted with my latest appointment at Brown Turner Ross.

*The Family team are a passionate and dedicated team of professionals with an expansive and growing portfolio of clients. I am sure that my experience will prove invaluable going forward and will enable me to navigate my clients through some of the most difficult of times".*

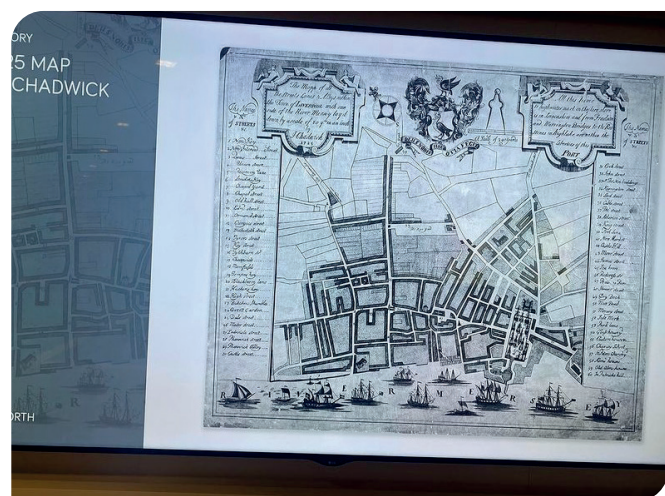
Brown Turner Ross have been providing legal advice for 135 years from their established offices on Lord Street, Southport and The Cotton Exchange in the heart of Liverpool's business district. The law firm, founded in Southport in 1884, has become one of the North Wests leading law firms who specialise in family, private client, corporate and commercial property, housing disrepair and dispute resolution work.



# Royal Institute of British Architects drinks



A number of LLS members and representatives cemented our new links with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) over drinks at RIBA North's location at Mann Island on 30 November.



A word of explanation: There is a long-established reciprocal tradition that LLS invites the President of the Liverpool Architectural Society (LAS) to the LLS Dinner and likewise our President is invited to the LAS Dinner. Additionally, the two Presidents meet at other professional Dinners, and last year I had the pleasure of getting to know LAS's **Jonathan Kinnear**.

The LAS Dinner last June saw me seated next to **Lifa Zvimbande** who is the very dynamic Director of RIBA North of England Regions. Our conversation led to us believe that there is potential for greater co-ordination between our two organisations and the respective professions.

We began to plan for a joint Drinks Reception, with the key input of LLS's CEO **Sarah Poblete** and our then Vice President, **Gaynor Williams**. Meanwhile, I was invited to two events at RIBA North. The first was RIBA's Fringe meeting at the Labour Conference and then a RIBA / Tate Liverpool Reception. My visits gave me the chance to see a number of exhibits and pictures on display as well as meeting a cross-section of Architects.

The Drinks Reception on 30 November was a busy day for each of our professions. LLS held its AGM that lunchtime and RIBA held its North West Council that afternoon. The date was agreed so that RIBA's regional leadership - with **Jonathan** - could be introduced to our members by **Lifa**.

Conversation was varied and there was a stimulating mixture of people. I do find that each event that takes us out of our usual tramlines is worthwhile in itself, making us more rounded individuals and so I feel more effective practitioners..

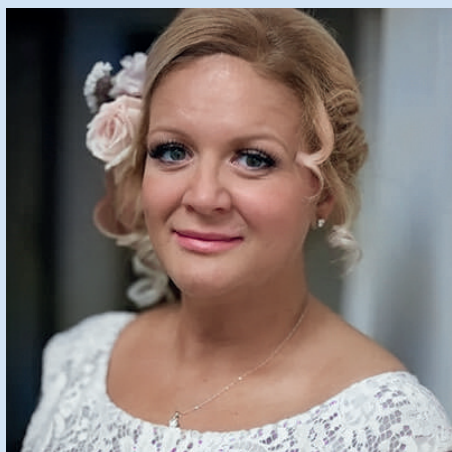
It was an opportunity to chat with **Lifa** about future possibilities. There may be some continuing education where our spheres overlap, so I suggested that LLS's courses could be open to RIBA members. This could be a boost to LLS's finances as well as providing networking opportunities. I then ensured that Lifa and LLS's **Jo Downey** now have each other's e-mail addresses.

Let's see what we and RIBA do collaboratively.

**Jeremy Myers**  
Immediate Past President



# Leaders in Law: Alisha Butler – Director & Solicitor Advocate Phoenix Legal Limited



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

As Managing partner of a small High Street firm my role is extremely varied, from dealing with a case load of high value claims, advocacy, supervising staff, and dealing with payroll/HR, to taking out the rubbish and changing the lightbulbs when they blow.

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

Positives – I am always on the front line, helping clients and training staff. I get to deal with everything from initial calls to settlements and costs, from hiring staff to training staff. It is an all-encompassing role which means that I understand what is required of everyone in my business and that I fully appreciate their hard work and continued efforts to grow our firm. They also get to understand every aspect of running a firm as we are all involved in the decision making

Negatives – There aren't any. From a very young age I dreamt of being a Solicitor and now I am. I guess if I had to say one thing it would be that it can be lonely running a law firm as a sole director. Having someone to just check that you are making the right decision is priceless

and as a result you can have second thoughts about the decisions you make, but I am great believer in “*whatever is meant to be will be*” and so I see no decision as a wrong decision as every decision will take you down the path you are supposed to go down, even if it does not seem like it at the time.

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

When Covid hit, it was hard as a small business owner. We furloughed all the staff, at first, and I ran the business on my own. Then we brought staff back in slowly as most wanted to actually return to the office. We have a lot of young staff who still live at home and so working from home for them was not easy and they wanted to be back in the office.

Before Covid we were mostly paperless. I would say that we were able to increase this to about 90% paperless when Covid hit as the courts were accepting of electronic bundles, and hospitals and GP's started to send more records electronically.

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

Now we also allow our Qualified Solicitors to work from home and the office, it's their choice. Although, we had this pre-covid it was not really widely accepted in the Legal industry and so it was only on rare occasions. Now, they can come and go as they please. For junior staff and trainees, I like to have them working with me, as I believe that is the best way for them to learn. We want our staff to get a full range of skills and this comes from listening to how I deal with clients and others on the phone, and learning every aspect of the business. You cannot learn some skills from just doing on line courses, it has to be taught in real life and by watching others.

## 5. What do you see as your biggest challenges?

I think the governments continued changes to recoverable costs in PI and clinical negligence will put a lot of small-medium high street firms out of business, and that may be the intention. We need to be able to adapt but using AI and automation comes with set up costs that are often out of reach to small firms.

Finding alternatives to the areas of law that you cover is the only option for small firms and their survival, particularly ones like mine that only deal with civil law. Being good at what you do, having experience and a great reputation with both clients and other legal professionals is invaluable and that is what I have always strived to have.

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

I am most proud of the fact that as a law firm we have been able to offer apprenticeships to people who, like me struggled achieving the right exam results in school or university. I left school with no GCSE's and had to re-sit them. I passed a few and then went on to A-levels which I again failed. I then found a different route with an Adult Course to higher education (I think I was 18 at the time), and passed this which allowed me to gain a place a University. I am terrible at exams, I panic.

When I started my law firm I didn't want to hire people who had straight A's, I wanted people who needed a break and to get a foot in the door and so we started our apprenticeship programme.

I love being able to say to people, “*do you know what, exam results aren't everything, it's about determination to get to where you want to be that will mean you will get there no matter what, it just may take a*

*little longer or take on a different path, but if you believe in yourself hard enough, you can do anything you put your mind to"*

I am also proud that my clients know how committed I am to helping them. I settled a claim in 2019 for £3.5 million for a client and he bought me a lovely bracelet with a heart on it and on that heart on one side of it said "love what you do" and on the other it said "do what you love". I believe that my love for the job shines through and is apparent to my clients and others.

#### 7. What are your immediate short-term goals?

We want to focus on developing our Medical Negligence team. We have some fantastic cases and we want to make sure that we are continuing to offer our clients a fantastic service.

We also have two great trainees and I

want to make sure that they get an all round experience focused on outstanding client care, over and above profit, as our clients have often been through harrowing events and we need to make sure that we take away any fears about getting a legal team involved.

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

Fingers crossed I will be semi-retired and working from a little house in Spain. I want to keep growing the business so that I can pass it down to the next generation of Solicitors. Hopefully, it will be some of the staff who are with us now. I love what I do, and I love my clients so I cannot imagine ever giving up work. I do not have a hobby as I love what I do so much, dealing with clients and helping them, that I don't see what I do as a job, to me it is a vocation, much like being a Doctor.

#### 9. What legacy, as Managing Partner, would you like to leave the firm?

I would hope that my love for what I do rubs off on the staff and the firm. I want the firm to be a firm that helped people. We may not make a lot of money doing it, as Profit has never been my driving force, helping people has. I know it seems cliché, but its true. If I won the lottery I would still run my firm, and I would still want to help my local community and help my clients get justice.

I would also like to think that I have trained my staff to care, be good solicitors, learn a variety of areas of law and not to be afraid to stand up for themselves and their clients. I hope that they value the training I have given them, as much as I have valued the privilege of training them.

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# Society celebrates the future of the legal profession



I was delighted to be able to attend the celebration of those who are newly qualified in their respective professions. The Liverpool Law Society event was held on 24 January 2024, at the Hard Day's Night Hotel.

The Society was privileged to have **His Honour Judge Cadwallader** as the key speaker for the evening.



