

February 2026

Liverpool Law

Liverpool  Law Society

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



***Welcoming the future of the legal profession:
LLS's Newly Qualified Celebration.*** Page 24





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The Law Society

February 2026

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DEADLINES

March 2026 edition: Monday, 23.02.26
 April 2026 edition: Friday, 20.03.26
 May 2026 edition: Tuesday, 21.04.26
 June 2026 edition: Friday, 22.05.26
 July 2026 edition: Monday, 22.06.26
 August 2026 edition: Friday, 24.07.26
 September 2026 edition: Friday, 21.08.26
 October 2026 edition: Tuesday, 22.09.26
 November 2026 edition: Friday, 23.10.26
 December 2026 edition: Friday, 20.11.26

Word Count Guidelines: Notes for Contributors

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

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

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

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

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

* Spanning a single column

** Spanning two columns

*** Spanning three columns



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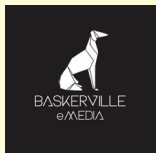
Liverpool Law Society Magazine is produced by and for Liverpool Law Society Members. This is our opportunity to share our news, events and celebrations with our friends in the legal community.

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

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

The views and opinions expressed in Liverpool Law are those of the individual contributed and not those of the Liverpool Law Society.

Published by Baskerville eMedia
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Editorial Committee Dates 2026

Meetings start at 01.00 pm.
except where noted.

Thursday 12th February - 12.00pm
Tuesday 17th March
Wednesday 15th April
Tuesday 19th May
Tuesday 16th June
Tuesday 21st July
No August Meeting
Tuesday 15th September
Tuesday 20th October
Tuesday 17th November

Welcome to the February edition of Liverpool Law



Things seem to back into full swing now after what feels like a very long and miserable January. We have nearly 50 pages of news and events from our region for you to enjoy and details of what our Directors have been campaigning on our behalf. If you are looking to get more involved in your local legal community please do get in touch with us or join one of our training or social events. I'm also enjoying the new Spotlight on future leaders in the law. If you have anyone in mind you would like us to interview please do get in touch.

Speaking of future leaders, this month's stand out event for me is the Newly Qualified celebration, featured on our front page. I was sad to have missed this year as it is such a lovely event to celebrate those embarking on their careers. Congratulations to them all, and a particular recognition to our award winners.

The confusion continues with Mazur, however, the Appeal is due to be heard from 24 February 2026, just after the deadline for our March edition. If anyone would like to send in their own articles on the outcome, once known, please do send it over (or any other articles of interest) to editor@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk. For now we continue to wait and see.

Many thanks

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

Welcome to new members

We would like to give a warm welcome to our new members who were approved for membership at January's General Committee meeting. There were 10 individuals from the following organisations:

- Bermans
- Bond Turner
- Brabners
- Hill Dickinson
- JMW Solicitors
- Knowsley M.B.C.

Liverpool Law Society's membership now exceeds 2,385 individuals from 175 law firms, barristers' chambers, and other organisations with legal professionals in the Liverpool City Region and beyond.

From the President

The latest from the President, Sarah Mansfield

There is a phrase often attributed to Aristotle that resonates strongly with the legal profession: *“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”* In my experience, this principle captures a simple but powerful truth — how we do anything is how we do everything.

In law firms, culture is not defined by mission statements on walls, but by daily practice. It is revealed in how promptly emails are returned, how thoroughly files are prepared, how courteously colleagues and clients are treated, and how seriously deadlines are respected. These seemingly small actions are not small at all; they are the building blocks of trust, reputation, and professional excellence.

Good habits compound. A firm that embeds disciplined file management, consistent supervision, and clear communication will inevitably deliver better outcomes for clients. Equally, firms that prioritise wellbeing,

mentorship, and reflective practice foster lawyers who are resilient, ethical, and engaged. None of this happens by accident. It happens because good practice is intentionally repeated until it becomes second nature.

For leaders, the message is clear: standards are set by what we tolerate and what we model. If we cut corners in minor matters, those corners will eventually appear in major ones. Conversely, when we demonstrate care in routine tasks, we signal that quality matters everywhere.

As a profession, particularly in challenging and fast-moving times, we should resist the temptation to treat habits as secondary to strategy. Strategy may set direction, but habits determine outcomes.

If we wish to build firms that are trusted, sustainable, and respected, we must start with the everyday. Do the small things well. Do them consistently.



Because in law, as in life, how you do anything is how you do everything.

Sarah Mansfield
President

president@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk

Response Received to Parliamentary Questions

The Directors of Liverpool Law Society meet with MPs on a biannual basis, to ensure there is an ongoing opportunity to discuss developments and concerns impacting the legal community.

Members may recall from our November 2025 edition, that during the last meeting which was held on 10 October 2025, the issue of the Legal Aid Agency data breach was raised by the **Ian Townley**, Chair of the Society's Access to Justice Committee. Ian highlighted the impact of the cyber attack (which resulted in an outage of

the Legal Aid Agency's CCMS system from May to December 2025) on both practitioners and their clients.

In response to Ian's update, **Marie Rimer** (Labour MP for St Helens South and Whiston) invited the Society's collaboration in drafting a number of Parliamentary Questions for response. The finalised queries (which were submitted as written questions by Ms Rimmer) addressed the method used to gain unauthorised access to the system; the steps taken by the Legal Aid Agency

following the attack; the types of data compromised; whether there was any intention to compensate legal aid providers for the disruption; whether a disaster recovery plan had been in place; and what future measures would be taken to protect against future incidents.

Responses were received in late December 2025, which have been reported on by the Law Society. Read further here: [Justice minister admits Legal Aid Agency did not have digital disaster recovery plan before cyber attack | Law Gazette](#)

LLS Meetings & events – February 2026

Start Time	Meeting/Event
10/02/2026 12:30	General Committee
11/02/2026 13:00	In-House Lawyers Sub-Committee
11/02/2026 16:00	Joint Law Fair with Fletchers Solicitors
12/02/2026 12:00	Editorial Sub-Committee
24/02/2026 12:30	Finance & Policy Sub-Committee
26/02/2026 13:00	Non-Contentious Business Sub-Committee
26/02/2026 18:30	Drinks & canapes evening for the winners and sponsors of ADLA 2025
03/03/2026 13:00	Employment Law Sub-Committee
04/03/2026 13:00	Pathways to the Legal Profession for Year 12s
05/03/2026 16:00	International Women's Day event

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; Family Business; In-House Lawyers; Non-Contentious Business and Regulatory committees, which are open to members of Liverpool Law Society. To enquire about your membership status and/or being co-opted onto one of the above committees, please email: committees@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk

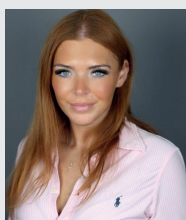
Consultation Papers & Call for Evidence referred:

Referred by the General Committee:

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

Committee	Consultation Paper title	Closing date
All Committees	Interest on Lawyers' Client Accounts Scheme consultation - Ministry of Justice - Citizen Space	09/02/26
Civil Litigation	Housing disrepair claims (Call for evidence)	12/02/26
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	Consultation on policy statement on 'Encouraging a diverse legal profession'	02/03/26
Non-Contentious Business	Enhanced protections for homeowners on freehold estates	12/03/26

Directors Interview: Kathy McQuillan



Kathy McQuillan, a Family Law solicitor at Morecrofts LLP, has been elected as a Director of the Liverpool Law Society for 2026. She is a native of the Wirral and a former pupil of Prenton High School for Girls.

After leaving school to raise her two children, Kathy remained ambitious to further her career through higher education. Just ten days after the birth of her second child, she began an Access to University course in Humanities and Humanistic Studies at Wirral Metropolitan College. Her success there led her to Edge Hill University to study for an LLB in Law, a subject she had always been interested in, particularly the area of human rights. As her studies progressed, her ambition to qualify as a solicitor became increasingly clear, prompting her to complete a Master of Laws (LLM) at the University of Central Lancashire.

During her postgraduate studies, Kathy

gained practical experience as a Legal Assistant at Camps Solicitors in Birkenhead, specialising in Professional Negligence. She was later promoted to Paralegal within the Clinical Negligence team; however, following the firm's closure, she secured a training contract with Morecrofts. Although she initially expressed an interest in litigation, Kathy undertook a twelve-month seat within the Family Law department, where she found that the family sector was a natural fit for her skills.

Today, Kathy's practice encompasses all legal matters arising from relationship breakdowns, including divorce, financial settlements, child arrangements, and domestic abuse cases. She is dedicated to further enhancing her reputation as a high-quality solicitor while expanding her professional network.

Kathy's involvement with the Liverpool Law Society is relatively new, but has grown steadily. After joining the Future Impact Network and engaging with various society events, she spent three years preparing herself for a leadership

role. With the encouragement of Morecrofts, she put herself forward for selection in November and was successfully appointed as a Director. In her first few months, she intends to familiarise herself with the society's governance and committee structures. Kathy is particularly keen to use this platform to advocate for social mobility within the profession; having been the first in her family to attend university and qualified via a non-traditional route while raising a young family, she hopes to inspire and support others facing similar challenges in accessing a legal career.

Outside of her professional life, Kathy leads a busy life on the Wirral. Much of her time is dedicated to her children, fifteen-year-old Ashley and thirteen-year-old Kima-Leigh, supporting their interests in rugby, football, and drama. When time permits, she enjoys hiking in the Welsh hills and has recently been appointed as a School Governor for Calday Grange Grammar School.

We wish Kathy every success in her new role.

Shaping the Regulatory Landscape: join our expanded Subcommittee

Regulation is no longer just about how we practise; it is at the heart of how our clients do business.

The Liverpool Law Society is expanding the remit of its regulatory committee. We are moving beyond a traditional focus on professional conduct to encompass the full spectrum of regulatory work carried out by lawyers across the Merseyside region. From the complexities of financial services to the unique demands of maritime, healthcare, data privacy, and environmental compliance, our committee aims to be the leading voice for regulatory excellence in the Northwest.

Our Mission

The subcommittee serves as a critical bridge between practitioners, regulators,

and the wider business community. We:

Influence Policy: Review and respond to high-level consultations from the SRA, LSB, FCA, ICO, and other statutory bodies.

Share Intelligence: Keep the Merseyside legal community ahead of the curve through expert insights in Liverpool Law and exclusive member briefings.

Build a Network of Experts: Provide a forum for regulatory specialists to share cross-sector best practices and address the specific challenges facing the Liverpool City Region.

Who We Are Looking For

We are inviting expressions of interest

from lawyers and academics across all regulatory disciplines. Whether you specialise in professional standards, navigate MCA shipping regulations, advise on life sciences/CQC compliance, or help FinTechs navigate the regulatory landscape, your expertise is needed at the table.

How to Join:

To find out more or to apply for a seat on the committee, please email committees@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk.

Josh Bates

LLS Regulatory Committee Chair
Managing Associate at Freeths

Please note: Applicants must be members of the Liverpool Law Society.

MJLD Spotlight: Aaron Taylor



Aaron Taylor

Aaron Taylor, a recently qualified solicitor within the Social Housing and Regeneration team at MSB Solicitors, also serves as a Careers and Education representative on the Merseyside Junior Lawyers Division (MJLD) committee. Originally from Aintree and a former pupil of St Mary's School in Crosby, Aaron's path to the legal profession began when he sought broader academic options following his GCSEs. Drawn to subjects like Law and Computer Science, he enrolled at Winstanley College in Wigan. During his time there, he was significantly influenced by his teacher, Jacqui Vitali, who encouraged his legal ambitions. His success at the college was later recognised when he was invited to feature on their alumni page to offer guidance to prospective students.

Upon completing A-levels in Business Studies, Law, and Psychology, Aaron progressed to Liverpool John Moores University to study Law and Criminal

Justice. His interest in criminal law, sparked during his college years, led him to choose a degree that incorporated specialised modules such as policing. Throughout his undergraduate studies, Aaron remained highly active in the university community; he served as a level six student representative and volunteered with the digital forensic evidence department. Furthermore, he dedicated time to the Support Through Court initiative at Liverpool County Court during the pandemic, assisting unrepresented litigants with complex family law applications and non-molestation orders.

