

Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer

The Official Journal of Leeds Law Society

Leeds
Law Society

June 2021

Issue 170

Future- proofing is vital

Whether building
a team or a
business, it must
be built to last



Local

Jordan Brown on working to benefit and bring together the Scarborough legal profession and local area

News

Lupton Fawcett helps to secure the future of Sheffield's Food Works by quickly completing a lease on its new premises

Society

The Diversity & Inclusion Conference is coming, plus meet the new president of Leeds Law Society

Last Word

Nadine Marston of Boardside on business immigration, Brexit's impact, and living and working in Yorkshire

Comment

Patrick Walker is forced to examine himself in the mirror, does not like what he sees, but bakes a cure



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PRINT:

Buxton Press



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Law Society &
Barker Brooks
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SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Subscriptions are available to Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer at £70 for one calendar year (10 issues). Unless requested otherwise, your subscription will start with the issue following receipt of your payment. To subscribe contact publishers Barker Brooks Communications on 01423 851 150, or email accounts@barkerbrooks.co.uk.

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Views

President's Column.....05

Catherine Woodward plans to support lawyers of all disciplines and levels of qualification in building the networks that are so essential to the legal profession

Leeds Law Society.....06

The Diversity and Inclusion Conference will take place in September 2021

News

Business Development.....08

Lupton Fawcett helps secure future of Sheffield's Food Works, Blacks Solicitors scores a try with the sale of Red Hall House, Taylor&Emmet launches national wealth service, and Centrica re-appoints Leeds-based Womble Bond Dickinson to UK legal panel

Community.....10

Crombie Wilkinson's John Ellis retires, Keebles offers free commercial law advice with Business Sheffield, IoD awards fellowship to Yorkshire and Lupton Fawcett lawyer Jonathan Oxley, team engagement and client relationships sustain growth at Clarion in difficult year, and more

Appointments.....14

The latest promotions and appointments from across Leeds and Yorkshire

Focus on

Leeds JLD.....18

Ellie Stansfield, vice-chair of the Leeds Junior Lawyers Division, reveals what it's been like to be a trainee over the past 14 months

Caddick Developments.....20

Helen Gardner, the new head of legal, on building an in-house team to complement a successful property development company

Scarborough.....21

Jordan Brown, president of the local law society, on working to benefit and bring together the local legal profession and area

Hardwicke and Ridley & Hall....24

Cameron Stocks and James Urquhart-Burton reflect on a recent case involving allegations of emotional and financial abuse

Law Society Council.....26

An overview of the Law Society of England and Wales, and the role of its governing body, which includes three members representing Yorkshire

Exchange Chambers.....28

Barrister Anna Bond has returned to Leeds after her career took her to London. She explains how her move back home led to her being instructed on more serious and complex cases in the Crown Court

Patrick Walker.....29

Patrick Walker is forced to examine himself in the mirror, doesn't like what he sees, but bakes a cure

Last word

Boardside.....30

Nadine Marston, a newly appointed partner, on business immigration, Brexit's impact, and living and working in Yorkshire





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Celebrating the relationships between lawyers



Catherine Woodward is a solicitor in the commercial litigation department of Gordons and president of Leeds Law Society

Catherine Woodward plans to support lawyers of all disciplines and levels of qualification in building the networks that are so essential to the legal profession

We all know that 2020 and 2021 have been very strange years. It has been my privilege to work with our past president, Nick Emerson, and all the directors and staff at Leeds Law Society to continue supporting our members and assisting firms and solicitors throughout the pandemic and its various lockdowns. When reflecting on a year of turmoil and change, where the usual connections and conversations have simply not been possible, I considered how the pandemic has caused me to focus on the relationships lawyers have as professionals and how important they are to lawyers, not just in their careers, but in their personal lives.

I have been very fortunate that, through my involvement in the Leeds Junior Lawyers Division and Leeds Law Society, I have met some truly wonderful people, a large number of whom I count as friends as well as colleagues.

In addition to this, being able to catch up with my friends and contacts, even though remotely, has allowed me to discuss and understand the changes in the profession and what we need to do to support our members. It has also given me a ring of support, with contacts who understand the pressures that solicitors were under during lockdown—whether that be from a surplus or deficit of work or simply that we all felt the same level of dislike towards the rooms we have been locked away in for a year!