President of the Liverpool Law Society, **Gaynor Williams**, started off proceedings with an opening speech and thanked all those in attendance including our valued sponsor the University of Law. **Gaynor** commented *"The newly qualified celebration is one of my favourite events and it brings lots of positivity and optimism at the start of a new year. I have attended this event for a number of years, and it is always a pleasure to meet the up-and-coming talent in the Liverpool City Region. The newly qualified lawyers have*



*shown determination and resilience at a time of economic and global uncertainty, and they should all be very proud of themselves."*

The President then invited **Mark Evans**, who is a lecturer at the University of Law and also is Deputy Vice President of the Law Society to address the attendees. **Mark** was followed by **Jemma Castell**, Chair of the Merseyside Junior Lawyers Division, who, among other matters, explained the important work of the MJLD.

Lastly, **Judge Cadwallader** gave an



inspiring speech. The Judge spoke to the newly qualifieds about the importance of serving your clients as legal professionals. He also recommended getting involved with local organisations such as the Liverpool Law Society and the Northern Circuit.



**Judge Cadwallader** then handed out certificates of congratulations to the newly qualified solicitors and barristers (listed below):

**Adam Singh Hayer**  
**John Dove**  
**Andrew Ball**  
**Anthony Hutchinson**  
**Callum Kelly**  
**Danielle Stevens-Green**  
**Gemma Baker**  
**Hannah Chapman**  
**Harriet Evans**  
**Julia Michalczyk**  
**Kelsey Ryan**  
**Krystel Devine**  
**Krzyszcie Zakrzewska**





*Lincoln Nelson  
Lucy Jones  
Michael Truman  
Neve Flynn  
Rob Thomas  
Sam Chadwick  
Sarah McClements  
Sarah Sharples  
Shivani Jobanputra  
Stephen Mungo  
Shona Casey*

**Sean Quinn** from Bermans winner of the Rupert Bremner prize

**Laura-Jane Beattie** from Kennon Doyle winner of Timpron Martin prize

**Alexandra Larsen** from HMCTS North West winner of C.A. Getley prize

A further two Liverpool Law Society Prizes were awarded.



The E. Rex Makin Prize was awarded to the youngest Solicitor to be admitted to the roll in the Liverpool constituency being **Caitlin Johnson**.

The Muir Matthews Prize was awarded to a young/trainee solicitor in Liverpool who was judged to have made the largest contribution on an all-round basis. The winner was **David Tarttelin** who works at MSB.

There were also prizes awarded for achievement in professional examinations based on the results of the Legal Practice Course at the Liverpool John Moores University and at the University of Law. The prizes are administered via the Society's Education & Charities Committee. The academic prize winners were:

**Megan Carden** from Brabners, winner of the Atkinson prize

**Joseph Drake** from Bermans winner of the Enoch Harvey prize

Following the presentation, the attendees had a chance to socialise, enjoy a few drinks, and were also treated to some canapes. I was pleased to have the opportunity to speak to many of the attendees and also see many familiar faces who have risen through the ranks to become qualified.

I remain confident that the future of the profession, in the North West, is bright. Congratulations to all the newly qualified and award winners alike, and good luck in your careers.

All photographs by **Dan Bentley**. Full photo album appears [here](#).

**David Tournafond**  
Chair of the Education & Charities Committee  
Liverpool Law Society









# Awaab's Law – the timescale for repairs

Following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak, an eight week consultation has been announced by the Housing Secretary, Michael Gove.



Daniel Conroy

Following our last update in September 2023 the Housing Secretary, **Michael Gove**, on 09/01/2024 announced the commencement of an eight week consultation on Awaab's Law to

be introduced following the tragic death of **Awaab Ishak** as a result of exposure to mould at the property let to his family by a social housing landlord.

## The law

S42 of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 inserts into the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 clause 10A which requires a landlord to “*comply with all prescribed requirements that are applicable to that lease*” in relation to prescribed hazards.

## The consultation

The consultation is intended to consider what will form ‘the prescribed requirements’. It also provides a proposed framework for Awaab's Law.

The consultation proposes that the (current) 29 Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards will be “*the prescribed hazards*” and that such a hazard will fall within the scope of Awaab's Law if it poses “*a significant risk to the health or safety of the actual resident of the dwelling*”.

## Timescale for repairs

The consultation proposes that, where a social housing landlord is made aware of a potential hazard it must be investigated within 14 calendar days and that such investigation must “*sufficiently determine whether there is a hazard, and if so, the level of risk to a resident's health or safety*”. In determining whether a hazard is affecting a resident's health or safety the landlord should give consideration to any vulnerabilities of the resident in question.

Under current proposals, within 48 hours of any investigation, a landlord will be required to provide the resident with a written summary of the findings of the investigation including how and when the investigation was undertaken, who carried out the investigation, if any further investigations are required, what hazard was identified, whether the hazard poses a risk to health or safety and what works are required to rectify the hazard. A written summary is proposed even where no hazards are identified.

Where a landlord's investigation identifies a hazard that poses a ‘significant risk to health or safety’ it is proposed that the landlord must begin repair works within seven calendar days of the written summary being provided. Under present proposals “*a worker being on site physically starting to repair and rectify a hazard*” would constitute ‘beginning’ works. In the event that a significant and imminent risk of harm to health or safety is identified, an enhanced timeframe would apply where any such emergency repairs should be undertaken within 24 hours.

Whilst a landlord must begin repair works within seven calendar days, it is proposed that a landlord must complete any repair works within a reasonable period of time. If a hazard poses a significant, or significant and imminent, risk of harm or danger and works cannot be completed within the specified timeframes, a landlord must offer a decant until the property is safe to return to.

It will be a potential defence to any alleged breach of Awaab's Law if a landlord was unable to comply with the timeframes but can show they have taken all reasonable steps to do so. The consultation specifically refers to access issues and shortages of materials and/or contractors as examples of what may constitute a justifiable defence. Interestingly, the consultation makes specific reference to a landlord being required to make three attempts to access the property to have made reasonable attempts to gain access. It is also proposed that landlords will be required to keep clear

records of their attempts to comply with the prescribed requirements.

## The future

Whilst currently at consultation stage, it seems safe to say that Awaab's Law will be put into effect in some form or other. As with all proposed laws, there are unanswered questions. These will no doubt be the subject of much debate. What constitutes a significant risk to the health and safety of a resident? What reasonable attempts have been made to comply with the timeframes in the event of non-compliance? What constitutes a reasonable period to complete any repairs?

The consultation highlights that there remains an underlying focus on health and safety and particularly hazards that are deemed to pose a risk to the health of residents. Under the current proposals, such issues will require the most prompt action from landlords. Social housing landlords will already be aware of the Guidance issued in September 2023 regarding health risks arising from damp and mould and should reconsider such issues when providing any views or responses on the current consultation.

Social housing landlords should take the opportunity that has been presented to them by the consultation to put forward their views on each of the proposals, highlighting the practical issues they are likely to face if the proposals contained within the consultation are implemented in their present form.

## Further information on the consultation.

We would recommend that registered providers consider and respond to the consultation.

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

**Daniel Conroy**  
Associate, Weightmans



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# Making the most out of the city



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



Julie Johnson

Lists and rankings of cities are often received in two ways; one half will use the perceived success as a sign that they are doing everything right, the other will shrug and say it's entirely subjective. Yet I can't have been the only one who felt a little spring in my step when TimeOut named Liverpool as one of its Top 10 World Cities. Those of us who love Liverpool rank it alongside global cities like New York and Madrid so the recognition feels like a third party endorsement.

In the dark weeks of winter, anything that brings a little joy is worth it, as far as we are concerned at Liverpool BID Company, and it reflects on how much work is done in the city to improve the existence of those living, working and visiting it day in and day out.

Our working days are not what they were, and for those who are still living hybrid existences between home and the office, those days in the city are ones to be savoured, and to make the most out of.

This January, Liverpool BID launched the city's first Yellow Monday. Blue Monday may be a PR concoction - originally to sell plane tickets - but who is going to turn their nose up at a singer serenading commuters as they leave



Moorfields Station, free cups of coffee from Bean Coffee, or bouquets of flowers donated to worthy colleagues at businesses across the city centre? Many different companies joined in the endeavour to bring a little joy into a cold and damp January day and it feels as though it may be a new date in the calendar.

The lunchtime yoga session as part of Yellow Monday is in fact a monthly occurrence. To coincide with one of your office working days, bring in your yoga gear and spend a lunch hour exercising to strengthen both body and mind.

I often find myself watching the mesmerising videos posted onto Liverpool BID's instagram channel showing the soporific street cleaning. As those who spend time in those corners of the internet, there is little more satisfying than a cleaning video, and all the more so when the cleaning is street furniture, pavements, buildings and walls. The

dedicated hours the BID team gives to street cleaning makes the city more attractive, but it also improves our day to day lives. We like to live in clean homes, why should it be any different for our city?

This year, we will also see the first Liverpool Restaurant Week. From 22-28 April, the city's eateries will be filled with offers to tempt diners. From £5 - £35, there will be ways to explore the city plate by plate and try somewhere new. For the days where you work in the city centre, trying something different for lunch, perhaps a new venue or a new dish, could be the best way to celebrate the working week.

Making the most out of our days in the city centre, whether for work or a day trip, are the best way to make it through the winter months. At Liverpool BID our ambition is to make Liverpool the best place to live and work, no matter what lists we appear on.



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

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TO JUSTICE  
FOUNDATION



We were delighted this month to have been successful in our bid for 'Improving Lives Through Advice' funding from the Access to Justice Foundation and the National Lottery. This is a five-year funding programme delivered by The Access to Justice Foundation and The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK. It is designed to support the delivery of free legal advice to marginalised people and communities across England. The funding will ensure our long-term sustainability and allow us to continue our vital work of providing access to justice to all. To have our work recognised by such prestigious funders and receive this funding is a testament to the importance and impact of the service we provide to the community.