Aaron subsequently pursued a joint LLM and Legal Practice Course (LPC). This proved to be an exceptionally demanding period during which he sat twenty-two exams, completed a criminal-law-based dissertation, and maintained a part-time job at McDonald's. In May 2021, shortly before concluding his postgraduate studies, he secured a position as a paralegal at White Collar Legal. Over eighteen months, he gained comprehensive experience in civil litigation, covering debt claims, negligence, and breach of contract. Although this role provided a robust foundation, the firm did not have the facility to offer him the 'training contract' required for qualification.

Seeking to qualify, Aaron joined Copious Law in Water Street. Following a successful six-month trial period, he was awarded a training contract specialising in housing law. While navigating his professional

training, Aaron continued to support his alma mater by delivering talks on the LPC and contributing to the LJMU student law journal. Despite his firm's eventual shift towards financial mis-selling claims, Aaron remained committed to civil litigation and housing law, eventually leading his team within six months.

In anticipation of his qualification in January 2025, and faced with his firm's decision to exit the housing sector, Aaron proactively contacted a partner at MSB Solicitors - a former courtroom opponent whose work he respected. This initiative led to an interview in September 2024, and a subsequent job offer. Aaron joined MSB four weeks after qualifying and now leads the private landlord department within the social housing team. His long-term professional ambition is to progress to associate level and eventually achieve partnership.

In addition to his casework, Aaron remains deeply involved in the local legal community. Alongside his colleague **Connor O'Riley**, he manages a court marshalling scheme for the MJLD, which allows students from Liverpool's five universities to shadow judges. He also sits on the civil litigation sub-committee for the Liverpool Law Society. Outside of his professional life, Aaron is a keen runner and footballer, and he maintains a weekly LinkedIn series, 'Tuesday's Tenancy Tips', providing free guidance to landlords navigating the evolving industry.

We wish Aaron every success in his career.

Liverpool Law Society

ADILA

ANNUAL DINNER &
LEGAL AWARDS 2026

SAVE THE DATE

12.11.26

Jackson Lees strengthens private family team with senior appointment



Jennifer Carr

Law firm Jackson Lees has bolstered its private family team with the appointment of senior associate Jennifer Carr.

Jennifer, who has more than 15 years' experience as a solicitor across Merseyside and Cheshire, has joined Jackson Lees from the Liverpool office of MSB Solicitors.

She focuses on all aspect of family law, in particular divorce cases, financial disputes arising from marital breakdown, and private children proceedings. Jennifer also has experience in dealing with disputes between unmarried partners, as well as nuptial and cohabitation agreements.

Over the years she has represented a vast range of high-net-worth clients, including

TV personalities, other lawyers, doctors as well as business owners.

Jackson Lees is part of the Jackson Lees Group, a full-service practice which includes Broudie Jackson Canter and Farrington Law. The group employs 240 people across offices in Liverpool, Wirral and Southport.

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

Jackson Lees partner **Sarah McCarthy**, who heads the family team, said: "Jen brings not only exceptional legal expertise but also a deep commitment to supporting

families through some of life's most challenging moments.

"Her approach aligns perfectly with our ethos of making a positive difference for every client we serve, and her experience and dedication will strengthen our ability to provide tailored solutions that protect and empower families across the region. We're thrilled to welcome her to the team."

Jennifer said: "I'm passionate about family law and am committed to helping clients during what can be the most difficult time in their lives.

"I'm thrilled to be part of the Jackson Lees Group and am very excited to be working alongside Sarah and the rest of her fantastic team. I'm looking forward to being part of the firm's future."

Bell Lamb & Joynson Re-establishes Liverpool City Centre Presence with New Office



Bell Lamb & Joynson Solicitors has announced the opening of its brand new office in Liverpool City Centre on 5th January 2026, marking a significant milestone in the firm's continued growth across the North West.

The new office represents a return to Liverpool City Centre for the firm, which last had a permanent presence there around 15 years ago. Its opening reflects both the firm's strong City Centre roots and its ambition to expand reach

and accessibility for clients across the Liverpool City Region and beyond. This latest expansion comes less than 12 months after Bell Lamb & Joynson opened its Ashton-in-Makerfield office, demonstrating sustained momentum following a period of exceptional growth and national recognition. In the firm's most recent financial year, turnover from client fees surpassed £5 million for the first time in its 200+ year history,



reflecting continued client demand and strategic investment across the business.

The Liverpool City Centre office has been designed to support both client access and team collaboration, providing a central hub for meetings, appointments and professional engagement. It also reinforces the firm's long term commitment to Liverpool as a legal and commercial centre, while allowing Bell Lamb & Joynson to serve a broader client base across the North West.

Managing Partner **Mike Leeman** commented:

"Returning to Liverpool City Centre is an important moment for the firm. Liverpool has always been central to our history and our identity, and this new office allows us to build on that legacy while looking firmly to the future. Opening a second new office within a year reflects the confidence we have in our people, our strategy and the continued demand for high quality legal services across the region."

DWF announces new leadership appointment in Liverpool



Sarah Mir

DWF, the global provider of integrated legal and business services, has announced Sarah Mir as the new managing partner of its Liverpool office.

Sarah has been with DWF for 18 years, joining in 2007 before completing her training contract in 2011. In 2022, she was promoted to partner in its Insurance Services division, reflecting her outstanding contribution to the group.

Beyond her professional achievements, Sarah is deeply connected to Liverpool. She grew up in the city and studied Law

and French at the University of Liverpool. Her strong ties to the city and its community make this appointment even more special.

Sarah succeeds **Julie Simms** in her new role.

Commenting on her new role, Sarah said: *"I'm honoured to take on the role of managing partner in Liverpool. DWF has a long and proud history in the city and I look forward to playing my part in maintaining and building on our strong market presence."*

Freeths Liverpool accelerates growth with strategic appointments



Real Estate Partner Luke Hopkins, Andy Nichol, Amanda Rotheram, Lisa Pattenden, Josh Bates, Jessica Murphy

Leading law firm Freeths has reinforced its Liverpool presence with strategic hires across Real Estate, Corporate and Knowledge Management, expanding its regional team by over a third.

This milestone follows a year of significant growth for the office, which achieved 22% revenue uplift and secured multiple high-profile client wins over the past 12 months, underlining Freeths' commitment to delivering exceptional service across the North West.

Investing in top talent has been central to driving this regional growth. **Josh Bates** has recently joined the Financial Services team as Managing Associate, bringing specialist expertise in insurance and digital assets, including cryptoassets and stablecoins. His appointment strengthens Freeths' regulatory capability, enabling the firm to guide clients through complex

compliance and transactional matters. It comes just weeks after Freeths welcomed Partner **Sushil Kuner** to lead the Financial Services offering, further enhancing the firm's depth in this critical area.

In Real Estate, Managing Associate **Lisa Pattenden** and Associate **Jessica Murphy** have joined the team. **Lisa** brings with her an impressive track record, having acted on landmark transactions such as a £180 million logistics park acquisition and a £773 million refinance of a £3.4 billion property portfolio. **Jessica** adds extensive experience in real estate finance, bolstering the team's capability to deliver on high-value, complex deals.

Freeths has also appointed Knowledge Systems Analyst **Amanda Rotheram**. She brings experience from a previous business analyst role and will focus on ensuring the firm's knowledge platforms

remain well-structured, intuitive and aligned to user needs. She takes a detail-driven, collaborative approach to working with stakeholders and is passionate about improving user experience and system effectiveness.

Amanda will play a pivotal role in ensuring best practice is shared seamlessly across the firm.

Managing Partner of Freeths Liverpool **Andy Nichol** said: *"The past 12 months have been transformative for our Liverpool office. Achieving 22% revenue growth and welcoming new people and clients is a clear sign that we are becoming a leading force in the region. These strategic appointments reflect our ambition to build a team that not only meets client demand but sets new standards for service and expertise. Jessica, Josh and Lisa bring a wealth of experience that will help us continue this momentum and deliver innovative solutions for clients."*

Glenville Walker Strengthens Property Team with Senior Appointment



Andrius Roos

Property specialist Andrius Roos joins to support growing client demand

Glenville Walker has appointed Andrius Roos as Partner in its property team, bringing 18 years of post-qualification expertise in residential and commercial property, housing association law, and leasehold management.

Andrius joins from Brabners LLP, where he spent 18 years building a practice focused on complex property transactions, landlord and tenant matters, auctions and housing association work. His experience spans everything from high-value portfolio transactions to leasehold management and housing regulatory compliance – delivered with the pragmatic, client-focused approach that aligns perfectly with Glenville Walker's values.

His appointment strengthens the firm's ability to support growing businesses and property clients across the Northwest, particularly those navigating the changing landscape of housing law and large-scale property matters.

Hazel Walker, CEO at Glenville Walker, said:

"Andrius brings exactly what our clients need – deep technical knowledge delivered in a straightforward, commercially aware way. He's spent nearly two decades turning complex property challenges into practical solutions for major landlords and housing providers. That's our philosophy in action."

"We're not interested in adding people who'll simply process transactions. We want advisors who understand the commercial realities our clients face and can move at the pace business demands. Andrius fits that brief completely. He strengthens our growing property team led by Guy Pattison, at a time when our clients are dealing with significant regulatory change and need guidance they can actually use."

Andrius's practice covers residential and commercial property transactions, landlord and tenant law, leasehold management, housing association work, and portfolio transactions. He's advised on everything from affordable home ownership schemes to complex refinancing structures and Building Safety Act compliance.

Andrius Roos said:

"Glenville Walker's reputation for straight-talking, commercially astute advice resonates with how I've always approached client work. After 18 years at a larger firm, I'm excited to join a practice where the focus is genuinely on client outcomes. The firm's growth trajectory and collaborative culture make this the right move at the right time."

The appointment reflects Glenville Walker's continued expansion across its core practice areas, supporting owner-managed businesses and property clients throughout the Northwest and beyond.



Private & Commercial Investigators and Process Servers EJM Investigations are a North West based detective agency in Preston, Lancashire, with a team of private investigators and process servers across the UK. We can carry out private investigations, commercial investigations and process serving at home, throughout Europe and worldwide.

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Excello Law grows its North West presence with two new senior appointments



Heather Horsewood



Darren Barwick

Leading new-model law firm [Excello Law](#) has expanded its team in the North West with the appointment of experienced solicitors: Heather Horsewood, a specialist in wills, probate and estate administration; and Darren Barwick, whose expertise spans transactional property matters with a particular emphasis on residential and mixed-use development work and secured lending. Both will work across the firm's Liverpool, Manchester and Chester offices.

Heather, who qualified as a solicitor in 1995 after training with DWF, brings three decades of experience advising on all aspects of private client work. She has particular expertise in drafting wills, administering estates (including probate and intestacy matters) and delivering bespoke inheritance tax planning.

Throughout her career, Heather has developed a reputation for managing complex and sensitive matters. Her experience includes acting for high-net-worth clients with estates exceeding £1 million, supporting vulnerable individuals, and advising in cases involving dependents who lack capacity to manage their own affairs. She frequently collaborates with

trusted financial advisers and other professionals to deliver comprehensive solutions.

Heather said of her decision to join: *"Excello offers an exciting, modern, forward-thinking way to offer high-quality legal services, provided by experienced, proven professionals."*

Darren Barwick started his career over 20 years ago at a regional commercial law firm. He is experienced in site acquisition and assembly; purchase and development funding loans acting for developers; site set-up including drafting plot sales contracts, leases and transfers and managing plot sales.

As well as acting for several large developers for many years, Darren also specialises in acting for secured lenders dealing with both bridging finance and development funding.

Darren comments: *"Excello has an exceptional reputation in the industry. This move gives me the freedom to concentrate on delivering excellent client service."*

Excello provides an alternative to traditional law firms by allowing lawyers to work as fee-share partners or launch their own branded legal

practices with the firm's support within its House of Brands.

[Julie Mogan](#), North West Regional Director at Excello, welcomed the appointments: *"We are delighted to have Heather and Darren join our expanding team in the North West. Their extensive experience, in complex estates and property work respectively, reflect the high calibre of lawyer who chooses Excello. Our unique model empowers senior practitioners to build their practice with true autonomy, supported by our market-leading infrastructure."*

Heather and Darren join the firm during a period of significant expansion. Excello recently announced record financial results, with annual turnover rising to £30.5 million, which equates to a 26.6% year-on-year increase and 170% growth over the past three years.