These relationships have been particularly important to me, coming from a background where no-one in my family was a lawyer nor did we really know any (aside from Justine Osmotherley, whose mum was my neighbour growing up—and who was another former director of Leeds Law Society!), or have the

sort of contacts beyond that which would perhaps assist.

Contacts are, as we all know, essential and we all create our own networks. Involvement in Leeds Law Society has helped me with this, and as part of my time as president, I want to support lawyers of all disciplines and levels of qualification in building those networks and promoting Leeds as both a centre of legal excellence and a great place to work and build a career.

There is also no doubt that such relationships, for me and countless others, have supported and aided lawyers across Leeds and the country throughout Covid and the various iterations of lockdown. I hope over the next year to focus on how we can maintain these relationships and support junior members in building such networks.

We will continue to focus on collaborative working in Leeds, between law firms, governmental bodies, technology companies, our outstanding universities and local councils to support these aims. Leeds Law Society does excellent work promoting Leeds for its great legal community and for our ongoing work on diversity and inclusion within the profession.

I am also thrilled to announce that this year's Diversity and Inclusion Conference looks like it will be another excellent event, with a wide range of topics from intersectionality to disability, and a wonderful range of fascinating speakers.

As we hopefully return to a more open world, I hope that Leeds Law Society can continue to help and support its members both as lawyers and as people and that we can all look forward to growing the connections and experiences that make working in this profession enjoyable.

Diversity and Inclusion Conference

September 2021

Promoting a modern, diverse and inclusive profession

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By popular demand and following the successful event held in 2020, Leeds Law Society and the Law Society of England and Wales are again holding a free virtual diversity and inclusion conference around National Inclusion Week from 14 to 30 September 2021. With a theme of 'promoting a modern, diverse and inclusive profession', the conference will consist of virtual events across six days, with pre-recorded sessions being released at the same time. Each will focus on a particular strand of diversity and inclusion:

- Mental Wellbeing: Tuesday 14 September (17.00 to 19.00)
- LGBTQ+: Thursday 16 September (17.00 to 19.00)
- Gender: Tuesday 21 September (17.00 to 19.00)
- Social Mobility: Thursday 23 September (12.00 to 14.00)
- Disability: Tuesday 28 September (12.00 to 14.00)
- Race and Ethnicity: Thursday 30 September (17.00 to 19.00)

- Religion and Belief: Pre-recorded session
- Age: Pre-recorded session
- Intersectionality: Pre-recorded session

The events will comprise talks and panel discussions with leading figures, together with hints and tips on diversity and inclusion best practice. Confirmed speakers include Lady Hale, Lord Shinkwin and Judge Victoria McLoud, together with representatives from #10000BlackInterns, LawCare and The Bridge Group. A representative from the Law Society of England and Wales and Leeds Law Society will speak at each event, with a member from either Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Liverpool or Manchester Law Societies joining the panel discussion.

Visit <https://linktr.ee/VirtualApproval> to book your place.

Mental Wellbeing

Tuesday 14 September (17.00 to 19.00)

Representatives from Leeds Law Society and the Law Society of England and Wales will welcome people to the conference. The event itself will include short presentations, followed by a panel discussion. Confirmed participants include LawCare, The Sleep Geek and representatives from Liverpool Law Society and Freshfields.



Social Mobility

Thursday 23 September (12.00 to 14.00)

The event will include short presentations, followed by a panel discussion. Confirmed participants include I. Stephanie Boyce (president of the Law Society of England and Wales) and Inez Brown (Birmingham Law Society), and representatives from The Bridge Group and the Law Society's Social Mobility Ambassadors.



LGBTQ+

Thursday 16 September (17.00 to 19.00)

The event will include short presentations, followed by a panel discussion. Confirmed participants include Rachel Reese (Global Butterflies), Judge Victoria McCloud and representatives from Manchester Law Society and the Law Society's LGBTQ+ Lawyers Division.



Disability

Tuesday 28 September (12.00 to 14.00)

The event will include short presentations, followed by a panel discussion. Confirmed participants include Lord Shinkwin, the Legally Disabled? researchers Professor Debbie Foster and Dr Natasha Hurst, together with representatives from Cardiff Law Society and the Law Society's Lawyers with Disabilities Division.