### Helping a vulnerable client in partnership with RAISE Advice

Our client, a vulnerable veteran and father of four, came to one of our drop-ins with a County Court summons for possession due to rent arrears. We took instructions from the client and advised regarding possession matter. We referred them to Raise who successfully applied for breathing space for him to be able to get his finances in order and seek professional advice without the fear of

being chased by creditors. Breathing Space is a scheme that provides legal protection to individuals who are struggling with debt. The scheme is available to individuals who meet certain criteria, such as having a debt adviser, and it can last for up to 60 days. Due to the breathing space, an adjournment of the possession hearing was granted for 60 days.

After further discussion it also emerged that he was in real hardship due to UC sanctions and that he may be eligible for PIP so we arranged to request a new application form and for a return appointment for him to get help with the form from our Welfare Benefits adviser. We will also be helping with a discretionary housing payment to help with his arrears and will apply for LAA funding if the landlord persists with their possession claim. Due to the dire state of the client's finances, we also provided him with a hardship payment to enable him to provide for himself and children that week. Raise will also be helping the client with foodbank vouchers, a Debt Relief order, and his general debt issues.

This case illustrates the complex nature of the issues many of our client's face. Often a client will approach us with a single issue and after gaining a clearer picture of their issues, we can see that they need help with numerous aspects of their life. Our client was suffering from PTSD due to being a veteran and had struggled to cope with the many demands of life while trying to provide for his children which meant he had fallen into a damaging cycle of debt and arrears. He came to us in a very vulnerable and scared position and together with Raise, we managed to start to get his life back on track and provide him with the advice and solutions to

enable him to begin to start to sort his life and finances out. Our client also plans to volunteer with us in the future to help people like himself. The impact of access to justice is far reaching and life changing and can never be underestimated.

### Volunteer & Donation Opportunities

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

We are always looking for volunteers to help with the services we offer to the public. For example, advice work, reception and signposting or general admin work.

We have a second volunteer stream to help with our campaigns, community outreach, fundraising, social media presence and event organisation.

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

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

To download our Volunteer Application Pack, please visit [www.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk/get-involved](http://www.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk/get-involved) and e-mail the completed form to [enquiries@merseysidelawcentre.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@merseysidelawcentre.co.uk)



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

As always, our current contact details and drop in session details are below so please do pass these onto anyone you think may benefit from or require our services. If you are unable to attend a drop-in session, there is an online enquiry form on our website. [www.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk/enquiryform](http://www.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk/enquiryform)  
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# The era of open banking has arrived

By **Scott Reece**, Head of IT Services at X-Press Legal Services



**At The Law Society's National Conference in October, Peter Rodd, chief assessor for the Conveyancing Quality Scheme, told the 11% of firms who said they have not undergone a recent audit of practice-wide risk assessment for anti-money laundering, to get an audit done.**

He also called on the 29% of firms who are not Cyber Essentials- or Cyber Essentials Plus-certified to reconsider. 'The risk [of cyber-crime] is substantial,' said Rodd. A change is on the horizon and The Law Society is now emphasising the message X-Press has been passing out to law firms through our continuing professional development (CPD) programmes for many years.

Let's take for example, Source of Funds at the beginning of every conveyancing transaction. It is still believed by many law firms that verbal or written statements accompanied by printed bank statements are sufficient forms of evidence. They are not.

It is important that the legal sector becomes familiar with open banking for Source of Funds checks. Not only does this help prevent money-laundering it also helps establish the provenance of the particular funds for use in a transaction. Using a blended approach and utilising this new technology is proven to reduce the amount of time that is spent compiling this information.

At X-Press we work with numerous suppliers to

provide legal firms with a choice of Source of Funds products to suit transactions of varying complexities and property types. These tools are simple to use, secure and incredibly accurate in the evidence they provide. And, as a Cyber Essentials Plus certified firm ourselves, we only partner with suppliers who match our commitment to online security.

Source of Funds tools have become incredibly sophisticated over recent years and can be worked into firm's existing workflows. The latest products are all incredibly easy to use, helping conveyancers streamline documentation collection by swiftly providing data, answers and evidence through open banking. Such tools are transforming the convoluted process of conducting manual checks and provide conveyancers with the armour they need to protect themselves against money laundering and non-compliance.

Source of Funds products help legal firms meet and prove their compliance responsibilities while also saving conveyancers a lot of time and money. The use of open banking enables faster, accurate decisions that contribute to speeding up the transaction process. If your firm isn't using a Source of Funds tool, it may be the right time to reassess your current process. It could be the difference between passing that SRA audit or not.

Now 2024 is in full swing, I highly recommend booking your firm in for an annual compliance audit. Think of Cyber Essentials and practice wide AML assessments as an MOT for your firm that will enable you to keep the conveyancing engine running smoothly. And open banking is the upgrade your Sat Nav needs to ensure you are always heading in the right direction!

*X-Press Legal Services continues to set the benchmark for quality, reliability, and expertise in the property search and conveyancing industry. With a widespread network encompassing all of England & Wales, alongside a comprehensive suite of services, the company remains at the forefront of the property search industry, catering to the diverse needs of its clients. Its local office owners provide conveyancers with a wraparound service including residential & commercial searches, pre & post completion services, cyber security, and compliance products. The company delivers thousands of searches and reports to the conveyancing sector annually and works with over 500 legal practices.*

*For more information contact X-Press Legal Services North Cheshire, Merseyside and Manchester on 01925 393 333 or email [central.7377@xpresslegal.uk](mailto:central.7377@xpresslegal.uk). Visit the website at [xpresslegal.co.uk](http://xpresslegal.co.uk).*





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**To find out more, please contact Adam Cooper**  
**T: 01925 393333 E: [adamc.7377@xpresslegal.co.uk](mailto:adamc.7377@xpresslegal.co.uk)**

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# Cohabitation: A Contentious Probate Perspective

**The legal implications of cohabitation have been making headlines recently, with a number of changes to the entitlement of cohabitantes to bring them more in line with married couples and civil partners.**

In 2017, we saw the Supreme Court disapply the requirement for pension nomination forms to be completed for cohabitantes to benefit. The following year, the Supreme Court deemed that the exclusion of cohabitantes from entitlement to Widowed Parents Allowance (“WPA”) was unlawful, paving the way for WPA to be replaced in 2023 with the Bereavement Support Payment scheme.

Pausing there, an estimated 21,000 households might be entitled to backdated payments; the deadline to claim is 8 February 2024.

Looking ahead, the Labour Party has pledged a reform of law affecting cohabiting couples if they are successful at the General Election which is likely to take place in 2024. Speaking in October 2023, the Shadow Attorney General, **Emily Thornberry MP**, said:

*“For too long, women in co-habiting couples have been left with no rights when those relationships come to an end. If there is no joint property or shared parental dues, a man can leave his partner with nothing, especially if he has the means to take it to court and... she does not.”*

TV’s money-saving expert **Martin Lewis** has also drawn attention to the current risks to cohabitantes on his Money Show Live, saying:

*“A special point to anyone who is cohabiting; you’re not married, you’re not a civil partner. If you have been living together for 30 years and you’ve got 9 children, it still means nothing. Your partner wouldn’t get anything” (21 November 2023).*

Lawyers specialising in will, trust and estate disputes know all too well the number of cohabitantes taken by surprise at their lack of legal rights upon the death of their partner.

The Inheritance (Provision for Family & Dependents) Act 1975 (“the Inheritance Act”) provides some degree of protection for cohabitantes meeting certain criteria, namely that can bring a claim if they have been living in the same household as if they were husband and wife or civil partners for at least 2 years at the date of death. In cases where a cohabitee cannot meet the criteria, they may have an alternative claim as a person maintained by their deceased partner. The Court will consider reasonable financial provision from the estate based on what is required for the claimant’s maintenance, not their current lifestyle.

The questions which arise in contentious probate disputes in determining if a person qualifies as a deceased person’s cohabitee under the Inheritance Act can be a useful touchpoint in considering any future changes to the current legal framework for living cohabitantes.

Firstly, what constitutes “living in the same household” when the housing arrangements and lifestyles of modern families vary significantly? Some potential scenarios might be:

- Spending less than 7 nights a week in the same property;
- Each party retaining their own property and staying together on alternate nights;
- One party retaining a property with their children and staying at the other person’s property on child-free days;
- One party working overseas or in the military;
- Parents adopting the “nesting” approach to childcare/parenting;
- One party with overnight caring responsibilities for a relative; or
- Parties living next door to each other

with an adjoining door.

Any legal reform will need to carefully define what amounts to “the same household” to protect cohabitantes engaging in the less common forms of these living arrangements.

A further question to address is when does the clock start on cohabitation? In marriages and civil partnerships, the date of commencement will be clearly defined on a legal document, but even if parties have a cohabitation agreement the start date for cohabitation might not be reflected by the date on the document. Possible examples of when a cohabitation might begin include:

- Removal of single person discount for council tax;
- Change of address with authorities e.g. DVLA, HMRC; or
- Moving belongings or a pet into the other party’s house.

If legal reform will provide safeguards only after a certain time-period, clearly defining the commencement of cohabitation would give certainty and potentially avoid future disputes.

Perhaps the most complex assessment of cohabitation as currently defined in the Inheritance Act is what amounts to living “as husband and wife” or “as civil partners”. In the case of *Re Watson*, Neuberger J directed us to consider normal perceptions and the opinion of a reasonable person but he warned that we should not ignore the “*multifarious nature of marital relationships*.”

**HHJ Judge Norris KC** gave further guidance in *Churchill v Roach*, indicating that we should take into account elements of permanence, elements of mutual support, community of resources, the degree of voluntary restraint on personal freedom and the frequency and intimacy of contact. In that case, the claimant didn’t succeed



on their cohabitee claim because there were “two separate domestic economies” but they succeeded on claim as a person maintained by the deceased.