The firm now has 270 lawyers worldwide, including a rapidly growing presence across the North West with offices in Manchester, Liverpool and Chester. Last year saw the opening of Excello's first international offices in California and Dubai, alongside a new Belfast base and the launch of eight new House of Brands practices.

Donna Scully named on the 2026 Northern Power Women PoWER List

Carpenters Group is delighted to announce that our Owner and Director Donna Scully has been named on the 2026 Northern Power Women PoWER List, recognising leaders who champion gender balance in the workplace and help shift the dial towards a more equitable world for women at work.

Donna's recognition reflects the difference she makes every day - inside our business and across the wider community. At Carpenters Group, Donna is a powerful advocate for inclusion, skills and opportunity, and her work with partners and charities across the North helps to create real, lasting change.

"Being recognised by Northern Power Women is a huge honour. Carpenters Group is predominantly based in the North and I am from the North Side of Dublin! I'm fortunate to work alongside brilliant colleagues, partners and charities who care deeply about doing the right thing for their communities and organisations. This recognition is really about them and the progress we're making together. There is still more to do, and I'm committed to using my platform to keep opening doors for women and girls across our region and to champion social mobility so that opportunities are accessible to everyone, regardless of their background. To lift more people like me up!"

- Donna Scully

The PoWER List shines a spotlight on role models who challenge the norm and champion gender-balanced workplaces. Twentyfour individuals were selected this year from more than 1,800 nominations by a panel of judges. Once named, honourees remain on the list, reinforcing their longterm contribution and influence.

Northern Power Women announced the 2026 PoWER List across its channels at **11:00 on Wednesday 21 January**, and had a virtual gathering for honourees on **23 January (12:00-12:30)**. The PoWER List will also be celebrated at the **Northern Power Women Awards at Manchester Central Convention Complex on Thursday 12 March**.

Pathways to the legal profession

04.03.26

1.30pm - 3.30pm

 Zoom

PROGRAMME

LEARN ABOUT DIFFERENT ROUTES INTO THE LAW

Organised by the Society's Education & Charities Committee, this annual event informs young people how they can pursue a career in the legal sector.

AIMED AT

all year 12 students

at Merseyside schools & colleges

free, online event

CHAIRPERSON

Sarah Mansfield
President
Liverpool Law Society

The University route, costs and the benefits of studying for a degree

Going into Law having a non-law degree

The Solicitors' Qualifying Examination (SQE)

The Legal Executive Route

Apprenticeships

Recruiting process for both graduates and apprentices at a law firm

A solicitor apprentice's view

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Leigh Day human rights team in Liverpool expands four-fold in its first two years



Leanne Devine

Law firm Leigh Day's human rights team in Liverpool has grown by 400% in just two years, with three new team members joining since its launch in 2024.

Partner [Leanne Devine](#), who leads the Liverpool team, joined Leigh Day in 2024 as the firm's first human rights lawyer based in the city. She joined asbestos claims specialists [Kevin Johnson](#) and [Joanne Candlish](#), who investigate legal claims on behalf of individuals who have been exposed to asbestos and families who have lost their loved ones.

Leanne had previously represented many clients from Merseyside, [including her role in the team that represented 22 families](#) who lost loved ones in the Hillsborough tragedy.

Since joining, Leanne has represented multiple families in inquests including the family of a [24-year-old](#) who died in a fatal car collision in September 2021. An inquest into his death concluded that a police officer's road pursuit contributed to the collision.

Leanne also [represented the family](#) of a 31-year-old who ended her own life in November 2023, in an inquest into her death. The coroner concluded that "failings" by the Department of Work and Pensions



Kevin Johnson

contributed to the decline in her mental state.

Leigh Day's Liverpool team [moved offices to the Plaza building](#) in the city in April last year to allow for further growth. The building was first used as the old Littlewoods Catalogues building, before being refurbished into a high-quality serviced office.

Human rights trainee solicitor **Ted Richards** who works primarily across inquests, also joined the team, working across Leigh Day's Liverpool and Manchester offices.

Associate solicitor [Emily Driver](#) [joined the team in May](#), with a focus on inquests and public inquiries.

Paralegal **Ellie Riley** joined Leigh Day as a paralegal in the human rights department in Liverpool in 2024. She works alongside Leanne on human rights cases and inquests.

Partner **Leanne Devine** said: "I am grateful to be part of such an incredible team. As our team has grown, we have become better equipped to support clients who have faced terrible hardships and adversity in their journey towards justice.

"Being able to offer legal



Joanne Candlish



Emily Driver

representation through our [legal aid contract](#) to our local community is of paramount importance to us and we strive to continue to ensure that our legal support is accessible, and high quality."



Sustained Growth Following a Successful Year at Paul Crowley & Co



Paul Crowley & Co Solicitors continues to strengthen its position as one of Liverpool's leading law firms following another outstanding year for its conveyancing department. Building on sustained growth, rising client demand, and industry recognition, the firm has expanded its residential property team while securing multiple prestigious awards that underline its reputation for excellence.

The continued expansion of the conveyancing department reflects increasing demand from homebuyers, sellers, landlords, and property investors across Liverpool and the wider region. In response, Paul Crowley & Co has welcomed two experienced conveyancing professionals, **Stef Nolan** and **Kattie Healy**. Their appointments strengthen the team and reflect a shared commitment to transparent, efficient, and client-focused service.

The residential property department advises on a wide range of matters, including sales, purchases, remortgages, transfers of equity, and property investment

transactions. Clients benefit from clear advice, proactive case management, and consistent communication throughout the transaction process. This modern and approachable service model has been instrumental in supporting the department's continued growth, helping to maintain strong client retention and satisfaction.

Director and Head of Conveyancing **Jenna Gall** commented:

"Our conveyancing department continues to grow as more clients choose Paul Crowley & Co for clear and dependable advice. Stef and Kattie's appointments strengthen our ability to manage increasing volumes while maintaining the high standards our clients expect. We are delighted to welcome them to the team and look forward to building further."

Alongside expansion, the team is geared up for another busy year following significant industry recognition. Paul Crowley & Co was awarded 'Residential Property Team of the Year' for the second consecutive year at the Modern Law Awards and was named 'Property Law

Firm of the Year' at the YM Liverpool Property and Business Awards 2025 for the third year running.

Reflecting on these achievements, **Jenna** added:

"It was an outstanding accomplishment for the team, going up against well-respected competition. It is wonderful to see our conveyancing team recognised for their dedication, hard work, and exceptional performance, which sets a high standard and ensures the best outcomes for our clients."

These awards highlight not only the technical expertise of the conveyancing team but also the firm's ongoing investment in its people and unwavering commitment to service excellence. With further recruitment planned in the coming months, Paul Crowley & Co remains focused on sustainable growth while continuing to deliver outstanding results for clients across Liverpool's property market.

Leslie Priestley
Paul Crowley & Co

London expansion and record revenues drive next phase of growth at Brabners



- Brabners reports record pre-tax profits of £20.3m (2024: £18.1m) marking an eighth consecutive year of profitable growth
- Annual revenue climbs to £60.2m (2024: £53.9m) as firm looks ahead to the next 3-year strategic cycle
- London launch announced, with office opening confirmed for mid-2026, strengthening national reach and client offering
- High-profile partner hires from Forsters and Gunner Cooke alongside existing London-based partners to anchor new City platform

Annual trading update for the year ending April 30th, 2025

Brabners has reported its eighth consecutive year of growth, with turnover surpassing £60m as the firm grows to almost 600 colleagues and prepares to enter its next phase of client-centred, scalable growth.

The purpose-led independent law firm

saw revenue rise by 11.7% to £60.2m for the financial year ending April 2025.

Pre-tax profits (before members' remuneration and profit shares) also increased to £20.3m, up from £18.1m the previous year.

Strategic Expansion: London

Building on this momentum, Brabners has confirmed its plan to enter the London market marked by the opening of its office in the City in mid-2026 — a landmark step that reflects both the firm's sustained growth and the evolving needs of its clients.

Brabners' move into the capital represents a natural progression for the firm and will amplify its national reach as well as the support it can offer to clients operating across the UK and internationally.

The move follows the firm's successful entry into the Leeds market in 2022 and further strengthens its position as a

leading independent law firm.

The London office will be anchored by the appointment of two senior partners.

Corporate Partner Stuart Hatcher joins from Forsters, bringing extensive experience in advising privately-owned businesses alongside deep sector expertise in sport, including his role as a director of Brentford FC; and Litigation Partner Russell Strong joins from Gunner Cooke, specialising in high-value commercial litigation and international arbitration.

They will join existing London-based real estate and tax partners Ross Shine and Euri Yoon respectively, establishing a permanent platform in the capital and laying the foundations for Brabners to play an active role in the London market over the coming years.

Operational Excellence and Sector Highlights

Brabners corporate team remained one

of the UK's most active dealmakers, advising on transactions worth more than £500m in the first half of 2025 alone, double the value of the same period in the previous year.

Standout mandates included advising on the sale of a majority stake in the £350m turnover engineering firm William Hare Group.

The firm's litigation practice also secured a landmark defamation victory in the Supreme Court, while its specialist sports team continued its growth with new mandates for the World Boxing Championships and Wrexham AFC.

The Brabners True North network — which brings together like-minded businesses, business leaders and other organisations who are keen to play their part in unlocking the true economic potential of the North — continues to go from strength to strength and has now grown to over 580 members. The network continues to build its influence in advocating for the positive role that purpose-led business can play in driving economic growth and inclusive prosperity.

Innovation remains central to the firm's strategy, with significant investments planned in its AI capabilities, technology infrastructure and data analytics — all aimed at enhancing service delivery and operational efficiency.

Culture and Excellence

Central to the firm's performance is its continued investment in its people.

During the period, Brabners was ranked as the UK's best law firm to work for and the sixth best large company to work for in the UK, reflecting its longstanding commitment to creating an inclusive, supportive and high-performing workplace.

A key pillar of this approach is social mobility. Brabners actively removes barriers for candidates from lower socio-economic backgrounds, ensuring that access to careers in law is based on potential rather than privilege. As a result, 36% of its current trainee cohort identify as having experienced high levels of socio-economic disadvantage.

This focus forms an integral part of the firm's wider strategic goal to lead on social impact, a commitment the firm intends to carry into London and its growth plans as it builds its presence in the capital.

The firm's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workplace has been recognised with various industry accolades, including winning Equality, Diversity and Inclusion awards at both the Manchester and Liverpool Legal Awards.

ESG and Social Impact

Brabners continues to make progress against its environmental and social targets and remains proud of its certification as a B-Corp. The firm reported a 19% reduction in energy consumption across its office estate during the last financial year, supported by its transition to more sustainable, modern workspaces in Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds.

The firm also continues to support social mobility and community initiatives, notably through the Maurice Watkins Bursary, which provides financial support for aspiring lawyers from diverse backgrounds, alongside its ongoing commitment to the peatland restoration project at Kingsdale Head.

In addition, the Brabners Foundation continues to reinvest the firm's success into the communities it serves. Since its inception in 2019, more than £210,000 has been donated through 86 grants

to charitable organisations across the North. Including £30,000 donated to eight charities in the last year. Current charity partnerships include Wakefield Hospice in Yorkshire, the Be Free Campaign in Liverpool and the North West Air Ambulance.

Robert White, CEO at Brabners, said: *"This year's financial performance provides a fantastic springboard as we begin the next phase of our growth. Most notably marked with our entry into the London market."*

"What we have achieved in the last year — and in the past eight years — is testament to the quality of our firm, the ambition of our clients and the strength of our relationships with them, as well as the aspiration and commitment of our people."

"Surpassing the £60m revenue mark is a significant milestone. And as we look ahead, our focus remains on delivering client-centred, scalable growth that enhances our ability to invest in exceptional talent, technology and innovation — and above all else that supports and protects our independence."

Nik White, Managing Partner at Brabners, said: *"Our success is driven by our people, and we are incredibly proud to be approaching 600 colleagues across the firm. Fundamental to who we are — and underpinning our ability to attract and retain outstanding colleagues — is our culture."*

"Launching in London is a landmark moment for Brabners. It allows us to build our presence in the capital while staying true to our values, strengthening our offering to clients and playing our part as an engaged and responsible member of the London business community."