Gender

Tuesday 21 September (17.00 to 19.00)

The event will include short presentations, followed by a panel discussion. Confirmed participants include Lady Hale, Coral Hill (founder and editor of Legal Women Magazine) and representatives from Leeds Law Society and the Law Society's Women Lawyers Division.



Race and Ethnicity

Thursday 30 September (17.00 to 19.00)

The event will include short presentations, followed by a panel discussion. Confirmed participants include Dawid Konotey-Ahulu (#10000BlackInterns), Lubna Shuja (vice president of the Law Society of England and Wales), together with representatives from Bristol Law Society and the Law Society's Ethnic Minority Lawyers Division. As this is the last night, representatives from Leeds Law Society and the Law Society of England and Wales will formally close the conference.



Lupton Fawcett helps secure future of Sheffield's Food Works



Lupton Fawcett has helped to secure the future of Sheffield's Food Works by completing a lease on its new premises in just two weeks.

Food Works is a not-for-profit organisation that reduces food waste by upcycling surplus food for anyone who needs it in Sheffield.

Rene Meijer (pictured, left), chief executive officer at Food Works, said: "Food Works showcases how tasty and nutritious meals can be produced for the community using surplus and locally grown produce."

"We've been based at our Wybourn hub for the last year but had to find new premises when the lease came to end with short notice."

"It seemed an impossible task, but with the help of lots of people and organisations in Sheffield and the invaluable expertise of Lupton Fawcett, we have now secured a 10-year lease on a new property in Handsworth."

"Being able to agree the lease guarantees continuity of our services and we can do it without closing for a single day."

Food Works's last market in Wybourn was on 19 May and its new hub opened on 20 May.

Meijer said: "We are excited for our future plans and expect that we will be able to expand our work, as well as delivering it from a much more conducive environment."

The lease deal was the first to complete for new Lupton Fawcett partner Claire Mayfield-Tulip (pictured, right), who joined the firm's commercial property team based in Sheffield earlier in May.

Mayfield-Tulip said: "We were delighted to be able to step in to help Food Works secure its new premises in record time. The process usually takes around two months, but we were able to complete in just two weeks, enabling continuity of the vital services that Food Works provides to help those in need of food in Sheffield."

Blacks Solicitors scores a try with the sale of Red Hall House

Blacks Solicitors has advised the Rugby Football League (RFL) on the sale of its head office, Red Hall House, near Roundhay Park in Leeds, after 26 years at the premises.

Red Hall House was purchased for more than £1.65 million by Dr Faisal Arshad, lead surgeon at the Hair Dr Clinic, in order to establish a private cosmetic surgery hospital.

On purchasing the premises, Arshad commented: "The Hair Dr Clinic is expanding quickly and we have outgrown our current premises. The majestic Grade II Red Hall, close to the new East Leeds Orbital Route, is absolutely perfect and it is humbling to be moving into such a magnificent building with such an illustrious history."

The commercial property team at Blacks advised the RFL on the sale of its head office ahead of a relocation to Sport City at the Etihad Campus in Manchester.

Blacks was chosen thanks to the longstanding relationship with the RFL, and the excellent service provided by the commercial property team.

Global property consultancy Knight Frank advised the RFL on the disposal of the property.

The RFL is the national governing body for Rugby League in the UK. Tony Sutton, its chief operating officer, commented: "This is a significant day for the RFL, after more than two and a half decades at Red Hall—which has been a distinctive headquarters for a national governing body since the RFL moved from Chapeltown Road in 1995"

"This move to the Etihad Campus will mark an exciting new era for the RFL, and we are grateful to Matthew and the commercial property team at Blacks Solicitors, Jonathan and his team at Knight Frank, and to Dr Faisal Arshad for a smooth and professional process."

Led by Matthew Hutchinson, who was assisted by Claudia



Willard, the team at Blacks provided the RFL with swift commercial property advice, enabling the exchange of the premises to take place within 72 hours of terms being agreed with the buyer.