If there are future disputes in relation to whether a former relationship amounted to cohabitation, we would expect there to be evidence from the two parties instead of only one witness, which is usually the case in contentious probate disputes. The lack of evidence from the deceased in Inheritance Act claims can result in attempts by the claimant to take advantage. Throughout my many years of experience in this specialism, I have come across people living in the same property where one occupier claimed cohabitation after the death of the first, including:

- Both parties in a broken-down relationship refusing to move out, with the survivor alleging the relationship continued in secret;
- Parties keeping entirely separate finances with the exception of utilities, as housemates would;
- One party frequently going on holidays without telling the other;
- One party alleging a cohabitee agreement had been procured by undue influence;
- One party being unable to physically leave the property due to disability;
- A handyman moving into the house of a dementia sufferer and claiming they had had a “secret relationship”; and
- Lockdown relationships which were never intended to amount to permanent cohabitation.

It is hoped that when both parties are able to present their own evidence of cohabitation, there will be less scope for one party to misrepresent the nature of the relationship unopposed. However, practitioners should be alert to the risks of this occurring and apply proper scrutiny to the evidence if law reform does take place, particularly if there is an existing imbalance in the parties’ relationship which would put one at a clear disadvantage if they were found not to be “cohabiting” in accordance with some future definition of what that means.

**Stephanie Kerr**  
Partner  
Irwin Mitchell LLP



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# Regulation Update

## February 2024

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



Andrea Cohen

**As 2024 gets fully underway, we provide our usual overview of what has been happening in the last month in the world of risk and compliance, including recent regulatory and disciplinary decisions.**

#### Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (Amendment) Regulations 2023

These regulations came into force on 10 January 2024 and amend the MLRs. As a result, UK PEPs are treated as lower risk than overseas PEPs but must nonetheless be subject to enhanced due diligence (EDD). There are however exceptions to this where there are factors other than the nature of their position which increase the level of risk.

The amendments do not mean that no EDD is required for domestic PEPs but, if appropriate, where taking a risk-based approach, the PEP is considered to be low risk, you may, for example, take less intrusive steps to establish source of funds and source of

wealth. If you've not already done so, firms are advised to read the amended regulations, review their policies, controls and procedures (PCPs) and FWRA and make changes to them if necessary, including client and matter risk assessments, and document that you have done so, even if no changes were needed. Any changes made should be shared with all those working in scope of MLR.

#### Changes to the UK sanctions list

More changes have been made to the UK sanctions list, including, as at the date of writing: 2 administrative amendments under the Democratic People's Republic of Korea sanctions regime; 21 administrative amendments and 4 amendments under the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaeda sanctions regime, and 1 new designation under the Bosnia and Herzegovina sanctions regime.

#### CILEX reports widespread support for its regulatory reform agenda

CILEX has published its report ([https://www.cilex.org.uk/about\\_cilex/governance/annual-report/cilex-reforms-consultation-outcome/](https://www.cilex.org.uk/about_cilex/governance/annual-report/cilex-reforms-consultation-outcome/)) on the consultation and public polling it conducted between August and November 2023 which, among other things, consulted on the proposal to redelegate the provision of its regulation to the SRA. All questions relating to that topic achieved at least a 60% positive response among the CILEX members, employers and other respondents.

CILEX will announce its next steps in this regard after the SRA Board has met to discuss the outcomes of its own consultation.

#### Cybercrime incidents

In response to recent high-profile cybercrime incidents, including the December attack on legal sector IT provider CTS, the SRA has published a press release (<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-123-cybercrime/>)

The SRA emphasises that, in the event of a cyberattack on any firm or its clients, this should be reported promptly. There is an obligation to report if there has been a serious breach of the Standards and Regulations under paragraph 3.9 of the Code of Conduct for Firms, but in all cases where an attack could or has had an impact on clients, it would still expect a prompt report to be made.

Firms should take this opportunity to review cybersecurity arrangements with a view to limiting the likelihood of becoming the victim of an attack and minimising the negative effects of any successful breaches. As part of this, firms should undertake a regular review of any third-party IT suppliers, and vet third parties for their security policies, procedures and any historical security breaches. It is also recommended that firms put in place a business continuity plan to help ensure that essential systems will remain operational in the event of a cyberattack.

Our CyXcel team <https://www.weightmans.com/products/cyxcel/> may be able to assist you.

#### Legal Ombudsman change of address

From 22 January 2024, the LeO's PO Box address changed to: Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167, Slough,



SL1 0EH. Firms will need to update any relevant documentation, such as complaints policy, Terms of Business, client engagement letters, final complaint response and website to reflect the change.

### Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (ECCTA)

Companies House are aiming to introduce the first set of changes brought in by the ECCTA on 4 March 2024. These changes need secondary legislation, so this date is still dependent on parliamentary timetables, but it will not be earlier than 4 March. The changes will include: greater powers to query information and request supporting evidence; stronger checks on company names; new rules for registered office addresses; a requirement for all companies to supply a registered email address; a requirement for all companies to confirm they are forming the company for a lawful purpose, and to confirm its intended future activities will be lawful on their confirmation statement; the ability to annotate the register when information appears confusing or misleading; taking steps to clean up the register, using data matching to identify and remove inaccurate information, and sharing data with other government departments and law enforcement agencies. Other measures, such as identity verification, will be introduced at a later date.

### New practice notes and guidance

#### Law Society practice notes

The Law Society has published one new practice note since our last update:

- Protection for client accounts <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/client-care/protection-for-client-accounts>

It has also collated its resources, including mental health guides and advice for supporting vulnerable clients <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/advocacy/mental-health-guides-and-advice-for-supporting-vulnerable-clients>

### Disciplinary and regulatory decisions

There have been a large number of decisions reported since our last update. These include a significant fine being issued in relation to a failure to conduct proper client due diligence (CDD) further fines for breaches of the SRA Transparency Rules and the first fixed penalties for failure to submit diversity data, prompting the publication of a press release on the topic (<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/more-fixed-penalties/>).

#### AML breaches

##### SDT fines top-50 firm £500,000

The SDT has fined a top-50 firm £500,000 and ordered it to pay costs of more than £128,000 for failing to conduct proper CDD on a Liberian shipping company and to conduct adequate ongoing monitoring in relation to 14 transactions. A former partner was also fined £11,900 and ordered to pay costs of nearly £55,000 in relation to the same. The full ruling will be published in the coming weeks.

This is the second sanction levied against the firm in the past seven years. In 2017, the firm was fined £50,000 and three partners £10,000 each for allowing its client account to be used as a banking facility and breaching AML rules.

##### Fines for AML failures

Another firm has been fined over £23,000 for failing, between June 2017 and January 2020, to have in place a firm-wide risk assessment, policies, controls and procedures (PCPs) to manage the risks of money laundering and terrorist financing, and the necessary client and matter risk assessments. The firm agreed to pay costs of £1,350.

A solicitor, who was owner, COLP and MLRO of a firm shut down by the SRA after its parent company went into liquidation, was fined £14,100 and ordered to pay costs of £1,350 for failure to have a compliant FWRA in

place, despite completing a declaration to that effect in 2020, failure to verify source of funds in conveyancing matters, and the AML policy referred to 2003 MLR. There was no evidence that money laundering had occurred.

A solicitor has been fined for failure to conduct adequate CDD in respect of five conveyancing transactions which all had unusual features and signs of money laundering. He further failed to carry out ongoing anti-money laundering and risk assessment checks, and failed to maintain proper files or documentation about the transactions. He was directed to pay £15,000 and costs of £1,350.

Separately, a Chartered Legal Executive failed to carry out the relevant client identification checks in the context of a gift of property to four children, and as a result was mistaken as to who was the owner of the property. He received a written rebuke due to extenuating personal circumstances and the fact he self-reported to CILEX and underwent further AML training following the incident. He agreed to pay the SRA's costs of £300.

#### Eight more firms found to be in breach of the SRA Transparency Rules

In addition to the three firms fined in November, eight more firms have each been fined £750 and directed to pay costs of £150 for failure to publish the information required by the SRA Transparency Rules.

#### Fines for failure to submit workforce diversity data

Three firms have each been fined £750 and directed to pay costs of £150 for failing to submit diversity data within the deadline.

#### Fine for failure to notify material change

A firm has been fined £750 and ordered to pay costs of £150 after failing to promptly notify the SRA of a material change to the information it had previously provided to the SRA about its COFA.

## Regulation Update Continued

### Solicitors fined for drink driving

Two solicitors have been fined by the SRA £1,500 for driving while over the legal limit and ordered to pay costs of £300. A third solicitor was fined what was considered to be an unusually high amount of just over £10,000 with £300 costs, but that has been surpassed by a fine of almost £14,000, over 30 times higher than the court financial penalty.

### Scottish solicitor given section 43 order for sexual misconduct

A Scottish Solicitor working in London has been banned from being employed at a law firm without SRA approval after he touched a female colleague in a sexual manner without her consent at a work event. He was also ordered to pay costs of £600.

### Solicitor fined for failures while acting for family friends

An experienced solicitor self-reported to the SRA in 2021 as she had acted for family friends without professional indemnity insurance under the mistaken belief that this was not necessary where she did not charge for her legal services and informed the clients that she had no such insurance. She said she had not realised that the rules had changed in November 2019, highlighting the importance of keeping up to date in relation to regulatory obligations. In addition, she held client money in accounts that were not designated client accounts. She agreed to a fine of £768 and to pay costs of £4,000.