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

Liverpool Law Society Directors meet with Liverpool City Region Local Authority representatives

On Thursday 15 January 2026, Liverpool Law Society held its first meeting of the year with the Liverpool City Region Councillors. The purpose of these biannual sessions is to discuss local issues and developments which impact the region and its residents.

President, **Sarah Mansfield**, chaired on behalf of LLS, and there was good representation from the region with seven Councillors (or representatives on their behalf) attending.

Chair of the Access to Justice Committee, **Ian Townley**, spoke of how difficult 2025 had been for legal aid providers, most notably arising from the Legal Aid Agency data breach in May, and how the impact of that incident is still being felt. He updated the Councillors of the Parliamentary Questions raised by Marie Rimmer MP (following the Society's meeting with MPs in October 2025) and the response that had since been received (see <https://www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk/news/response-received-to-parliamentary-questions/>).

Further, **Ian** raised that housing remains a particular issue for the region. There are just six legal aid solicitors (and an even smaller number of paralegals) practicing in the discipline in an area of more than a million people, leaving many unable to secure representation. Ian spoke of the impact of the housing crisis, and the cost-saving impact that early legal advice can have. **Cllr Jane Corbett** (Liverpool) expressed how pleased she was that the Society was alive to this, and it was resolved that the Society and Councillors will collaborate, to include a separate meeting, with a view to developing a plan for the future.

Chair of the Non-Contentious Business Committee, **Pamela Chesterman**, raised the ongoing impact of Land Registry delays and inconsistency of approach in responding to applications. Pamela emphasised the wide reach of the problem – one example being planning, where information online used by the Council cannot be relied upon. A number of the Councillors concurred that the impact on businesses and individuals can be significant. **Cllr Geoff Pearl** (St Helens) spoke of a constituent who had recently lost a property purchase due to the delays. **Jan Bakewell** (St Helens) reported that Estate Agents had raised similar concerns. Those present discussed the importance of a strong bank of examples to demonstrate the problems faced.

Chair of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, **Jewels Chamberlain**, had a number of questions for the Councillors, which I presented in her absence. These related to future plans for the region, to include budgets, timetables and interaction with ESG initiatives. **Cllr Corbett** invited these in writing for a formal response.

I provided a brief update which focussed on the Law Society's Head of Justice's evidence at the recent Justice Select Committee's new inquiry into Access to Justice on 06 January 2026. I also spoke of the progress of the Sentencing Bill which has now entered its Report Stage in the House of Lords, and of the recent House of Commons debate on the widely publicised proposal to abolish Jury trials.

We concluded by inviting any issues that the Councillors and their representatives wished to raise. **Cllr Corbett** raised the importance of s1 of the Equality Act, and the outstanding guidance relating to that legislation. It was resolved that the Society would address this via questions to MPs in due course.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 16 July 2026. Suggestions for agenda items from the Society's members are welcomed ahead of that date.

Laura Spence
Parliamentary Liaison Officer

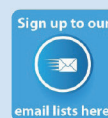
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Our training, member and general news & events emails will come from legalnews@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk and automated messages from our website (such as when making a booking for one of our courses or events) will come from enquiries@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk.

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

Not signed up?



Legal Leaders Hear from PBS Growth Board



On 21 January, the Society was pleased to host a scoping evening introducing the *Professional and Business Services (PBS) Growth Board*, kindly hosted by *St John's Chambers*. Leaders from across the region's legal firms attended to learn more about the PBS Growth Board and its role within the UK Government's *Modern Industrial Strategy: Professional and Business Services Plan*.

Immediate Past President **James Mannouch** opened the evening and welcomed the guest speaker, **Graham Bond**, Partner at RSM and Chair of the PBS Growth Board. **Graham** explained that the Liverpool City Region (LCR) has been designated by Central Government as a PBS Growth Hub, alongside Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, the West Midlands, and the Edinburgh–Glasgow Central Belt.

Growth Hubs are tasked with delivering a long-term strategy, and it is anticipated that the LCR PBS Growth Strategy will form a 10-year blueprint focused on boosting productivity, increasing investment, and creating thousands of jobs. The

strategy will be a collaborative effort involving business, universities, and the Combined Authority, with the PBS Growth Board maintaining a “dotted-line” relationship to the Combined Authority's Business and Enterprise Board.

Graham highlighted the scale and importance of the PBS sector within the Liverpool City Region, noting that it comprises approximately 12,000 businesses employing around 96,000 people. While PBS has significant capacity for growth in its own right, it also functions as a cross-sector enabler, supporting expansion across other industries by providing specialist advice and professional services to growing businesses.

A key theme of the presentation was the distinction between vertical and horizontal growth factors. Vertical growth relates to the infrastructure and resources firms need to expand—such as access to technology, skills, and finance—while horizontal growth concerns the expansion of a firm's client base and markets. The PBS Growth Hub aims to support firms across both dimensions.

In his closing remarks, **James Mannouch** thanked **Graham** for his insightful presentation and emphasised that professional legal services must sit at the forefront of any PBS growth strategy. While the Liverpool City Region has experienced consolidation and contraction in other PBS sectors, legal services have remained resilient, with several firms headquartered in the city and new firms continuing to relocate to the region. James described legal services as a “winner” within the PBS sector, adding that winners should be firmly placed “in the shop window”.

Following the presentations, attendees divided into three groups to provide qualitative feedback. These discussions were facilitated by Past President **Nina Ferris** and current Director **Laura Spence**. Participants were invited to consider what growth would look like for their Liverpool operations and what internal and external factors would be required to stimulate that growth. Discussions were held under the Chatham House Rule and proved constructive and informative. As part of its ongoing commitment to member engagement, the Society found these sessions particularly valuable in shaping future services and priorities.

The evening concluded with a plenary question-and-answer session. Liverpool Law Society is keen to play an active role in the PBS Growth Plans for the Liverpool City Region, and members wishing to engage further are encouraged to contact **James Mannouch** at james.mannouch@law.ac.uk.

A Joint Industrial Strategy Roundtable for Legal Services will be hosted in Liverpool on 12 March, in conjunction with the national Law Society. Anyone interested to contact contactus@liverpoollawsociety.org.uk

James Mannouch
Immediate Past President

Merseyside Junior Lawyers



Anya McNally

Merseyside Junior Lawyers Division attended the Liverpool Law Society NQ Event on Thursday 29th January, which featured a speech from our Chair and Careers Representative, Faye Morris and Aaron Taylor.

One of our social representatives, **Daniella Norman,**

also attended to celebrate her qualification as a solicitor following the completion of her training contract. Dani now works as a solicitor in Resolution and Recovery at HM3 Legal.

An introduction to legal apprenticeships

In light of celebrating the newly qualified, it's important to talk about the large variety of routes to qualification that are now widely enrolled across England and Wales. Legal apprenticeships were introduced in 2016, gaining more popularity upon the introduction of the SQE in 2021, and have since been adopted by the vast majority of firms nationwide.

Paralegal apprenticeships consist of the first two years of the six-year solicitor degree apprenticeship, and offer an accessible route to paralegal qualification, often with more lenient grade boundaries and entry requirements than the six-year programme. Many paralegal apprentices will also be given the option to progress onto the latter four years of the solicitor degree apprenticeship following its completion.

Solicitor degree apprenticeships are highly competitive, with many firms often receiving thousands of applications with fewer than ten job offers available. The apprenticeship route has been praised as a great option for social mobility, drawing the attention of many aspiring solicitors from working-class backgrounds like myself due to the education funding, competitive salary and six years of work experience prior to qualification.

My own experience of legal apprenticeships began when I was offered a L7 Solicitor Degree Apprenticeship at 17 years old. Like many degree apprentices, I then entered the profession straight from school and was able to immediately gain experience in practice alongside studying for my LLB.

I'm now over a year into my apprenticeship and have extended my seat in the police claims team at Weightmans, where I work alongside some of the top police lawyers in the country and assist

on a variety of matters to build up my professional portfolio.

MJLD Christmas Event

On Thursday 18th December, the MJLD hosted our sold-out Christmas event at The Tempest. We welcomed junior legal professionals from a variety of firms, levels and practice areas to a night of networking and socialising ahead of the New Year. The event was extremely well-attended and well-received with many attendees returning from our previous events, including our Autumn Social at Ma Boyle's.

MJLD January Social

The MJLD January social at PINS was held on Thursday 29th January and was kindly sponsored by G2 Legal. The night included networking, nibbles and games suitable for all and was a great opportunity to meet with like-minded junior lawyers.

Anya McNally
Apprentice Solicitor at Weightmans
MJLD Social Representative



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Dr Stuart Porter

Chartered Physiotherapist Expert Witness

PhD. MCSP. HCPC. BSc Hons. Grad Dip Phys. MLACP. PGCAP. CertMHS. SFHEA.

Dr Porter acts as an expert witness, in clinical negligence. Condition and prognosis, breaches of duty of care and alleged inappropriate conduct, patient assessment and management, ethics and professional practice, rheumatology, orthopaedics and soft tissue injury management of both children and adults.

His defendant to claimant ratio is currently 50/50. He is also often involved in regulatory breach of duty investigations with professional regulatory bodies, the government and fitness to practice reports for the Health and Care professions council. Dr Porter is an international author having written ten textbooks translated into eleven languages. He has lectured internationally and is a publishing consultant for Elsevier publishers, Oxford. Dr Porter has enhanced DBS clearance, ongoing professional liability insurance and is registered with the information commissioner's office. He is HCPC registered and can supply numerous redacted samples of medicolegal reports if required.

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MR RICHARD GUY

MBCChB MD FRCS FRCS(Gen)

COLORECTAL & GENERAL SURGEON

Mr Guy undertakes Expert Witness work, including the preparation of medicolegal reports in personal injury and clinical negligence cases and is trained to appear in court. Mr Guy can act on behalf of either claimant or defendant or as a Single Joint Expert.

HIS FIELD OF EXPERTISE INCLUDES:

- Emergency abdominal surgery
- Abdominal sepsis
- Abdominal catastrophe
- Intestinal failure
- Colorectal cancer
- Inflammatory bowel disease

Email: info@richardguyexpertwitness.co.uk

Website: www.richardguyexpertwitness.co.uk

Mr Guy is based in the North West and consults in Liverpool, but is prepared to travel nationwide.





Welcoming the future of the legal profession: Liverpool Law Society's Newly Qualified Celebration 2025

On 29 January, Liverpool Law Society proudly hosted the annual Newly Qualified Event, celebrating and welcoming all those who qualified into the legal profession in 2025. The evening recognised the newly qualified practitioners' hard work, dedication and outstanding achievement in reaching this significant milestone.

perseverance required to qualify as a solicitor, emphasising the significance of this accomplishment. She also shared a personal reflection on her own journey, noting that the occasion holds special meaning for her as she attended the Newly Qualified Event herself 30 years ago, where she received the Rupert Bremner Prize.

He noted that, on average, students work around 52 hours per week, highlighting the significant commitment required not only to complete their degree but also to undertake the further training necessary to qualify. James emphasised the importance of continuing to attend networking opportunities and professional events, particularly in the early stages of their careers as Newly Qualified Solicitors. He stressed that the connections they make now will stay with them as they progress through the profession and will prove invaluable throughout their legal careers.



Sarah Mansfield, President of Liverpool Law Society, opened the event by thanking all attendees and extending particular appreciation to the Society's valued sponsor, The University of Law, for their continued support. In her remarks, Sarah highlighted the remarkable commitment and



Sarah Mansfield then invited **James Mannouch**, Immediate Past President of Liverpool Law Society and Pro Bono Coordinator at The University of Law, to speak. James congratulated all the Newly Qualified Lawyers in attendance, recognising what an impressive achievement it is to qualify as a solicitor.



Following **James Mannouch's** remarks, **Faye Morris**, Chair, and **Aaron Taylor**,

Careers and Education Representative of the Merseyside Junior Lawyers' Division (MJLD), spoke about the valuable work the organisation undertakes across Liverpool. MJLD provides an educational and professional support network for young lawyers across the Merseyside region. They also highlighted the opportunities available through MJLD, including the judge marshalling scheme, delivered in partnership with judges across the civil, criminal and family courts. This scheme offers students the chance to observe judicial work firsthand and gain invaluable practical experience that supports their early career development.