Hutchinson, a partner in the commercial property team at Blacks, said: "We're really pleased to have been able to support the RFL on the first stage of their relocation. The team worked hard to ensure the sale of Red Hall House ran smoothly and was able to complete promptly. We're looking forward to seeing the new headquarters of the RFL and supporting them in the future."

Jonathan Hyland, partner at Knight Frank, said: "Knight Frank are absolutely delighted to have successfully marketed and sold Red Hall House on behalf of the Rugby Football League. Not surprisingly, there was a good deal of interest in this iconic building, but we believe the eventual purchaser, Dr Faisal Arshad, is best placed to breathe fresh life into Red Hall. His plans to transform the building into a pioneering private hospital are tremendously exciting and we wish him the very best of luck."

Arshad added: "I would also like to thank Jonathan Hyland of property consultancy Knight Frank, whose help in this significant transaction has been invaluable. Jonathan's experience and expertise played a crucial part in enabling us to buy Red Hall. We are very grateful."

Taylor&Emmet launches national wealth service



Taylor&Emmet is introducing a new multidisciplinary service tailored to the needs of high-net-worth and ultra-high-net-worth individuals.

The Sheffield firm has created a dedicated wealth management team to handle the complex estates of families across the UK with multiple assets and income streams.

Led by the firm's head of wills and probate, Richard King (pictured), the wealth management team will liaise with external advisers, where necessary, to help clients structure large estates effectively and efficiently to reflect their current circumstances and plans for the future.

The new department comprises experts from Taylor&Emmet's probate, residential property, family law, litigation and business

teams. They will work together to provide bespoke advice on a range of issues, such as private wealth structuring, succession planning and cross-border estates.

King said: "As the number of complex, high value estates we manage has gradually increased, it became apparent we needed to find a way to handle them in a simplified, streamlined manner. By combining different legal disciplines under one umbrella, we can make life easier for clients and provide discrete, personalised advice, based on each individual's unique set of circumstances."

In response to an increase in wealth management enquiries from London and surrounding counties, Taylor&Emmet has secured premises in Covent Garden to make its services more accessible to clients in the south. Its team is also happy to undertake confidential remote consultations, if requested.

Centrica re-appoints Leeds-based Womble Bond Dickinson to UK legal panel

Law firm Womble Bond Dickinson, which has a large office in Leeds, has been re-appointed to the UK legal panel for international energy services and solutions company Centrica.

Womble Bond Dickinson has a longstanding relationship with Centrica. In this latest UK panel review, the firm has been appointed to advise on commercial, property and litigation matters for a period of two years.

The Womble Bond Dickinson team acting for Centrica is being led by energy sector partner Ian Newcombe. He commented: "We are delighted to continue our long-standing relationship with Centrica and we look forward to working

with the team and other firms on the panel."

"This was a competitive tender process and our appointment recognises our strong credentials in the energy sector as well as our expertise advising on complex commercial, litigation and property issues"

Womble Bond Dickinson provides legal services across 11 key sectors from seven offices in the UK and 19 in the US. The firm's energy client portfolio includes Centrica, Scottish Power and RWE, as well as other major utilities such as ESBi (the Irish State power company), Northumbrian Water, Waterplus and leading independents including RES and Atco Power.

InfoTrack announces game-changing enhancements to Property Report

They include automated reporting for SDLT, environmental search and Land Registry data

InfoTrack has released content updates to Property Report, the only search data-driven report on title solution in the market. Solicitors can rely on Property Report to provide content tailored to their title registers, conveyancing searches and land tax, in line with HM Revenue and Customs guidance.

Solicitors select applicable tenure types including freehold, leasehold, new build, shared ownership, and underlease, and the report automatically inserts or removes components based on relevancy. The ability to extract data directly from complementary title registers means solicitors will no longer be required to copy and paste covenants, easements or rentcharges. Pre-populating data from integrated environmental searches, Property Report also assesses the results' risk ratings and any further hazards found in the vicinity of the property.

Reporting on stamp duty land tax (SDLT) is a complex process—Property Report uses automation to relieve the burden from law firms. Extracting information from the SDLT draft, Property Report presents client-friendly, pre-written content covering the tax



due, relief claims, and transaction details such as linked transactions and shared ownership options. For Welsh properties, the system includes new content for land transaction tax, with Welsh postcodes recognised automatically.