### London solicitor fined £10,000 for unauthorised practice as a sole practitioner

A solicitor has agreed to a fine of £10,000 and to pay costs of just over £4,000 after assisting 'Person A' with

civil proceedings. Person A was not a client of the firm she worked for, and she was not authorised by the SRA to practice as a sole practitioner. In the course of the civil proceedings, she made misleading statements to Coventry County Court in stating that she was a sole practitioner and, separately, that she had been appointed to act for Person A.

### How Compli can help...

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

**Andrea Cohen**  
Compli,  
Weightmans LLP

## Merseyside Junior Lawyers Division



Callum Waterhouse

On 18 January 2024, the MJLD welcomed its members to their first social of 2024 at Point Blank on Castle Street. The event was kindly sponsored by BCL Legal, and it would not have been possible without their support! The night was a massive success with 75 of the MJLD's lawyers, paralegals, legal executives, trainees and newly qualified solicitors gathering for food, drinks, networking, and target practice within Point Blank's practice range. The event proved to be a great evening for MJLD members to catch up with the committee, meet our sponsors from BCL Legal with BCL Legal carrying out a competition to win a £75 voucher for San Carlo Liverpool which was won by our very own, Gemma Castell.

Overall, it was a great event with a brilliant turn out. We would like to thank all our members for their attendance so soon after the festive period. As well as this, we would like to thank Point Blank for the great venue as well as a further thank you to our sponsors, BCL Legal.

The MJLD encourages all junior lawyers to join our network, which will play host to further events in 2024.

**Callum Waterhouse**  
MJLD Social Representative  
Fletchers Solicitors







# Pathways to the legal profession

**Liverpool Law Society** is pleased to arrange this online event for all schools across the **Liverpool City Region**. It is your chance to learn about the different ways it is possible to pursue a career in law. A degree in law is not the only way to enter the profession; for instance apprenticeships are becoming more widely available and popular.

Date **6th March 2024**

Moderator **Gaynor Williams**

Time **1.30pm - 3.30pm**

Venue **President of Liverpool Law Society  
Online**

## Programme

**The University route, costs and the benefits of studying for a degree** by Lydia Hayes, Director of Recruitment and Admissions for Law and Professor of Labour Rights at The School of Law & Social Justice at the University of Liverpool

**Going into Law having a non-law degree** by Laura Samaroo, Solicitor, Senior Lecturer in Law and Programme Leader LLM in Legal Practice Lecturer at Liverpool John Moores University

**The Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) & what LPC** was by Nicola Walker, Campus Manager – Liverpool & Chester at The University of Law

**The Legal Executive Route** by Lydia Jones, Business Development Representative, CILEX (The Chartered Institute of Legal Executives)

**Apprenticeships** by a tutor at the University of Law

**Becoming a barrister & life in the Law** by Isabella Denn-White, Barrister, 7 Harrington Street Chambers

**Recruiting process for both graduates and apprentices at a law firm** by Denise Wright, Early Careers Adviser at Weightmans

**A solicitor apprentice's view** by a Solicitor Apprentice at Weightmans

# SRA Accounts Rules compliance: A 'how to' guide by Nicola Moore-Miller, Jayva



Nicola Moore-Miller

**Every law firm authorised by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) has a mandatory requirement to comply with the SRA Accounts Rules. Unfortunately, law firms are regularly found to be in breach of the rules.**

Breaches aren't just a small firm problem or a big firm problem. Accounts breaches are a human problem.

## The human factor

While breaches can be unintentional, often they're deliberate. Some people get into dire financial situations and look for an easy way out. Other people want a lifestyle they can't afford and seek an easy source of funds. Whatever the issue and whatever the reason, client funds are seen as the easy money solution.

Beyond the news headlines, you're likely to discover a deviant and desperate partner or cashier with an addictive gambling habit to feed or crippling debts to pay. In extreme cases, you'll find individuals using illegally obtained funds for criminal activity.

## The aftermath of fraud

Protecting client money is the first priority for law firms. According to the SRA Accounts Rules, money belonging to consumers is 'sacrosanct' and its misuse has very serious consequences including SRA intervention, referral to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal, being struck off, permanent closure and possible criminal convictions.

There's a good reason for this safeguarding focus and harsh treatment... the theft of client money causes great distress and ruins lives. Move to the other side of the fence for a moment and imagine you've completed the sale of your home with £500,000 of proceeds sitting in your law firm's bank account. Then, they go bust and you can't get your hands on your money. Your life's turned upside down in an instant.

These are the real-life, devastating implications of solicitors failing to keep client money safe, neglecting their regulatory duties and undermining the public trust in our profession.

## The compliance challenge

If someone's intent on defrauding, they'll find a way to do it. Typically, the misappropriation of funds isn't visible from standard accounting reports.

For instance, your bank reconciliation will list inbound and outbound monies to and from your bank. If a swindler's changing the recipient details on the bank payment in order to redirect into an account owned by themselves, it'll only come to light when clients check the whereabouts of their cash and subsequent investigations including involvement by your bank clarifying accounts paid into. Suddenly, everything starts to make sense.

Alternatively, a forensic audit of your

books will highlight discrepancies for earlier resolution – before potentially millions of pounds of debt and stolen funds build up.

## The steps to compliance

So, what do you need to do to keep your accounts clean, pristine and secure? Here are a few tips to help you out:

### *Tip #1: Make sure your financial management processes are robust*

Clearly documented, robust accounting controls, which are not just 'assumed' to be happening, but are checked by an internal audit function, go a long way towards compliance. From reconciling bank accounts at least every five weeks, to scrutinising unidentified transactions, ensure you perform the right steps at the right time in the right way. It begins by understanding the SRA Accounts Rules thoroughly and introducing better processes for assured regulatory compliance. To achieve this goal, training of ALL staff, not just cashiers, is absolutely essential.

### *Tip #2: Assign roles, responsibilities and authorities*

Trickier for smaller-sized law firms with fewer staff, if you're able, designate specific cashiering-related duties to different people – for example, someone entering accounts data, another processing payments, another reconciling your bank accounts etc. Also, set up controls in the form of authorisation levels and systems permissions to create boundaries and prevent corruption.

These combined best-practice methodologies, cross-referencing checks and layers of approval act as a deterrent or, at the very least, allow you to notice anomalies before it's too late.

*Continues over page.*





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**Andrew Horwich, Symes Bains Broomer Solicitors**

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**Andrew Gray, Truth Legal**



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## SRA Accounts Rules compliance continued

### *Tip #3: Run an accounting health check*

Comprehensive health checks reveal vital business intelligence and compliance insights. Many of the aforementioned problems would be identified and headed off at the pass with this type of measure.

Recognising you may not possess these skills in-house, it's worth knowing consultancies such as Jayva perform health checks day in, day out. Thanks to our health check's thorough financial review, detailed compliance analysis, reassuring reconciliation verification, helpful audit preparation and easy-to-implement actionable report, your accounts will be shipshape in no time.

### *Tip #4: Report breaches accurately and promptly*

While minor compliance failures only need to be recorded in-house by your COLP or COFA, serious breaches must always be reported to the SRA. The SRA's Code of Conduct dictates whether a breach is considered reportable or not and you'll need to apply your professional judgement too. Remember to strike the correct balance between reporting trivial oversights unnecessarily and withholding information about grave matters. The latter scenario will cause the SRA to come down much harder on the law firms and individuals concerned.

### *Tip #5: Carry out a best-practice study*

Combining #1 to #4, tap into the expertise of external legal-specialist consultants and trainers like Jayva to take a close look at your existing processes, and recommend improvements to and restructuring of day-to-day, month-end and year-

end procedures – for optimum outcomes and guaranteed compliance.

These best-practice advisory services are not simply about showing which buttons to press in your legal accounting and case management software. It's a consultative approach to making crucial changes to your internal operations – so you can run a first-rate accounting function that industry regulators will approve of.

### **The final words**

In conclusion, there may be occasions when you know your accounts are in a muddle. This can genuinely come about for a number of valid reasons, whether it's change of staff, merger or acquisition, change of system, staff illness, whatever – all of which impact a law firm's operations and that's when risks increase.

We'd love to say instances of fraud are rare and one-off events – but, sadly, they're growing in volume. The majority of law firms have only good intent at heart, but breaches of the rules can and do happen. We're human and we make mistakes. The key is identifying, resolving and reporting.

There's huge variance in the stances taken by law firms regarding financial management and SRA Accounts Rules compliance. We're here to assist law firms with standardising and strengthening techniques for safer bookkeeping in line with rules and regulations. Learn about our advisory services by emailing [info@jayvaglobal.com](mailto:info@jayvaglobal.com), calling 0333 20 20 995 or visiting [www.jayvaglobal.com/legal-accounting-consultancy-services](http://www.jayvaglobal.com/legal-accounting-consultancy-services).



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# Liverpool Law Society

## Inaugural Golf Day – 6th June 2024



The LLS Corporate Golf Day is open to all firms, chambers, in-house departments and other organisations who are members of Liverpool Law Society.

Enjoy a day of golfing, networking and camaraderie with fellow professionals.

**Date:** Thursday, 6th June 2024

**Time:** Tee Times start from 12 Noon

**Location:** Caldy Golf Club

**Address:** Links Hey Rd, Caldy, Wirral, CH48 1NB

### Event Highlights:

- **Tournament:** The day will feature an exciting golf tournament at Caldy Golf Club, known for its beautiful coastal views and picturesque setting. The course provides the perfect challenge for golfers of all abilities.
- **Prizes:** Prizes will be awarded for

various categories, including Longest Drive, Closest to the Pin, Team Winner and the overall Tournament Winner.

- **Networking:** It's not just about golf! This event will provide a wonderful opportunity to network and socialise with fellow members. Forge new friendships, catch up with old ones, and enjoy the company of like-minded individuals.
- **Dinner & Awards Ceremony:** After the tournament, we will gather for a delicious dinner and an awards ceremony to recognise the tournament winners and share memorable moments from the day.