Liverpool Law Society were delighted to welcome **Andre Rebello OBE**, HM Senior Coroner for Liverpool and Wirral areas. **Mr Rebello** brings with him a wealth of experience and insight from an area of law that sits at the intersection of justice, public service and humanity.

Andre Rebello OBE thanked Liverpool Law Society for the invitation and offered his warm congratulations to all the Newly Qualified Lawyers in attendance. He reflected on the importance of the core principles that underpin the legal profession, upholding the rule of law and maintaining the highest standards in public life as they progress in their careers. Drawing on his 43 years as a solicitor, **Andre Rebello OBE** spoke of the immense fulfilment he has found in his work, rooted in the significance and purpose of the role he carries out each day. He offered thoughtful advice to those newly qualified, encouraging them to act lawfully, be fair, protect trust, and to carry forward their careers with love, kindness and compassion.

Andre Rebello OBE then invited all

the Newly Qualified Solicitors to come forward and receive their certificates. It was a proud moment for each recipient, marking the formal recognition of their entry into the profession.

The full list of Newly Qualified Solicitors celebrated on 29th January can be found [here](#).

We then welcomed our prize winners to the stage to receive their awards. These prizes recognise exceptional achievement in professional examinations, based on results from the Legal Practice Course and the Solicitors Qualifying Examination at Liverpool John Moores University and The University of Law. **Andre Rebello OBE** offered his warm congratulations to all recipients.

The academic prize winners were:

- **Lloyd Brookman** from Brabners, winner of the Atkinson prize for 2025
- **Ruby Griffiths** from Bermans, winner of the Enoch Harvey prize 2025
- **Zahra Khan** from Hill Dickinson, winner of the Rupert Bremner prize 2025
- **Alicia Lester** from Bond Turner, winner of Timpron Martin prize 2025
- **Robbie Greenfield** from Brabners, winner of C.A. Getley prize 2025

The final award of the evening was the Muir Matthews Prize, presented to a young or trainee solicitor in Liverpool who is judged to have made the most significant all-round contribution. The winner of this award was **Beth Walker** from Brodie Jackson Canter.

Following the presentations of certificates and awards, attendees enjoyed the opportunity to network and socialise. We were delighted to welcome so many guests and to congratulate many of the Newly Qualified Solicitors in person. We look forward to welcoming the next cohort of newly qualified lawyers at next year's event.

Full photo album of images of the evening appears [here](#).



All photographs by **Adam Kenrick**.
Event kindly sponsored by the [University of Law](#).

All change please! Understanding the December 2025 proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework



Anna Tranter

On 16 December, the Government published a consultation draft of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). As a framework, the NPPF sets out national policies that guide how local plans are made and how planning decisions must be taken across England. Rather than offering minor policy tweaks and updates, this draft proposes a significant restructuring of the NPPF to move rules-based policies centre stage to increase certainty and clarity in the planning system.

The proposed changes and accompanying list of consultation questions are extensive. This article provides a brief overview of some of the main changes proposed and outline the proposed direction of travel under the draft text.

Structural re-organisation and the introduction of NDMPs

The draft NPPF is restructured into two main components:

1. Plan-making policies, and
2. National decision-making policies (NDMPs).

NDMPs are proposed to be nationally set planning policies intended to provide a consistent baseline for planning decisions across the country. Their

introduction may bring some potentially significant consequences:

- Local plans which conflict with NDMPs will carry “very limited weight” (meaning that such local plans will be treated as having very little influence on decision-making) once the revised NPPF is effective – thus clarifying the hierarchy between local and national policy.
- Local planning authorities are discouraged from replicating, substantively restating or modifying NDMPs in their local plans – potentially limiting the scope for NDMPs to be tailored at the local policy level.

There are uncertainties around interpretation (e.g. how will inconsistencies and tensions between NDMPs and existing local plans be reconciled/ addressed?) and transitional consequences (e.g. what does this mean for local plans which are already in the process of production and adoption at the time the revised NPPF takes effect?). Subject to consultation responses, we would expect – or hope – to see these wrinkles ironed out in the finalised and updated NPPF.

Sustainable Development: From tilted balance to permanent presumption

The current NPPF contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which for decision-taking means that a planning permission should normally be granted if it accords with an up-to-date development plan, and where the plan is absent or out of date, permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

The draft text updates this long-“presumption in favour of sustainable development” and its tilted balance test and transforms it into a permanent “presumption in favour of suitably located

development”, which is focused on location-based needs and spatial strategies. The Government has explained that they “*want to make clear what forms of development are acceptable in principle in different locations as part of creating a more rules-based approach to development*”. In effect, a rules-based approach would direct development to the most appropriate location.

Substantial weight is to be given to the benefits of supporting business growth in particular sectors, including “AI Growth Zones”, logistics, town centres, and agriculture and rural development.

Housing Delivery, SMEs and the Green Belt

The delivery of housing has been central to this Government’s agenda, and the policies in the NPPF seeking to support this in a number of ways:

Higher-density development near transport hubs

New policies in the draft text promote higher-density residential development at 50 dwellings per hectare near “well-connected” railway stations which are located outside settlements and including land located within the Green Belt (subject to minimum service levels).

There are also proposals to support higher density development in other sustainable locations (at a minimum density of 40 dwellings per hectare) including through the redevelopment of corner and low density plots, upwards extensions and infill development, including within residential curtilages.

SME-led delivery on medium sites

Explicit support is proposed for SME developers to bring forward medium-sized sites of between 1 – 2.5 hectares in recognition of the role of these developers to diversify housing supply. Further support for rural social and affordable housing and clearer expectations for

accessible housing is proposed with a view to further diversifying the housing mix.

While not a part of the proposed NPPF text itself, within the published wider set of consultations is a proposal to introduce a “medium development” site category of between 10-49 homes. It is envisaged that this size site would benefit from reduced regulatory and policy requirements.

Green and Grey Belt Flexibility

A more permissive approach to releasing Green Belt land to promote housing delivery is proposed.

The draft proposes allowing local planning authorities to take a strategic approach in identifying areas of Green Belt that would be best suited to accommodate sustainable development, in recognition of that not all Green Belt land contributes equally towards the Green Belt purposes.

Grey Belt land (previously developed land within the Green Belt or land that does

not strongly contribute to certain of the Green Belt purposes) as introduced in the December 2024 revision of the NPPF is now formally defined and embedded within the proposed wording. The Green Belt purpose of “safeguarding the countryside from encroachment” has been excluded which may increase the number of sites which now qualify as within Grey Belt land.

Sites within Grey Belt land that comply with the Golden Rules (also introduced in December 2024) no longer have to demonstrate that they meet the “very special circumstances” test and where the benefits (e.g. housing development, infrastructure, regeneration) are compelling – providing a clearer scope for development on these sites.

Conclusion

The consultation runs until **10 March 2026** with a copy of the draft text and accompanying consultation questions available on MCHLG’s [website](#)

While a proposed simplification and streamlining of the planning system may be welcomed, the full implications of the policies in the draft NPPF will depend on how residual uncertainties and ambiguities are resolved in the final version. The consultation period therefore provides a crucial opportunity for practitioners, authorities and developers to weigh in and shape the final framework. We expect that the draft NPPF text will be approved without further major changes, and so the consultation period also provides an important moment of inflection and preparation for developers to consider whether forthcoming proposals align with the new approach.

Anna Tranter is a Planning & Environmental lawyer at Irwin Mitchell. For any further questions or queries about the NPPF or general planning or environmental legal advice please do get in touch at Anna.Tranter@irwinmitchell.com.

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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.

Our 2025 Impact

We are reflecting on our 2025 impact and feeling immense pride. It was a year of life changing outcomes for many of our clients with many wrongful decisions overturned. We are also remembering all the difficult and saddening situations we witnessed and hoping that 2026 brings change for some of the most vulnerable people in our society and a more empathetic and supportive approach from decision makers. Despite the stark realities of the challenges our sector is facing, we will keep striving for social justice going forwards to ensure more transformative results for our clients.

It is thanks to our wonderful staff members, board of trustees and our funders & supporters that we can provide access to justice for those really in need and we want to say a big thank you to all of them. Their hard work, dedication and passion for their work really does change lives.



West Derby Centre for Social Justice

The free SEN Advice service provided by The University of Liverpool Law Clinic is back this year, on the 4th Feb & 18th March. We are so grateful to the Law Clinic for bringing this much needed service to the centre and know that their advice will make a profound difference to the lives of SEN families

Free Child SEN Advice Service

University of Liverpool Law Clinic is providing a **FREE SEN advice service** at the **West Derby Centre For Social Justice**. (The centre is based at Dovecot MAC, L14 9BA.)

The Clinic will hold **free drop-in sessions** (no appointment required), to provide advice in person on a one-off basis between **10.30am-12.30pm** on:

Wednesday 4th February
Wednesday 18th March

We politely ask that you only attend if you are a resident in Ian Byrne's West Derby constituency.

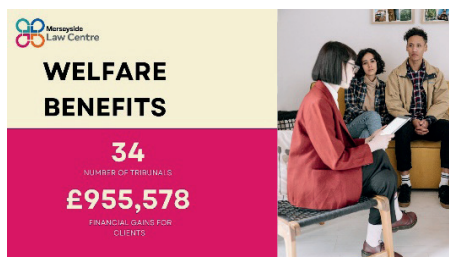
For more details of what the clinic is able to assist with please visit below.

www.liverpool.ac.uk/law/liverpool-law-clinic/clients/children-with-sen-or-disability/

Please contact sophie.brown@merseysidelawcentre.co.uk for any enquiries about this drop-in.

in our communities. No appointment is necessary and we politely ask that you only attend if you are a resident of Ian Byrne's constituency. You can get in touch directly with the Law Clinic here if you have any enquiries regarding the service they provide.

[Children with Special Educational Needs or a Disability | Liverpool Law School | University of Liverpool](http://www.liverpool.ac.uk/law/liverpool-law-clinic/clients/children-with-sen-or-disability/)



West Derby Centre for Social Justice

Timetable

Elevating local lives through access to justice.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Merseyside Law Centre Drop-In Session Weekly 10am-12pm Housing & Welfare Benefits	ACORN Union Drop-In Session 1st Tuesday of the month (check social media for dates) 12pm-2pm	Partners Credit Union Drop-In session Weekly 10am-3pm	Merseyside Law Centre Drop-In Session Weekly 10am-12pm Housing & Welfare Benefits	Broudie Jackson Canter Drop-In Session Weekly 9.30am-11.30am Family Law
Located at: Dovecot MAC 10 Back Dovecot Place L14 9BA		SEN Advice Service University of Liverpool (check social media for dates) 10.30am-12.30pm	Raise Advice Weekly Appointment only 1pm-3pm Debt advice	

To find out more, please e-mail:
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or use your phone camera to scan the QR code



Statistics show that in a single year, £2.8 billion of Pension Credit and Housing Benefit goes unclaimed by older people and over a third (37%) of pensioner households entitled to Pension Credit are not claiming it.

Some older people feel if they are a homeowner or have a small private pension that they will not be entitled to anything which is not the case.

We want to ensure that older people are receiving the benefits they are entitled to and deserve by providing a free welfare advice specifically for people aged 65 or over.

Please share with your networks and get in touch with us if you or anyone you know may benefit from this service.

Case Study: DLA Mobility Appeal

Our client approached our service seeking support to challenge a Disability Living Allowance (DLA) decision for their son *Ben who has a very rare, progressive, and non-treatable neurological condition. Despite the severity of his disability, Ben had been awarded only the lower rate of the mobility component.

Ben is one of five known children in the UK with this condition. The family had learned that the other four children—

each younger and less severely affected—had all been awarded the highest rate mobility component. This raised immediate concerns for the parents, who believed the decision failed to recognise the extent of Ben's mobility difficulties.

The family felt that important behavioural and functional factors had not been considered in the original decision. In addition, the family were unable to transport Ben's wheelchair and specialised buggy due to vehicle limitations, further restricting his independence and ability to access the community.