Adrian Noble, managing director at Key Legal, comments: "It is clear that the system has been designed with the conveyancer in mind and is a significant time-saving tool. I have been completely sold on the benefits of Property Report. The report can be entirely amended as required and is updated in real time so that you can actually see how your amendments will appear within the report."

Scott Bozini, chief executive officer at InfoTrack, says: "Using Property Report provides transparent communication channels with your client, including disclaimers to mitigate risk for your firm and keep the buyer fully informed. InfoTrack's automation allows conveyancers to apply their expertise and review SDLT information before purchaser approval. Reporting on SDLT and environmental search data is no longer a time-consuming and complex task."

Crombie Wilkinson's John Ellis retires



John Ellis, director at Crombie Wilkinson Solicitors, retired on 30 April after 51 years as a solicitor.

Ellis qualified as a solicitor in 1970 and has provided high-quality legal services to individuals, business, and the farming community across his extensive career.

He is well known and respected for his work across a range of legal services, including wills and probate, commercial, residential and agricultural conveyancing, and partnership advice. Ellis was president of the Yorkshire Law Society from 1995 to 1996.

Ellis joined his father, Barnet Ellis, in his Pickering office in 1964 and, after being admitted as a solicitor in 1970, became a partner in Barnet Ellis Son & Lakin (later Ellis Lakin & Co).

In February 2018, Ellis Lakin & Co joined forces with Crombie Wilkinson Solicitors and Ellis became a director at the merged law firm.

Richard Watson, senior director of Crombie Wilkinson, said: "I have had the good fortune of knowing John for some 35 years, and both he and I considered our joining of forces in 2018 to have been a great opportunity for both firms."

"It has been a great pleasure working with John over the past three years. His reputation for providing an excellent legal service to his clients, and supporting the

local community, is second to none, and I know he will be missed as much by his clients as he is by all of us here at Crombie Wilkinson."

Isobel Willoughby, director and head of the Crombie Wilkinson Pickering office, added: "Working with John has been both an honour and a privilege. The breadth of his knowledge—both of the law, and of the families and businesses for whom he acts—is incredibly inspiring, and I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from John over recent months."

"I am incredibly proud of our team in Pickering, and of the excellent service which our teams in both Ryedale offices provide, but this is in no small part due to John and the exemplary foundation which he has built in Pickering throughout the course of his career. As a firm, we work tirelessly to deliver on our Service Pledge; John, however, has been doing so for 51 years, and the Pickering team will always strive to live up to his high standards, and to continue to support the local community in the same way as he has done."

Ellis commented: "The variety and nature of my work has been interesting and rewarding and I would like to take the opportunity to thank the firm's clients, for entrusting me and the firm with their legal work."

He continued: "I have enjoyed 51 years of working with delightful clients, but I must also give thanks to my various colleagues over the years (whose camaraderie and support have been invaluable), and of course the many other professionals with whom I have had the great pleasure of working (including surveyors, estate agents and accountants), both in Pickering and further afield, for their professional friendship over the years."

"I wish every continued success for the team at Crombie Wilkinson Solicitors; a highly experienced and professional team more than capable of providing Pickering and the wider Ryedale area with first-class legal advice and support."

Ellis has no plans to use his retirement for relaxation, as he will continue to enjoy playing cricket with Thornton Dale Cricket Club, playing table tennis with Ryedale Sports Club, and cycling.

Keebles offers free commercial law advice with Business Sheffield



Keebles has teamed up with Business Sheffield to offer one-to-one commercial law appointments to business owners.

The 45-minute sessions are hosted as a one-to-one Zoom meeting. They are completely free and give business people an opportunity to discuss any legal questions or concerns with an expert from the Keebles team.

The sessions run once a month and must be booked in advance. They are open to anyone who is seeking advice on legal matters affecting their business.

Associate and commercial law expert at Keebles, Tom Rook

(pictured), said: "We know how daunting it can be for business owners to ensure that they are following the correct legal processes, so these sessions are a way of steering them in the right direction."

"We commonly cover contract law, leases and partnership agreements, but there are other areas of law which might be relevant to their business, and we encourage people to use the opportunity to ask us anything they might be unsure of."