### Registration Details

To book a team, go online to <https://www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk/events/2024-golf-tournament/>

### Entry Fee

£600 +vat per Team of 4

The entry fee includes light refreshments on arrival, green fees and evening dinner.

### Sponsorship Opportunities

We are also offering sponsorship opportunities for local businesses and individuals who wish to support our event. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact Sharon Stanton (Jaidan Events Ltd) for more information – [sharon@jaidan.co.uk](mailto:sharon@jaidan.co.uk).

We look forward to welcoming you to the Liverpool Law Society Golf Day and making it a memorable experience for everyone.

Let's make this inaugural golf day a resounding success, and we can't wait to see you on the green!

# Recent scientific developments in hair strand testing and racial bias in current practices of hair strand testing



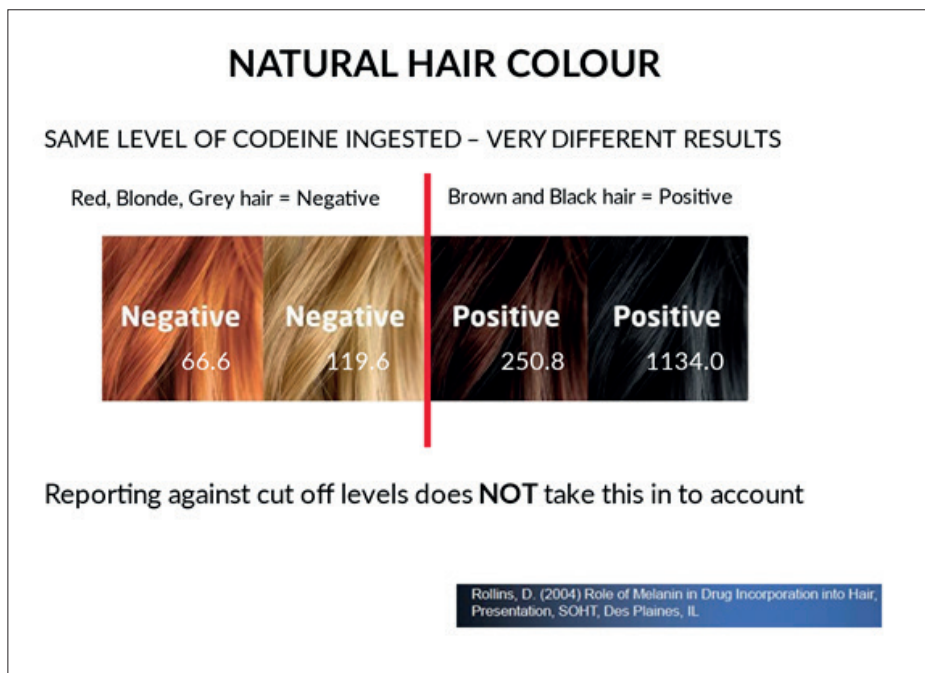
Sarah Branson

Sarah Branson has recently joined Paul Hunter, Technical Director at FTS on a Podcast for Today's Family Lawyer, where they focus on racial bias in some practices of hair strand testing. The Podcast was broadcast on 25 January 2024.

Sarah Branson is a barrister at Coram Chambers, specialising in acting for children, parents, and local authorities in the most complex public law proceedings. Paul Hunter is an accomplished expert witness in the field of drug and alcohol testing, with over 20 years' experience developing and running specialist substance-misuse analytical laboratories.

This is a summary of what is covered: The use of hair strand testing for drugs and alcohol has been around for over twenty-five years and is now commonplace in the family courts.

Despite case law setting out its limitations as examined below, a positive hair strand test will often lead to the seemingly irrefutable conclusion that drugs or excessive alcohol have been consumed.



Often conclusions are drawn about the number of drugs consumed from the tests alone. A positive drug test in the face of a denial about using substances (or using them at the levels suggested) will lead to professionals, working with that family, to accuse them of being dishonest about their substance misuse problems, lacking insight or being in denial.

Despite the certainty with which these results are often treated, studies and data accumulated over the past 10 years cast doubt on the reliability of previously drawn conclusions.

This podcast explores the recent academic research into this evolving scientific field and highlights areas where caution must be exercised in drawing definitive conclusions. It demonstrates that in many cases the standardised use of cut off levels used for interpretation and reporting hair strand testing, employed by the majority of testing companies, creates a racial bias and therefore caution must

always be exercised when results are presented as 'positive' or 'negative'.

Specific, real examples are covered in detail during the podcast.

FTS has been innovating and leading the way in best practice D&A testing for over 13 years. They do not use cut-off levels providing a complete forensic investigation into all the variables available to help determine the correct decision for the child and the parents. They have their own in-house laboratory which is accredited to UKAS & ISO Standards, and they deliver a gold standard model to support vulnerable children. They are the only laboratory that currently meets the guidance provided by the High Court and TIAFT, delivering the necessary burden of proof for the family court.

A supporting article can also be found on the FTS website – just look in our News section, and Sarah Branson.  
<https://www.forensic-testing.co.uk/news/>





# LEAP and WillSuite launch new end-to-end digital solution for estate planning and management

LEAP, the global provider of legal practice management software, and WillSuite, the estate planning innovator, have joined forces to launch LEAP Estates, an end-to-end digital solution for estate management, probate and lifetime planning professionals.



Seb Shakh & Craig Matthews

LEAP Estates is a specialist practice productivity solution that equips Private Client practitioners with the tools they need to manage matters on a single platform. Previously, many departments had to use multiple applications for practice management, wills, LPA applications, trusts and probate applications. However, the new solution from LEAP and WillSuite provides a single location for all these functions, improving and simplifying both the practitioner and client experience.

The mission of LEAP Estates is to continually elevate the provision of private client service through innovative technology. Both based in Nottingham and benefiting from the city's booming technology scene, the two pioneers of legal cloud technology have developed LEAP Estates to support practitioners navigate the changing legal technology landscape. The solution benefits from the shared knowledge, development capabilities and operational resources from both businesses, which is essential in delivering highly effective software with estate management, probate and lifetime planning professionals in mind.

As a specialised division, LEAP Estates offers intuitive information and processes that can be shared with clients, facilitating dynamic and proactive estate planning. LEAP Estates

users will also have access to the software provider's extensive content library, including new recent additions for Private Client practitioners.

One recent addition to the content library is a document that provides hyperlinks to all the legacy settings on social media. This document is designed to be shared to clients. It offers advice on how to enable legacy settings on platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for individuals considering their legacy and making a will.

*"Estate planning and Private Client practice probably evolve more rapidly than any other area of law, because it responds to how we live our lives today," says Craig Matthews, CEO of LEAP Estates. "As a society our attitudes to estate planning are changing, with healthier and younger people considering lifetime planning. Each new generation brings a different asset portfolio, and family structures now vary, impacting wills and probate services. Assets have also evolved, with elements like cryptocurrency, NFTs and digital banking now playing a role. We've developed LEAP Estates to support Private Client practitioners in meeting the evolving needs of individuals in their lifetime planning."*

LEAP Estates also includes key functionality for will writing, available through WillSuite. This includes mirroring across wills and LPAs, as well as LPA copying. The will writing software provider works in partnership with the Institute of Professional Will Writers and The Society of Will Writers, with over 3,500 wills and 2,500 LPAs drafted on the WillSuite platform each week.

**Seb Shakh**, founder and CEO of WillSuite comments, *"Since inception in 2015, WillSuite has grown from strength to strength. Our software is now firmly a market-leader, and simplifying the delivery of Private Client work for thousands across the profession is what we do best. This collaboration with LEAP is the next logical step in our journey and pairing our expertise with the world's largest legal*

*tech platform ensures we can deliver even greater advancements and efficiencies within the sector together through a single integrated solution."*

LEAP Estates can sit within a specialist private firm or a department of a firm. It is also available to accountants offering lifetime planning and probate services, will writers, estate planners and IFAs. For more information, please visit [www.leapestates.co.uk](http://www.leapestates.co.uk).

## About LEAP Estates

LEAP Estates occupies a unique position in the legal software market, providing specialist software for probate solicitors and estate planners.

With powerful features and functionality, the innovative solution provides everything you need to manage your client's wills, LPAs and estates efficiently, including case management, accounting, document assembly and management, will building and legal publishing assets in one integrated cloud solution.

For more information, please visit [www.leap.co.uk](http://www.leap.co.uk).

## About WillSuite

WillSuite offers cloud-based software that simplifies the process of drafting Wills, LPAs, and other documents for Will drafters, Financial advisers, Solicitors, and Estate planners. With innovation at its core, WillSuite aids efficiency, minimising errors, and improving client service and has allowed practitioners to generate over 600,000 Wills and 1 million documents since inception in 2015. Partnered with The Society of Will Writers and the Institute of Professional Willwriters, WillSuite includes document automation tools delivering up to date content and clauses written in plain English, seamless integrations, and improved client communication via custom workflows and automated branded channels. Learn more at <https://willsuite.co.uk/contact>.

# Charity Spotlight: The NSPCC in Liverpool

On December 22 2023, landmarks around the UK including the World Museum Liverpool, St George's Hall, Liverpool Town Hall, the Mersey Gateway Bridge and Blackpool Tower were lit up green to support the NSPCC and symbolise hope the charity offers to young people in their darkest hours.

Here is an exclusive look at the charity's history and the work its staff and volunteers carry out from its North West hub, from the NSPCC's **Paula Marshall**.

## History of the NSPCC in Liverpool

The organisation we now know as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), was established in May 1889, but its roots lie right here in Liverpool where the very first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (SPCC) in Britain was founded in April 1883.