Evidence Submitted

To support the appeal, the family provided substantial evidence, including:

- A detailed letter from another parent navigating the same rare and difficult circumstances, highlighting the small number of affected children in the UK
- Medical information confirming the progressive nature of the condition and the expectation of continued deterioration

Impact on the Family

The delay in resolving the appeal—lasting almost eighteen months—significantly affected the family's wellbeing and their son's quality of life. During this period, Ben's condition worsened without the level of support required to maintain safety, mobility, and independence. The family described increasing frustration, financial strain, and emotional stress as they sought appropriate recognition of Ben's needs.

Our Role

We took on the case to challenge what was clearly an unjust decision, advocating for a reassessment that properly reflected the severity of Ben's mobility restrictions and risks. Our role included reviewing the evidence, assisting the family in presenting clear comparisons with other children affected by the condition, and ensuring that the decision-makers understood the progressive and complex nature of Ben's disability.

Outcome

We attended the appeal hearing with the family. The appeal to obtain the higher

rate of the mobility component was successful on both grounds:

- It was recognised that Ben met the "virtually unable to walk" regulations.
- The assessment confirmed significant cognitive and behavioural challenges, so Ben met the "severe mental impairment" grounds also.

As a result, Ben was awarded the **higher rate mobility component** effective from **10 January 2024**, with the award set to run until **22 November 2035**.

The family expressed immense relief and happiness with the outcome. They plan to use the award to obtain a Motability car capable of transporting Ben along with all his equipment, addressing the limitations of their current vehicle

Conclusion

This case highlights the importance of thorough advocacy and evidence-gathering in DLA appeals, particularly for children with rare and progressive conditions. By ensuring that all functional and behavioural factors were fully considered, the family obtained a fair outcome that directly improves their child's mobility, independence, and quality of life after such a stressful period

"Since we put in for higher mobility for Ben in January 2024 and getting knocked back and feeling let down, we were put in contact with Merseyside Law Centre. From day one Andrew reassured us and made our family his priority in getting the support needed off the DWP. It has been a long road, 2 years in fact and along that period I can be sometimes not the most patient but again Andrew always explained properly and said the tribunal process is long winded. Andrew always checked in and was the first to let us know any information regarding the case. We can't thank him enough for what he has done for us as a family. I would highly recommend Mersey Law Centre to anyone who is struggling in these areas and need specialist and professional advice."

Volunteer & Donation Opportunities

Volunteers are the backbone of
(Continues over page)

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

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

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

To download our Volunteer Application Pack, please visit [Get Involved | merseysidelawcentre.co.uk](http://GetInvolved.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk) and e-mail the completed form to enquiries@merseysidelawcentre.co.uk

With the current cost-of-living crisis, our services are now needed more than ever. If you could consider donating to

Merseyside Law Centre, it could make a massive difference to many people's lives in Merseyside. Our donation details are up on our website www.merseysidelawcentre.co.uk/donate

As always, our current contact details and drop in session details are below so please do pass these onto anyone you think may benefit from or require



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DWF comments on UK labour market



Joanne Frew

Economic uncertainty, coupled with ongoing legislative reform, is placing heightened pressure on the UK labour market. The UK employment rate was estimated at 75.1% in September to November 2025. This is largely unchanged in the latest quarter but above estimates of a year ago. The UK unemployment rate was estimated at 5.1% in the same period, showing an increase in the latest quarter and over the last year. These indicators highlight a labour market that remains resilient but increasingly under strain. The estimated number of vacancies in the

UK for October to December 2025 indicated a small increase of 10,000 to 734,000 compared with July to September 2025. We are still seeing a reluctance across the market to recruit employees as employers grapple with rising costs and increased worker protection.

Annual growth in employees' average earnings in Great Britain for regular earnings (excluding bonuses) was 4.5% and for total earnings (including bonuses), was 4.7% in September to November 2025. Annual average regular earnings growth was 7.9% for the public sector and 3.6% for the private sector. The public sector annual growth rate is impacted by some public sector pay rises being paid earlier in 2025 than in 2024. Persistent increases in living costs continue to put upward pressure on wages, leaving employers under ongoing strain to adjust compensation accordingly. Many organisations are now revisiting their pay structures and wider reward offerings in an effort to remain competitive in a challenging labour market.

With the Employment Rights Act 2025 receiving Royal Assent on 18 December 2025, we are embarking on one of the most significant periods of employment law reform in decades. A growing number of employers are scaling back recruitment plans as they navigate higher operating costs, tighter restrictions on flexibility, and a more demanding compliance landscape.

Employers are encouraged to take early, proactive measures to prepare for the forthcoming legislative changes and facilitate an orderly transition. The reforms present a constructive opportunity to reinforce workplace protections and support the development of a future-focused, resilient workforce. Those employers who work collaboratively and invest in strengthening their workplace culture are likely to adapt most effectively to the coming reforms and position themselves for long-term success.

Joanne Frew
DWF

Five key regulatory changes for your 2026 risk agenda

With a raft of changes on the horizon, Calum MacLean, Risk Manager at specialist professional indemnity insurance broker Miller Insurance Services LLP, shares five key regulatory changes to keep on your risk agenda during 2026.

1. **Tax adviser status:** New legislation under the Finance Bill 2025-26 will mandate registration for all individuals and firms who “interact with HMRC on behalf of clients”. This new tax-adviser registration requirement (by May 2026) has been confirmed to apply to conveyancers completing SDLT returns. HMRC guidance should now be available, and firms excluding tax advice from their retainers must carefully evaluate the implications.
2. **AML Regulation:** Last autumn’s budget did not introduce many of the feared measures for law firms (notably changes to LLP taxation). However larger firms face hefty charges under the Economic Crime (Anti-Money Laundering) Levy. With AML regulation likely to transition to the FCA late 2027, firms should start preparing for possible dual scrutiny from the FCA and SRA.
3. **ACSP registration:** By spring 2026, only Authorised Corporate Service Providers (ACSPs) will be allowed to file LLP or company documents. Firms intending to continue these services must register promptly. Additionally, and part of Companies House reforms, existing LLP members and company directors must verify their identities by November 2026. New appointments are equally subject to ID verification requirements, with a 14-day deadline for new Persons with Significant Control.

4. **UK AI Regulation and EU AI Act:** The UK Government is cautiously evolving its approach to AI regulation, balancing its ambition to become an AI superpower with proportionate oversight. Anticipating an AI Regulation Bill in 2026, based on principles from the 2023 White Paper, firms should expect a more formalised UK AI regulatory framework over the next 12-24 months. Firms with any EU touchpoints should prepare for the EU AI Act, effective August 2026.
5. **Data (Use and Access) Act 2025:** With the aim of easing regulatory burdens on firms, the DUAA introduces significant amendments to the UK’s data protection framework, including the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Key changes include revised Data Subject Access Requests rules and statutory exemptions for communications covered by legal professional privilege. Firms will need to update their policies, procedures, and client documentation to align with new timelines and fee structures.

Complaint procedures also change under the DUAA, requiring clients to raise data handling issues directly with the organisation before approaching the ICO. Furthermore, firms using AI tools must comply with updated automated processing rules and conduct robust “active diligence” and audit checks on all third-party data processors.

Act now to stay ahead

Firms should proactively assess their readiness for these upcoming changes. A robust framework will ensure you are equipped to thrive amidst challenges and seize opportunities. Look out for Miller’s Horizon Scanning whitepaper coming soon.

Miller is a trusted adviser to over 1,300 law firms across England and Wales. For guidance on risk or insurance, contact Kerry.greenwood@miller-insurance.com or email solicitors@miller-insurance.com.

About the Author



Calum MacLean

Calum is a Risk Manager within Miller’s Professions team, working primarily with law firms, however his experience also spans across accountants and construction professionals.

He has worked in insurance for over 16 years, primarily in risk management, with a particular emphasis on the solicitor market. Whilst his current focus is on UK based firms, he also brings a wealth of international experience.

Calum is a self-confessed ideas person and loves looking at how to make things work better. He enjoys bringing a pragmatic approach to clients and delivering innovative ways to continue the positive evolution of Miller’s offering.



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Regulation Update

February 2026

The latest Regulation news from Andrea Cohen of Weightmans LLP



Andrea Cohen

As the new year gathers pace (where did January go?), regulatory developments across the profession continue to evolve at speed. From shifts in supervisory expectations to high-profile disciplinary decisions and significant consultations, the past few weeks have delivered important updates shaping risk, compliance, and practice management across the sector. In this month's Compli update, we bring you the latest regulatory insights, key insights and a roundup of some of the recent disciplinary decisions to help you stay informed and prepared.

Consultations

As we mentioned last month, the SRA published its consultation on client money in legal services, which includes consideration of enhanced protections and the potential reintroduction of universal accountants' reports, with the closing date for responses set at 20 February 2026. The consultation is a follow up on the 2024 consultation which had also raised proposals regarding firms' ability to hold client money, which the SRA have put on hold. However, no sooner had the profession breathed a sigh of relief regarding that delay (albeit only temporary), the Ministry of Justice has launched a consultation on a

proposed scheme, 'Interest on Lawyers' Client Account Scheme' (ILCA), to raise funds by requiring payment of the interest earned on client money to be paid to the government (up to 75% on interest on pooled client accounts, and 50% of interest on individual client accounts). In addition to the principle itself, the method of collection is being considered, including automatic remittance from banks directly, or transfers from firms themselves. The consultation seeks views on the percentage rates, how often the interest should be paid and the impact on clients. There has been much debate and discussion, and it is anticipated that there will be considerable opposition to the proposals. The consultation, which was launched on 7 January 2026, has a very short response time and ends on 9 February 2026.

Claims management

On 16 January 2026, the SRA published an updated statement on motor finance commission claims, highlighting expectations post the Supreme Court judgment of 1 August 2025, including firms familiarising themselves with the details of the judgment, considering its impact on existing and prospective clients, and informing clients of the 'realistic prospect of an FCA-led redress scheme being introduced'. For prospective clients, this must be done before any agreement is signed and applies even where a redress scheme is not yet in place.

The government has called for evidence on housing disrepair claims and references last summer's report on the SRA thematic review on high-volume consumer claims and discussion paper that closed November 2025, which reported investigations against 76 firms and the closure of 5 firms in the sector, and it is anticipated

that changes will be introduced.

Mazur

The SRA updated its guidance arising from the Mazur litigation which was released on 18 December 2025, clarifying expectations around supervision of litigation and case oversight, and confirming that those conducting a reserved activity without authorisation who have not 'addressed the implications of the judgment and our guidance', can expect the SRA to use 'appropriate investigative and enforcement powers to identify and address this misconduct'. The CILEX appeal against the judgment will be heard on 24 February 2026 and has been listed for two and a half days. The Law Society has been granted permission to be added as a party.

Disciplinary and regulatory decisions

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

High Court overturns solicitor misconduct finding and castigates SDT and SRA

In a decision that has received much attention, both for the decision and the Judge's comments, the High Court has overturned a SDT finding of misconduct against a solicitor involved in pre-action correspondence which had been found to be an improper attempt to restrict the right of a tax lawyer and journalist to publish or publicly discuss the contents, and withdraw claims about the client's tax affairs. The SDT had fined the solicitor £50,000 and ordered him to pay £260,000 costs.

The SRA's original allegation had been that the email was improperly headed 'confidential and without prejudice' to prevent permissible disclosure,

but by the time it reached the SDT, the allegation was that it improperly attempted to restrict the right to publish the email and that was what the SDT ‘purported to find’, and as a result, found all charges to be made out, without further analysis. The judge stated: *“This idea of a preoccupation with secrecy and stifling a right to publish – proposed by the SRA and adopted by the tribunal – was, in my judgment, insufficiently examined, accounted for, or evidentially supported in the tribunal’s analysis, and as such was replete with risk of unfairness to Mr Hurst and to the reaching of an unfair decision... the tribunal did not address itself correctly and relevantly to that law, and unsurprisingly fell into error of law to the extent that it ostensibly had regard to it, sought to apply it, or rejected it as irrelevant.”*

The SRA has said it is considering the judgment before deciding on next steps. Unusually, the SDT made a statement that it ‘welcomed the judge’s observations and would ‘carefully review the court’s findings to ensure that future decisions are articulated with the maximum possible clarity for the profession and the public.’