Andrew Bunn, startup business adviser at Business Sheffield, said: "We are immensely grateful to Keebles for providing these free advice sessions which are invaluable to business owners."

"Although they are open to anyone, the vast majority of clients are in their first three years of trading and may need some guidance or want to double check documents they are about to put in place, so one-to-one appointments like this are perfect for them."

IoD awards fellowship to Yorkshire and Lupton Fawcett lawyer Jonathan Oxley



Corporate lawyer Jonathan Oxley has been awarded a fellowship of the Institute of Directors (IoD)—one of the highest accolades granted by the directors' organisation.

He is a former regional chair of the

IoD for Yorkshire and the Humber and continues to represent the institute in the region on devolution and the Northern Powerhouse.

Oxley (pictured) is chairman of Yorkshire law firm Lupton Fawcett and head of its York office. He is a corporate lawyer,

specialising in buying, selling and financing companies. He has a particular focus on small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), where his knowledge and experience has helped countless startup business ventures to scale-up their offering.

IoD fellowship is exclusive and by invitation only. It is for directors of the highest standing who epitomise the institute's founding values of integrity and enterprise.

Membership is granted through a strict qualification process that considers seniority, business experience, contribution to the director community, commitment to the IoD, and achieving the institute's prestigious Chartered Director status.

Oxley said: "It is a tremendous honour to be awarded IoD fellowship. I very much enjoyed my time leading the institute in the region and continue to take an active interest in the Northern Powerhouse agenda, as we look to promote the North as a solution to rebalancing the UK economy while supporting and retaining talented people to launch and scale-up businesses here."

Jonathan Geldart, IoD director general, said: "My congratulations to Jonathan on his appointment as a fellow of the Institute. His experience and leadership have been integral to helping our members to build fresh connections, develop their professional skills and influence the national agenda on the Northern Powerhouse."

Team engagement and client relationships sustain growth at Clarion in difficult year

Clarion has delivered a solid financial performance with revenues reaching £19.6 million for the financial year ending 31 May 2020.

The Leeds-based law firm attributes its resilience to its focus on supporting its team and clients throughout the upheaval and distress caused by the pandemic.

Roger Hutton, joint managing partner of Clarion, explained: "Over the last 13 years, we have focused on making Clarion a great place to work, knowing that a highly engaged and committed team will deliver the very best service to our clients."

"This strong employee culture has really been put to the test since March 2020 when we all started working from home, but the commitment of the team has really shone through. I believe we have actually emerged stronger as well as learning some important lessons along the way."

These latest financial results mark Clarion's fourth consecutive year of double-digit growth, with turnover at the firm increasing almost 13% since 2018/19 when it reached £17.4 million.

The firm has also continued to invest in new talent, recruiting another 46 people over the last financial year.

Hutton said: "We actively encourage colleagues to invest time and energy in really getting to know their clients' businesses rather than simply looking at the immediate legal issue, and these latest results are

testament to our ability to do this. With all kinds of businesses facing an incredibly challenging time, the Clarion ethos has really come into its own—when facing tough decisions, people turn to advisers they know and trust.

"We are also fortunate to have such a top class and well-regarded legal community in Leeds which gives us a great platform from which to work regionally, nationally and internationally. Yorkshire is a really dynamic place for entrepreneurs and businesses and, therefore, also for professional advisers—it's encouraging to see so many people with the vision and grit to find new opportunities, whatever the situation."



Family law experts in Yorkshire welcome introduction of vouchers for mediation



Family law specialists from Yorkshire firms Taylor&Emmet and Clarion have welcomed the introduction of a new voucher scheme that will enable more local couples to access mediation.

Vouchers are now being offered by the Ministry of Justice, up to the value of £500, for participants in family mediation who are not eligible for legal aid.

According to Taylor&Emmet, while free mediation is available to individuals who qualify for legal aid, if their partner is funding the mediation privately, they are responsible for their fees from the second session onwards, which can cause disengagement.

Using the voucher scheme, the private client can access additional funding, allowing them to continue with the process. In some circumstances, this may mean another two or three mediation sessions can be undertaken before payment is required and, in many cases, this would be sufficient to resolve the issues.