Thomas Frederick Agnew

The SPCC was founded by Liverpool businessman **Thomas Frederick Agnew**, and a London SPCC was established in July 1884 by **Reverend Benjamin Waugh**, and these became the NSPCC we know today.

The Liverpool and District branch of the NSPCC was founded on 1 July 1895 and Agnew served as treasurer. It covered Bootle, Crosby, Eccleston, Formby, Garston, Huyton Quarry, Litherland, Old Swan, Prescot, St. Helens, Seaforth, Waterloo, Whiston and Woolton. Another branch, with its own inspector, was formed in St Helens during 1896. The Liverpool SPCC and NSPCC finally merged in 1953.



The LSPCC, circa 1895

## What happens in the NSPCC hub?

Today in Liverpool, the NSPCC runs services from its North West hub, in Great Homer Street, less than two miles from the city centre.

The hub was built in 2007 and received a £6 million donation from Matalan founder **John Hargreaves** who had his first market stall at Great Homer Street Market. The building is modelled on the shape of a hug and has a courtyard garden. It is also home to a Childline base where thousands of counselling sessions are delivered to children across the UK.

Practitioners offer services to the local community such as Domestic Abuse Recovering Together, supporting mothers and children to break the cycle of domestic abuse and Pregnancy in Mind, which is a preventative, evidence-based mental health service for parents-to-be who are at risk of or experiencing mild to moderate anxiety and/or depression during the perinatal period.

They also offer Letting the Future In, a therapeutic service for children who have been sexually abused.

The Schools Service team has a base at the North West hub, working alongside their volunteers. They are responsible for visiting primary schools across the region and delivering Speak out, Stay

Safe - a programme for five to 11-year-olds that helps them understand abuse in all its forms and directs them to any help available.

Since April, the North West service has delivered 225 virtual assemblies reaching 56,336 children. A further 8,407 children have received NSPCC-led workshops.

If you're passionate about preventing child abuse, the NSPCC Schools team is looking to recruit new Speak Out, Stay Safe volunteers to deliver workshops in primary schools to years five and six in the North West.

If you're interested in becoming a volunteer please email [volunteerrecruitment@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:volunteerrecruitment@nspcc.org.uk)

## Delivering national change

Around 34,000 online grooming crimes were recorded by UK police in the past six years, including more than 6,000 in the North West. The NSPCC and its staff and volunteers across the North West and the UK have been campaigning for new online safety legislation throughout that time.

In September last year, the NSPCC welcomed the passing of the Online Safety Bill, a ground-breaking piece of legislation which it is hoped will radically change the landscape for children online.

After years of campaigning, tech companies will now have a legal duty to protect children from sexual abuse and harmful material on social media sites, gaming apps and messaging services.

The Government first promised regulation to help protect children online at the NSPCC's annual conference in 2018, following the launch of the charity's Wild West Web campaign.





The opening of the NSPCC's North West Hub, the Hargreaves Centre in Great Homer Street

The Online Safety Bill has been shaped in large part by survivors of abuse, bereaved parents and young people themselves who have campaigned tirelessly to ensure the legislation leads to real change for children.

**Sir Peter Wanless**, NSPCC Chief Executive, described the passing of the bill as a 'momentous day for children'.

### Safeguarding and working with partners

During Keeping Your Child Safe in Sport Week in October last year, Liverpool, Everton, Tranmere Rovers, Manchester City, Cumberland FA, Liverpool County FA and the Liverpool Tennis Centre all supported the NSPCC's campaign.

NSPCC staff joined Tranmere Rovers manager **Nigel Atkins** on the pitch before a game to highlight the campaign and encourage parents to be involved in their child's sporting journey.

Volunteers work at the Childline base in the North West hub to support children and young people across the UK.

Originally founded by **Dame Esther Rantzen**, Childline offers support to children and young people up to their 19th birthday around the UK 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

It's accessible via the phone or web chat

and can offer support on any issue shared. Over the 12 days of Christmas, the UK wide team delivered just over 5,500 counselling sessions, 35% of which related to mental and emotional health issues.

In 2023, Childline in Liverpool also launched a new service with Merseyside Police offering Childline to young people in custody for the first time.

The Childline call will allow experienced counsellors to offer those young people confidential advice and support, aside from the legal advice provided by a solicitor.

The idea came from retired Merseyside Police officer **Deborah Rigby**, who is now a supervisor at Childline in Liverpool.

She approached the force and then worked together with **Constable Christopher Beedle** from Merseyside Police to make the idea a reality.

**Deborah** said: "As a former police officer, I have first-hand experience of working with children in custody and I know what a difference a service like this could make to their lives."

It is hoped that other forces across the country will follow Merseyside in adopting it.

Find out more about Childline see [nspcc.org.uk/childline](https://nspcc.org.uk/childline) or call 0800 1111

In addition to Childline, our NSPCC Helpline is there for any UK adult concerned about a child or young person either in their personal or professional capacity.

Parents and carers can contact us about how best to support their child or young person and any concerns no matter how small can be shared. We've just launched our Better Safe campaign with the Home Office to raise awareness of this service.

Search 'NSPCC Helpline' for more information or call 0808 800 5000

### Fundraising and events

We have a range of activities you can get involved in to support our work - the Liverpool Chester bike ride is back on Sunday 7 July with discounted places now on sale in addition to runs, treks, tough mudders and sky dives around the UK.

We know every single contribution counts, so this year, the NSPCC has launched the Partners In Business initiative, which means even the smallest businesses in Merseyside - from gardeners and florists to a 'man with a van' or a dog walker - can help us make a difference.

By signing up to raise vital funds, either with a one-off event or up to 12 months of challenges, you'll help us bring a local focus to national campaigns and ensure we can do all we can to support children and young people.

Please get in touch if you'd like to find out more about fundraising or search 'NSPCC Partners in Business' if you'd like to join forces to help keep children safe.

North West Regional Relationship Manager **Chris Dunn** said: "In Liverpool we have an enthusiastic group of staff and volunteers who are determined to do everything they can to help children and young people.

"We are so proud of what they do and we'll continue to offer help wherever we can."

# The Imperative Shift: Why Your Law Firm Needs The Best Legal Technology in 2024

**Once upon a time people rode horses to work. Now you use a car. It's a new day. Let's get ready!**

Societal norms have shifted, and what was once considered unnecessary or extravagant has become an integral part of our daily lives. In this article I am challenging anyone with a resistance to the best technology. I am questioning the logic of those who reject it while simultaneously using smartphones, ride-sharing apps like Uber, food delivery platforms, and digital boarding passes at airports. We are surrounded by technological conveniences in our personal lives yet hesitate to implement similar advancements in business operations. Why?

As I reflect on the ongoing dialogue surrounding the adoption of legal technology in 2024, I am reminded of conversations I engaged in with **George Blair**, our Chairman and Founder, about his early days speaking to members of the legal community. Back then, the scepticism and apprehension towards new technologies were palpable. George reflected on the adversity he faced when he started trying to sell legal tech to lawyers in the 90s.

In 1996, as a young entrepreneur and legal tech visionary, George vividly recalls advocating for the integration of websites and software into law firm business operations, a concept that was met with scepticism, similar to the experiences my colleagues and I still (madly) face. The prevailing sentiment was, *"Why invest in this website thing when we have the Yellow Pages?"*. It's a sentiment that resonates with the resistance some still harbour towards embracing new technologies. Fast forward to 2024, and the conversation has evolved into the realm of legal case management software, challenging the status quo, and emphasising its indispensable role in the legal landscape.

The parallels between the past resistance to websites and the current hesitation towards the best legal case software are striking. I would draw your attention to the fact that societal norms have shifted, and what was once deemed unnecessary is now an integral part of our daily lives. In this context, the reluctance to embrace new and improved legal software in 2024 is akin to resisting the adoption of websites back in the 90s.

The financial impact of not leveraging legal tech must become a central point of discussion. George highlighted to me the potential loss of significant revenue for those not utilising this technology. This underscores the missed opportunities and efficiency gains that businesses are forfeiting by clinging to outdated practices.

From the perspective of someone deeply entrenched in the legal tech profession, I echo George's sentiments as he spoke to me about the incongruity of living in a world surrounded by technological conveniences in personal life while hesitating to implement similar advancements in legal operations. As we navigate the complexities of the legal landscape, legal case management software emerges not as a luxury but as a strategic imperative.

I would challenge any law firm leader to dive into the underlying issues contributing to the resistance towards legal case management software. What I truly believe you'll find is ideology, complacency, and fear of change are standout factors. I can attest to the fact that the legal community, much like any other, often grapples with the fear of complexity and the misconception that adapting to new tools is an insurmountable challenge.

However, I stand alongside George's long term philosophy and enthusiasm in urging legal professionals to recognise their capabilities and the transformative potential of legal software. The benefits extend beyond mere efficiency gains; they encompass the preservation of valuable time and the empowerment of legal practitioners to deliver enhanced services to their clients.

In the context of legal case management software, the conversation extends to future-proofing legal practices. Just as businesses in other sectors benefit from technology adoption, law firms stand to gain a competitive edge by embracing the capabilities of legal software. This not only enhances the overall value of a legal practice but also positions it as a forward-thinking entity in a very competitive market.

As we step into 2024, I am compelled to emphasise the imperative shift towards tech adoption as the pursuit of excellence. In this era of rapid technological advancement, the legal profession cannot afford to lag. The message is clear: embracing legal technology is not just a choice; it is a strategic decision that paves the way for a more efficient, competitive, and future-ready legal practice.

Let's get off the horse!

.....