Solicitor struck off for attempting to involve junior in dishonest conduct

A solicitor has been struck off by the SDT after admitting she knowingly misled an unrepresented opposing party in a family law matter and sought to involve a junior colleague in the deception. The colleague reported the matter to a partner. In mitigation, not agreed by the SRA, she said these were two lapses in her 15-year career which were not reflective of her overall character. The tribunal said the misconduct was not a ‘one-off moment of madness’ and found her conduct dishonest and deliberate.

Struck off for failing to verify ID in person

A solicitor who certified copies of a client’s passport and driving licence without seeing the originals has been struck off, the SDT rejecting the argument that he was entitled to do so as they were high quality images and the originality lay in the information in the document, not the physical object itself, and he had represented the client for a number of years. During the SRA’s initial investigation, he made admissions and claimed he was dealing with personal issues and then told the tribunal he was ‘pressurised’ into making statements. The tribunal rejected that claim and found he had acted dishonestly. He was ordered to pay over £30,000 costs.

Struck off for certifying documents without seeing originals

A solicitor who operated an online document-checking service has been struck off after certifying documents without reviewing the original paperwork. The tribunal found that uploading copies to a website and checking its veracity using AI did not satisfy the requirement to inspect original documents in person. He was ordered to pay almost £36,000 costs.

Paralegal barred over misleading conveyancing emails

A paralegal has been barred from working for any law firm without SRA permission and ordered to pay £4,500 costs, after sending two misleading emails about the progress of conveyancing transactions, with the tribunal finding she knowingly misrepresented factual matters. She claimed that she had acted in accordance with her supervising solicitor’s instructions. The solicitor denied any misconduct and said she had not authorised the emails, which was accepted by the SDT.

Solicitor suspended for amending handover note

A solicitor who admitted dishonesty, having deleted a paragraph in a handover document as he had failed to follow the instructions in it and then sent a misleading email two days later, has been suspended for two years, followed by two years of strict practicing conditions, including only acting as a solicitor as an employee and only in employment approved by the SRA. The SDT said ‘The dishonesty was brief, confined to a single matter, unaccompanied by gain to the solicitor or actual harm to the client or anyone else, and there was highly credible evidence of immediate confession, remorse and genuine insight.’ The support of his firm was also taken into account.

Struck off for recording 28 hours per day

A solicitor who recorded an average of 28 hours a day over 12 months to maximise her bonus, which led to her firm having to repay the Legal Aid Agency, has been struck off. The SRA sought costs of almost £50,000, but due to her means, costs of £5000 were ordered.

How Compli can help...

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

Andrea Cohen
Compli,
Weightmans LLP

Charity Spotlight:

MCTC are a counselling charity established in 2011.

- We are in Hamilton Square, Birkenhead, accessible and convenient for local transport.
- We offer fully professional counselling and psychotherapy to any child or adult in need on a pay what you can afford model. In 2025 we facilitated nearly 3500 sessions.
- We make every effort to help everyone who approaches us for help.



For any client who is feeling suicidal we can offer 24/7 support. Our service successfully moved online during the pandemic and we now offer both a face-to-face and online support service.

In 2019 we established a local outreach program in schools. We kept this going during the pandemic and reached children and young people who would otherwise be isolated. The Lottery did not renew the funding, and the project had to scale down, but we still help in three local schools, providing art therapy and counselling services, with a drop in hub.

Our main focus is to work directly with people who are on the edges of mainstream society in ways which encourage inclusion, integration and independence. We have been recognized as “outstanding” by the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society and are members of the Liverpool City Region Fair Employment Charter. We are members of the Zero Suicide Alliance.

We'd like to share some stories to illustrate how our work can transform lives.

“When I first came to therapy at MCTC, I had made multiple suicide attempts and frequently could not get out of bed because I was so depressed. I even missed some therapy sessions because of my depression. Thanks to the deep and meaningful work I have done with my therapist, I have now started as a volunteer for a community Cafe. It has made a huge difference in my mood and getting me out and about. If I ever need any more therapy I would definitely reach out. I wanted to thank you so much, you have transformed my life.”

“A client who I worked with a few years ago, left her artwork and I had kept it. I realised it wasn't best practice so I went to deliver her old work, as she had left school by then. When she came to the door she was so delighted to see me, and to have her old work back. She said art therapy had helped her so much, she tells everyone at college about it, it changed her life. This client had had quite a lot of ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) and we worked on putting her fears into pictures that she

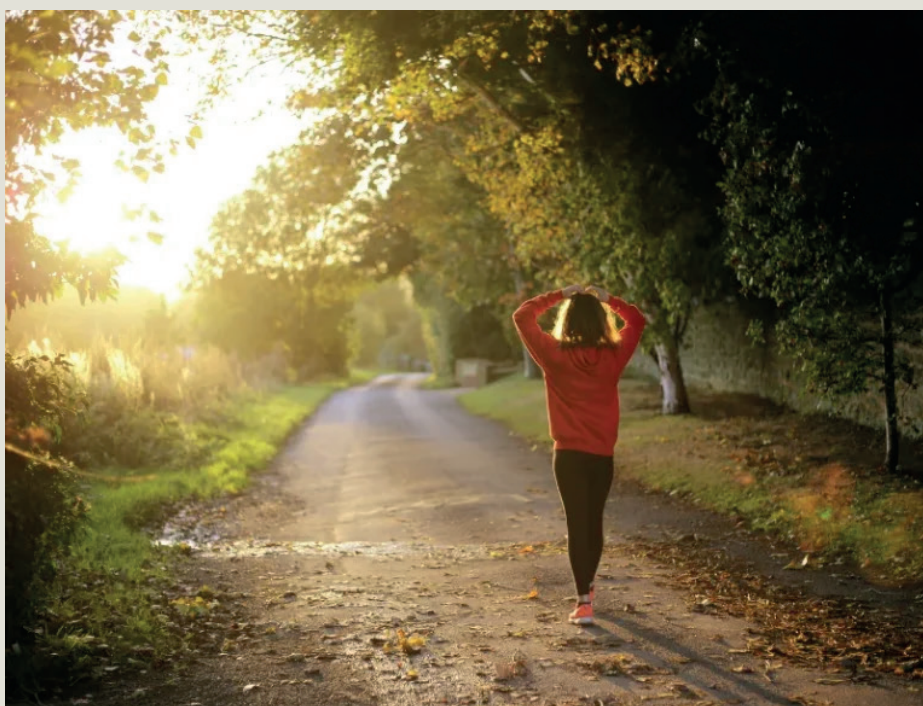


could then get control of and change them.”

Thomas aged 15 Merseyside -
Presenting issues:

- Struggling with Identity
- Suicidal thoughts
- Self harm
- ADHD

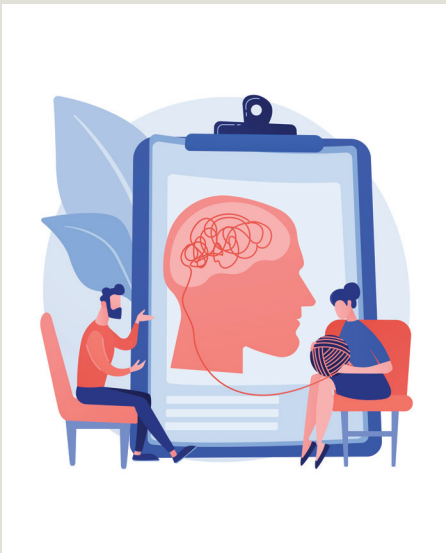
Counselling provided Thomas with a safe space to share his inner world, Thomas felt a deep sense of rejection



and abandonment by his father (who left the family suddenly with no warning), asking himself, “*what’s wrong with me?*”.

Thomas would feel depressed, often feeling overwhelmed by his emotions and he would use self-harm as a way to cope. Through counselling Thomas learned that people do care about him, that his opinions and thoughts were important. Thomas felt valued and we built trust to talk about his struggles. From attending counselling Thomas started to put healthy coping mechanisms in place and has built his confidence to have more understanding around his sense of self. He has become resilient and found a purpose, he is able to recognise his achievements and is looking forward to the future. He no longer wants to end his life.

.....



In November 2025, our founder **Angela O'Connor** retired. Angela drove the charity forward tirelessly for over a decade, transforming MCTC from a one therapist, one room operation to an operation with nearly 20 therapists and various outreach community projects. **Sue Stinchcomb** is our new Clinical Director and will be taking the charity forward.



Sue Stinchcomb and Angela Samata outside the MCTC office in Birkenhead

“I have been associated with MCTC for many years and am now proud to be leading the organisation toward the end of the decade.

MCTC is equipped for the 2030’s and beyond.”

- Sue Stinchcomb – Clinical Director

My aims for MCTC are to remain true to the original ethos of helping those in need, irrespective of their ability to pay, which I understand may be a challenge in the current climate, but I have confidence that through the generosity of those who share our vision, we will prevail. We have a terrific workforce, essential to the continued success of MCTC, and whom I look forward to supporting in their ongoing development. I also look forward to working more closely with our patrons and trustees to ensure the

We are proud to have **Angela Samata** as our Patron. Angela is a psychotherapist TEDx Speaker, and the presenter of the BBC1 BAFTA nominated documentary ‘Life After Suicide’, winner of the Mind Media Award for Best Factual TV documentary.

MCTC will shortly be starting a search for a new Chair of Trustees, please contact us if you share our ethos and are keen to help steer the charity forward.

Administration@mctcwirral.org.uk



More than a supplier: How Jayva became Antonelli & Antonelli's trusted LEAP Legal Software partner

Introduction

At Antonelli & Antonelli, client care is everything – and when it came to implementing new practice management software, the law firm wanted a partner who shared that same ethos of empathy, responsiveness and reliability.

As a certified LEAP Legal Software partner, Jayva didn't just install software; it provided hands-on support, tailored training and ongoing financial management services that feel more like having an in-house expert than an external consultant.

The result was a seamless transition to LEAP and continued peace of mind, with a trusted team always on hand to keep systems running smoothly, bookkeeping in check and staff focused on serving clients.

The client

As a family-owned law firm, Antonelli & Antonelli's ethos is treating its clients' legal matters as its own. As such, it's committed to 100% satisfaction through delivering thoughtful and effective guidance, and vigorous representation in litigated matters – with relationship building at the core.

Daniel R. Antonelli handles all aspects of probate, trust and estate administration and litigation. He approaches legal services provision with empathy, to support clients at one of the most emotional and distressing periods of their lives.

Daniel comments, "I love hearing from clients that I did something to put them at ease. While many lawyers want to be viewed as a 'pit bull', in my opinion the role of a lawyer is more dynamic. Aggressive representation in a litigated matter is a must, but when working with a client, the most important skills are communication and compassion. I pride myself on having these skillsets in abundance."

The challenge faced by Antonelli & Antonelli before the software switchover

Antonelli & Antonelli was juggling multiple disconnected systems to manage its cases. This patchwork approach worked when the caseload was small, but as the practice expanded it became increasingly inefficient and difficult to maintain consistency.

Once they hit 60 active matters, it became clear they needed a better solution to handle time recording, document automation and storage in one place. LEAP's combination of rich features and sophisticated document automation stood out as the platform to take the law firm forward.

Daniel explains, "I started out with a combination of applications. When we reached the 60-case milestone, something more robust and fully integrated was needed to be comprehensive enough to do everything simultaneously. Having researched the marketplace offerings, we chose LEAP backed by Jayva. It's feature rich with sophisticated document automation built in, powered by templates and database pre-population."

The solution delivered by Jayva Global

From the beginning of Antonelli & Antonelli's LEAP journey, Jayva played a hands-on role in making the transition smooth and stress-free by providing expert training, implementation support and integration advice. Jayva's deep knowledge of both LEAP and QuickBooks Online meant the law firm could go live confidently while refining processes, and keeping its data reconciled and compliant.

Daniel adds, "LEAP's supporting us really well – a total transformation to our earlier IT set up. From the word go, we received training through Jayva. In fact, it wasn't totally obvious it was Jayva rather than LEAP, as the two organisations operate closely together."

"Jayva's knowledgeable on LEAP and QuickBooks Online – the two systems we'd

be running in tandem. Having Jayva on board to assist with implementation and training was extremely comforting. As a result of their positive input, uptake of the new software has been strong.

"Now, Jayva's role has evolved into helping with integration between LEAP and QuickBooks Online, specifically making sure the figures in these systems reconcile with the money in our bank account via monthly bookkeeping support."