In cases where both parties are funding a separation privately, pre-mediation meetings would be payable at £108 each, before the voucher could be applied. This should then fund two sessions, or one longer meeting, as required.

The Family Mediation Council has been allocated £1 million to administer the scheme, in a bid to reduce the costs of separation and keep couples out of the courts. Vouchers will be granted to participants in pre-mediation meetings and paid directly to mediators registered with the scheme.

Commenting on the news, Dawn Lowry (pictured, middle, with Taylor&Emmet's head of family law Michaela Evans, left), a family law expert in Taylor&Emmet's Rotherham office and a qualified mediator, said: "There are huge delays in the family courts at present, so the introduction of mediation vouchers is a boost for separating couples wishing to move on with their

lives. Not only will they save money, but they will also have the opportunity to reach a settlement that works for them, in a less stressful and confrontational environment."

Justine Osmotherley (pictured, right), partner and head of Clarion's family practice, which includes a Family Mediation Council-accredited mediator, said: "This is a really positive move which will help hundreds of families throughout Yorkshire who find themselves struggling to reach a solution in difficult situations following separation."

"As a firm which has long been committed to the amicable resolution of disputes wherever possible, we are pleased to see the launch of this scheme. We are delighted to be extending our services at Clarion to include mediation with the recent recruitment of Sarah Manning, an accredited mediator who has eight years of mediation experience."

John Taylor, chair of the Family Mediation Council, said: "This government investment in mediation is much welcomed by the Family Mediation Council. It will help separated families agree solutions that are best for their children, taking into account what is going to be important for them as they grow up. Family mediation is a proven, cost-effective way to resolve differences following separation. This voucher scheme will make it even more accessible and will help families resolve issues for themselves, without having to go to court."

Lowry added: "The average legal fees associated with taking children proceedings to court range from £3,000 to £5,000, depending on their complexity. Mediation was already a cost-effective alternative for separating couples willing to enter into meaningful discussions about the future of their family, but the new voucher scheme will significantly reduce the costs further and we urge private clients to give it serious consideration."

Technology is raising standards in conveyancing

John Espley, CEO of LEAP UK, explains how conveyancers are using the latest technology and the LEAP Best Practice Standard to enhance their customer service and to win new business

The UK housing market remains remarkably buoyant, due to government measures such as the stamp duty holiday and government-backed 5% deposit scheme. As with all business, more and more property transactions are being undertaken online, and the development of new technologies is a key driver in enabling conveyancing firms to deliver excellent customer service.

Throughout the pandemic conveyancers and clients alike are taking advantage of the service elements that digital conveyancing can provide. Technology allows conveyancers to bring transactions from instruction to completion while improving the speed, quality and accuracy of the customer service given.

Onboarding a new client is one of the most arduous elements of the conveyancing process. Obtaining information for identity and anti-money laundering compliance checks and details regarding the property can significantly delay the process at the start of a transaction. A quick onboarding procedure for the consumer is of paramount importance to have a transaction up and running quickly. Self-service online tools allow the client to complete upfront property information online (such as the TA6) through an elegant, consumer-friendly interface that records the data directly back to the conveyancer's practice management system. Such solutions hold the key to speeding up the initial stages of the client journey.

By conducting the onboarding process online clients are interacting with the conveyancing firm digitally from day one. With a firm providing the client an online portal



LEAP™

where they can access their matter documents, financial statements and even pay their bills, this sets the scene for the process to be undertaken

digitally from beginning to end of the transaction. This reduces the length of total time taken for the transaction to be completed, improving client satisfaction, the reputation of the firm and profitability. It also reduces input errors as the client is responsible for the accurate entry of their own data.

By optimising the use of new technology, conveyancing firms are able to generate efficiencies at all stages of the property transaction. Prospective clients are seeing the adoption of such digital capabilities as essential when selecting a conveyancing provider.

Progressive law firms are now building their brands and marketing themselves on the basis of providing this powerful end-to-end digital service.

One commitment LEAP is making to its client base is the Best Practice Standard. Launched in 2017, more than 140 firms using LEAP software have now achieved a quality standard in conveyancing, an accreditation achieved through their use of LEAP's innovative technology and that of its integration partner InfoTrack, delivering outstanding service that brings many benefits to both client and a practice.