*If you would like to discuss how best to adopt new legal case management software you can reach out to us by emailing [info@denovobi.com](mailto:info@denovobi.com), call us on 0141 331 5290 or visit our website [denovobi.com](https://denovobi.com).*



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# Forthcoming Courses

DATE	Event
23/02/2024	Contract Drafting: Lessons from 2023
27-28/02/2024	Probate and Estate Administration - Introduction and Refresher – 2 Day
01/03/2024	Financial Orders: Law & Practice
01/03/2024	Cohabitation: Law Practice
05/03/2024	Personal Branding for Women Lawyers
06/03/2024	Costs Conference 2024
08/03/2024	Managing and Mitigating Directors' Conflicts under the Companies Act
12/03/2024	Personal Injury Update
19/03/2024	Conveyancing Law Update
22/03/2024	A Court Of Protection Update 2024: how to make an application
16/04/2024	SRA Accounts Rules Update
17/04/2024	Commercial Property Update
19/04/2024	Is it enforceable?
24/04/2024	Public Child Law Conference 2024
13/05/2024	Introduction to Wills & Probate, and Connection with Family Law
15/05/2024	Private Client Conference
21/05/2024	Commercial Property: Essential Update for 2024
23/05/2024	Private Child Law Update
23/05/2024	Public Child Law Update

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

For full details, visit: [www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk](http://www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk)





## **\*NEW\* Contract Drafting: Lessons from 2023**

with Chris Beanland

Live online: Friday 23rd February, 2pm - 4pm

This online training will deal with drafting points that arose in cases over the last year. The drafting points covered are not limited to the cases in question – they are of general interest to anyone who either drafts contracts or is involved in dispute resolution involving construction of contracts.

*Covering:*

- As basic as it gets – getting the parties correct. The potential problem in including subsidiary companies in the definition of contracting parties: Canon Medical Systems Ltd v The Imaging Centre Assets Ltd [2023] EWHC 3007
- Drafting a notification of breach of warranty: Decision Inc Holdings Proprietary Ltd v Garbell [2023] EWCA Civ 1284
- Drafting an exclusion clause to cover non-performance as well as defective performance: Pine-wood Technologies Asia Ltd v Pinewood Technologies plc [2023] EWHC 2506

**& more...**

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)



### **Probate & Estate Administration: Introduction & Refresher**

with Rebecca Roscoe

Live online: 27th & 28th February, both 9.30am – 4pm

**A great refresher for experienced practitioners & a must for NQ's & Paralegals.**

This online course uses a mixture of practical case studies & group discussions to ensure the maximum benefit from this two-day course.

Day 1:

- Overview, PRs, initial steps, the validity of the Will
- Checking the Will and intestacy
- IHT part 1 (valuations, successive charges, taper, apportionments)
- IHT part 2 (grossing up, nil rate bands, transferring nil rate bands)

Day 2:

- IHT recap – completing the IHT400
- Applications for the Grant – online & paper
- Administering the estate, dealing with debts
- Claims against the estate & post-death variation

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



### **Financial Orders: Law & Practice** with Safda Mahmood

Live online: Friday 1st March, 10am - 12.30pm

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

The topics covered will include amongst others, the following:

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



**& more...**

**[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)**



## Cohabitation: Law Practice

with Safda Mahmood

Live online: Friday 1st March, 1.30pm - 4pm

This online course will consider the various factors surrounding advising cohabitants in family law matters. The developments in this significant area of law will be considered with emphasis of the leading case law & statutory provisions.

**It will be of benefit to those delegates who seek to become more confident with how to run/defend a case through the courts involving trusts of land & Schedule 1 Children Act Matters.**

The topics covered will include amongst others, the following:

- Joint Tenancies and Tenancies in Common
- Resulting and Constructive Trusts
- Trusts of Land and Appointment of Trustees Act 1996 – Applications
- Proprietary Estoppel
- Drafting and Procedure
- Practice following Stack v. Dowden, Kernott v. Jones and Barnes v. Phillips
- Consideration of Hudson v Hathway 2022
- Schedule 1 Children Act Applications
- Case law Update

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)



## Personal Branding for Women Lawyers

with Jannette Brimm

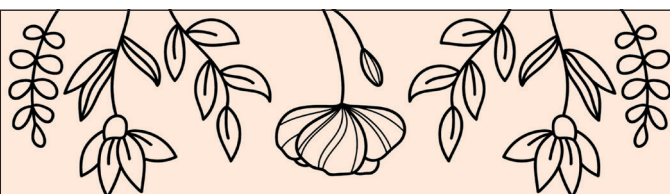
Tuesday 5th March, 12pm - 1pm

**In support of International Women's Day and this year's theme of 'Inspire Inclusion' join us on-line or for this engaging Personal Branding Workshop where Jannette Brimm will share her knowledge, tips & techniques to help female lawyers develop their brand to inspire inclusion in the career. Personal branding, particularly for women, offers several opportunities in their professional career.**

### Branding benefits are:

- Differentiation and Visibility
- Career Advancement
- Trust and Credibility
- Networks and Relationship Building
- Client Attraction
- Speaking Opportunities and Thought Leadership
- Online Presence and Reputation Respect
- Personal Satisfaction and Fulfillment

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)



## 2024 COSTS CONFERENCE

Wednesday 6th March | 9.30am - 3.15pm | Online

To be chaired by DJ Baldwin with sessions conformed so far:

### **Impact of Recoverable Fixed Costs on Civil Litigation**

David Pilling, Civil Law Chambers

### **FRCs & The Courts: What the Judiciary Are Being Taught**

Nick McDonnell, Kain Knight

### **ADR and Costs - the effect of Churchill v Merthyr Tydfil**

Peter Causton, 7 Harrington Street Chambers

### **Update on Costs Budgeting and Costs Management**

Sean Linley, Carter Burnett

[Book Here](#)



Can't make the date/time or need to revisit the training?

No problem, booking onto this event means you will receive a link to access a recording at your leisure!



## **\*NEW\* Managing & Mitigating Directors' Conflicts under the Companies Act**

with David Impey

Friday 8th March, 10am - 11.30am

Private company advisors and their company and director clients need to be able to identify directors' (and, since the Burnell case, ex-directors') Companies Act s 175 'situational' or s 177 'transactional' conflicts when they occur, and the practical steps to take to avoid or manage them – such as 'safe harbours' and 'conduct' provisions in articles; member or board authorisation or ratification; and appropriate procedures, policies and record-keeping.

**This online course will help commercial lawyers in private practice and in-house, and company directors and secretaries cover all the bases, including for companies in a group, and take the practical steps needed to keep conflicted directors within the law.**

### Covering:

- Terminology
- 'Situational' and 'transactional' conflicts
- Situational conflicts (s 175)
- The elements of the duty
- Remedies for breach
- Examples of 'situations'
- Exceptions

**& more ...**

[BOOK HERE](#)





## Personal Injury Update

with Andrew McLoughlin

Live online: Tuesday 12th March, 1.30pm - 4.30pm

**This session will provide every practitioner with updated knowledge in the field of personal injury law & practice.**

*Topics covered include:*

- Fundamental Dishonesty – review of the last 12 months' cases
- Qualified one-way cost shifting – proposed changes
- Road Traffic Accident claims – a case review
- Part 36 – its impact on personal injury in the last 12 months
- Occupiers Liability – an update
- Employers Liability – some recent cases
- Official Injury Claim Portal – pitfalls and solutions

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)



## Conveyancing Law Update

with Richard Snape

Live online: Tuesday 19th March, 1.30pm - 4.30pm

**Conveyancing continues to undergo major changes, especially in relation to leasehold and the Building Safety Act continues to cause major problems. This online course aims to look at some of the issues.**

*Topics covered include:*

- Changes to the Fire Safety Order 2005
- Building Safety Act 2022 and registration of higher-risk buildings
- Building Safety Act 2022 and Leaseholder protections
- Mortgage Company requirements
- Recent case law
- The Renters (Reform) Bill and the abolition of assured shorthold tenancies

**& more...**

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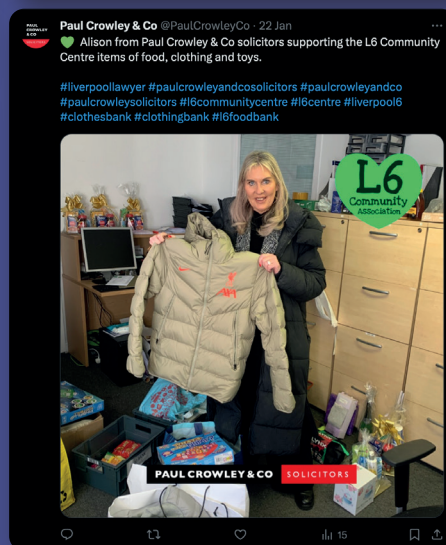
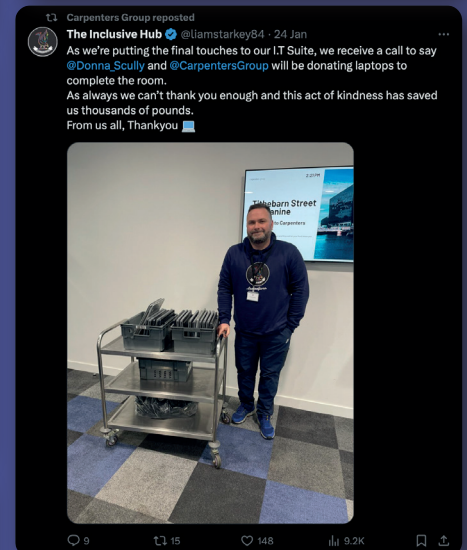
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# Social Media Highlights

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



If you have an interesting post to share, why not send it to us, clearly labelled 'Social Media Page': [editor@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk](mailto:editor@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk)





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