The benefits of the Jayva-LEAP solution

Jayva's role didn't stop at implementation – it evolved into a long-standing partnership that delivers tangible business value courtesy of a blend of bookkeeping, reconciliation, reporting and trouble-shooting support that's like having an in-house finance and systems expert. This proactive service gives the law firm peace of mind, frees up staff time, reduces costs and ensures LEAP and QuickBooks Online run at peak efficiency – enabling Antonelli & Antonelli to stay focused on clients rather than back-office complexities.

Daniel concludes, "Jayva acts as chief financial officer and bookkeeper all in one. As well as reconciliation, Jayva runs a series of regular financial reports. Jayva's support goes beyond the realms of simple cashiering as it's a detailed financial analysis for forecasting and planning purposes."

"As a business owner, I'm constantly pulled in a million directions. Resolving a technical dilemma on my own or have my staff do it could take three hours. The related overhead salary costs of doing so are substantial. In contrast, it would take Jayva half an hour maximum to fix, thereby cutting my expenditure by over 80%. Jayva's one of my favourite suppliers. I couldn't run my law firm as successfully without them."

Learn more about Jayva

Visit www.jayvaglobal.com, email info@jayvaglobal.com or call 0333 2020 995.

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Induction training & onboarding



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Workflow design & training including business process reengineering



About Jayva

- + Legal sector experts
- + Launched in 2014
- + Offices in 6 countries
- + Client success centric
- + Global support 24/6
- + Gold Xero & Elite QuickBooks advisors
- + LEAP consultancy

Forthcoming Courses

****NEW****

MULTI DELEGATE DISCOUNT FOR MEMBERS

In September we launched our brand-new members-only benefit - booking multiple delegates on the same legal training course will enjoy substantial discounts, making it ideal for teams looking to learn together or firms aiming to offer equal training opportunities across departments.

This offer cannot be used in conjunction with the Training Passport.

DATE	EVENT	SPEAKER
10/02/2026	Developing Management and Business Skills for Lawyers	Keith Harper
12/02/2026	Conveyancing Law	Richard Snape
19/02/2026	Introduction to Wills and Probate, and Connection with Family Law	Safda Mahmood
24/02/2026	2026 Personal Injury Conference	Various
05/03/2026	International Women's Day	Various
12/03/2026	Conveyancing and the Family Home	Richard Snape
18/03/2026	Financial Orders: Law and Practice	Safda Mahmood
18/03/2026	Cohabitation: Law Practice	Safda Mahmood
21/04/2026	Private Children Law: 2026 Update	Safda Mahmood
21/04/2026	Public Children Law: 2026 Update	Safda Mahmood
29/04/2026	Commercial Property Update	Hannah Mackinlay
30/04/2026	All About Alphabet Shares	Jackie Sheldon

To comply with the SRA's [Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs](#), all solicitors must keep their professional knowledge and skills up to date. These courses will help you maintain an up-to-date understanding of relevant law, policy & practice.

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

For full details or to book any of the above courses (& more!) please visit:

<https://www.liverpoollawsociety.org.uk/training/>

Conveyancing Law Update

with Richard Snape

Online, 12th February, 1.30pm - 4.30pm



Conveyancing continues to evolve with significant legislative and case law developments. This comprehensive course is designed to keep busy practitioners fully up to date with the latest changes impacting practice. Topics we will cover include:

- The Renters' Rights Act 2025 and the abolition of assured shorthold tenancies in England
- Progress on the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024

- Commonhold: Government plans to replace leasehold flats
 - Case law on the Building Safety Act and guidance on building height requirements
 - The TA6 6th edition and best practices for responding to enquiries
 - Recent case law on easements, covenants, car parking, and boundary agreements
 - Updates on adverse possession and the general boundaries rule
 - Chancel repair liability and proposed Law Commission reforms
- Join us for an in-depth update that ensures you remain informed and prepared for the challenges ahead.

[BOOK NOW](#)

Introduction To Wills And Probate, And Connection with Family Law

with Safda Mahmood

Online, 19th February, 10.00am - 4.00pm



This course is designed to help you become more familiar with the law, practice, and procedure in Wills and Probate, while keeping you up to date with case law and statutory developments. It will enable you to anticipate potential problems in handling cases and provide you with the knowledge and skills to draft wills with greater confidence and be aware of common types of clauses in wills. This course is written and presented by an experienced family solicitor. The course will equip you with the essentials in terms of principles of Wills and probate, and as to how it links into other areas of law, particularly family law.

[BOOK NOW](#)

International Women's Day

Thursday 5th March 2026, 4.00pm till 6.45pm
In Person Event at Evelyns Partners

Join fellow professionals in celebrating International Women's Day 2026 with an inspiring evening of thought-provoking sessions and networking. The event will feature motivational speakers covering a range of topics, including practical strategies for managing stress, the benefits of mentoring, and financial confidence through life's key turning points. You'll also hear from an active member of Liverpool's legal profession on her pathway into law, followed by valuable insights on career reinvention and navigating "squiggly" careers. The programme includes opportunities to connect over refreshments and engage with ideas that empower women to thrive both personally and professionally.

[BOOK NOW](#)

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Conveyancing and The Family Home

with Richard Snape

Online, 12th March, 1.30pm - 4.30pm



Conveyancing involving the family home can present a range of challenges. This course is designed to explore these difficulties and provide practical solutions, making it an invaluable resource for both conveyancers and family law practitioners.

Topics we will cover include:

- Declarations of trust and their implications
- Gifts from parents to children
- Managing undue influence and conflicts of interest
- Overriding interests and consent forms
- Issues surrounding severance
- SDLT considerations

Join us for an insightful session that equips you with the knowledge to handle these intricate matters confidently.

[BOOK NOW](#)



Family

Financial Orders: Law and Practice


with Safda Mahmood

Online, 18th March, 10.00am - 12.30pm



This course will consider the various factors surrounding financial orders and the developments in the case law and statutory provisions and will be of benefit to those delegates who seek to be aware of the current themes and developments surrounding this area of law. This course will support you in understanding financial orders and financial remedies, helping you become more knowledgeable about key legislative updates and recent case law developments. It will also enhance your awareness of relevant practice and procedure, prepare you to manage anticipated challenges, and highlight the value of nuptial agreements. Overall, the course is designed to strengthen your confidence and improve your efficiency in this area.

BOOK NOW




Family

Cohabitation: Law Practice


with Safda Mahmood

Online, 18th March, 1:15pm - 3.45pm



The course will be of benefit to those delegates who seek to become more confident with how to run/defend a case through the courts involving trusts of land and Schedule 1 Children Act Matters. This course offers assistance in understanding the manner in which cohabitation issues are raised in family matters, helping you become more confident with key legislative and case law developments. It aims to increase confidence with the relevant practice and procedure, particularly under TOLATA 1996, and to equip you to deal with anticipated difficulties. You will gain an understanding of the various steps that can be taken to assist cohabiting parties, and overall the course will help you improve your confidence and efficiency.

BOOK NOW




Family

Private Children Law: 2026 Update


with Safda Mahmood

Online, 21st April, 10:00am - 12:30pm



Join us for an essential training session designed to bridge the gap between theory and practice in private children law. This event will help you master key legislative and case law developments, understand crucial procedural steps, and stay ahead of the game in a fast-moving area of law. Gain confidence in applying case law and legislation effectively, avoid common pitfalls, and enhance both your efficiency and professional competence. Whether you're looking to refine your skills or strengthen your practical knowledge, this session will equip you with the tools to succeed.

BOOK NOW




Family

Public Children Law: 2026 Update

with Safda Mahmood

Online, 21st April, 1:15am - 15:45pm



Join us for an in-depth session designed to help you put the theory of public children law into practice with confidence and precision. This course will guide you through key legislative and case law developments, essential procedural steps, and practical strategies to stay ahead in this complex area. You will learn how to apply case law and legislation effectively, avoid common mistakes, and enhance your efficiency in managing cases. By the end of the session, you'll feel more confident and equipped to handle challenges in public children law with clarity and competence.

BOOK NOW

All About Alphabet Shares

with Jackie Sheldon

Online, 30th April, 1.00pm - 2.30pm



This online course will provide an understanding surrounding share classes (including a discussion of different types of shares and an appreciation of class rights). It will practically identify how to create a different class of share and provide a step-by-step guide to follow.

This online course will cover the following:

- Analysis of different classes of shares and examples of methods to draft share particulars
- Extracts from real life articles of association showing how different share classes may be used (and appreciation of why Alphabet Shares may be utilised in practice)
- Case law on alphabet shares
- Practical process to create different classes
- Variation of class rights

This course is appropriate for paralegals, junior solicitors, accountants or company secretaries that are involved in advising on share capital.

BOOK NOW

Commercial Property Update

with Hannah Mackinlay

Online, 29th April, 9.30am - 12.30am



In 2024, we witnessed significant changes for commercial real estate lawyers, and we can anticipate even more impactful developments from the new Labour government. Many firms are preparing for upcoming changes.

This half-day online session will prepare you for what's ahead by covering the latest developments in leasehold reform, EPC proposals and their impact on service charges, rent reviews, and alterations, as well as major Supreme Court changes on squatters' rights. You'll also explore updates on commercial lease renewals, deposits and drop-dead dates in conditional contracts, overage and lender priorities, SDLT reclaims, general case law trends, and what the future may hold for commonhold. Stay informed, anticipate challenges, and ensure your practice is ready for the next wave of change.

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The Solicitors' Charity spotlights the driving force leading its Data and Operations support



The Solicitors' Charity is highlighting the pivotal role of Ricardo Premchand, Director of Data and Operations, whose strategic leadership behind the scenes continues to strengthen the charity's mission of supporting solicitors and their families through times of need. Ricardo, the longest-serving current member of the charity's staff with 13 years of dedicated service, brings a unique blend of operational expertise and purpose-led commitment to his work.

In The Legal Loop series on the charity's website, he shared insights into how his team's focus on systems, data integrity and process optimisation has enabled the charity to operate with greater clarity, responsiveness, and impact: <https://thesolicitorscharity.org/article/legal-loop-ricardo/>

"You don't have to manage things on your own. We all need a helping hand from time to time – and it really is ok to ask for help," says Ricardo, reflecting both his personal

ethos and the charity's approach to wellbeing support.

Ricardo emphasises that while his team's work may be less visible than frontline services, it is vital in ensuring The Solicitors' Charity runs smoothly and effectively.

From enhancing internal systems to better coordinate casework, donor management and reporting workflows, his contributions help create space for colleagues to deliver thoughtful, human-centred support to solicitors and their dependants across England and Wales.

He explains that: *"good data and well-considered ways of working give us the confidence to adapt, improve and grow in the right direction,"* while reinforcing the charity's commitment to a holistic wellbeing model that goes beyond financial aid to address emotional, physical, and professional wellbeing too.

Ricardo's perspective underscores a broader evolution within the charity: one that

recognises the complexities of modern legal lives and the need for tailored, efficient, and compassionate support systems.

His reflections also resonate with the legal profession at large, encouraging organisations and individuals alike to consider how informed, strategic operational practices can amplify impact across sectors.

He concludes: *"The Solicitors' Charity is here not only for moments of crisis, but to walk alongside people as they move forward. With over 165 years of experience and a sole focus on supporting solicitors and their dependants, we're uniquely placed to offer personalised, compassionate help that reflects modern legal life."*

The Legal Loop series offers a behind-the-scenes look at the people shaping The Solicitors' Charity's work.

Find out more about the support available through The Solicitors' Charity: <https://thesolicitorscharity.org/how-we-help/>



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

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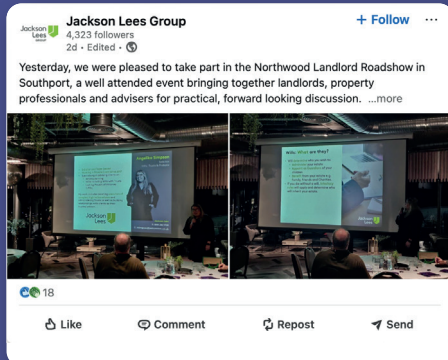


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Social Media Highlights

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 story to share, why not send it to us, clearly labelled 'Social Media Page':
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