Conveyancing firms accredited with the LEAP Best Practice Standard take active steps to provide a high standard of service and adhere to best practice through the use of cutting-edge technology.

Receiving regular, remote and independent audits ensures standards are maintained, improving communication, streamlining processes and generating cost savings and efficiencies to the benefit of their clients, and in some instances the risk mitigation provided has been seen positively by insurers.

LEAP client Mike Leeman of Bell Lamb and Joynton Solicitors comments: "The LEAP Best Practice Standard gives our clients reassurance that we as a firm maintain independently assessed high standards, transparency and a modern technology-based approach to their conveyancing."

www.leap.co.uk



Moving on up

A round-up of the latest appointments and promotions
in Leeds and Yorkshire



Corporate lawyer Oliver King has joined **Berwins** as a senior associate.

King brings with him a decade of legal experience and a reputation for delivering targeted results for corporate clients.

The Berwins corporate team routinely advises clients from a range of sectors but has a particular specialism in the IT and software space.

On being appointed, King said "I'm thrilled to have joined such a well-regarded firm at what is an exciting time for the practice and the industry as a whole."

"Not only does Berwins have an enviable reputation for completing high quality corporate and commercial work, but the firm has also used the past 12 months to focus and accelerate growth plans. That means real benefits for both clients and the business as a whole."

Before joining Berwins, King was part of the corporate team at a regional law firm and has spent his entire career based in York, acting for both regional clients and those further afield.

Reflecting on the appointment, senior partner Paul Berwin added: "We're delighted that Oliver has become part of the Berwins team. There are many synergies between the way that he and the team operate, and this strategic hire will not only complement and strengthen the skill set already in place but forms a key part in driving the firm forward, contributing to ambitious growth plans."



Morrish Solicitors has made a number of new appointments, strengthening its position as a Leeds law firm and as a national trade union specialist.

Tom Morrish has taken over as senior partner from Paul Scholey. Morrish will continue his roles as the firm's finance partner and head

of the wills and estates team.

His appointment recognises his long-standing contribution to Morrish Solicitors. Discussing his new appointment, Morrish commented: "I am delighted to have accepted the role as senior partner, it gives me great satisfaction to be able to maintain the Morrish family connection. I wish Paul the best as he continues to be an active partner in the firm."

Scholey will keep working closely with Morrish's trade union clients and their members. He said: "It's been an absolute privilege to be senior partner. We've expanded our client base locally, regionally and nationally, and grown our profile in the trade union world. I'm really proud of the work done by all our staff, and I know [managing partner] David [Sorensen] will take the firm from strength to strength with Tom as senior partner and a great team around the partnership table."

Joining the firm's partnership is Anna Sari, who has worked at Morrish Solicitors since graduating in 2008.

Specialising in medical negligence cases, she has a wide range of experience in claims, including birth injury, delayed cancer diagnosis, GP negligence, orthopaedic injuries, gynaecological and obstetric injury and gastroenterology.

Her appointment recognises her years of dedicated service to Morrish Solicitors and its clients, and the growing caseloads within the clinical negligence team. On being appointed as a partner, Sari commented: "I am absolutely delighted and proud to have been promoted to partner. I am very much looking forward to a new challenge and contributing to the continued growth of the medical negligence team and future success of the firm."

Employment solicitor Tony Rippon has been promoted to associate solicitor. Starting at Morrish Solicitors in 2013 as a paralegal, Rippon finished his training with the firm before specialising in employment law.

His promotion reflects his excellent work and the ongoing expansion of the employment team. Speaking of his promotion, Rippon said: "I'm delighted to have been promoted to associate solicitor. I have always felt supported in my personal development here. I advise clients from a diverse background across a wide range of sectors on all aspects of employment law. I look forward to continuing to contribute to the success of the firm in my new role."

Other appointments have been made, with Haylee Chambers and Paul Farrell joining as solicitors in the employment team, Ikhlas Ahmed as a legal executive in the wills and estate team, Lawrence Ofori and Erin Garnham appointed as trainee solicitors, Rosie Brookes as a legal assistant in the employment team, and Hannah Neville as a legal assistant in the personal injury team.

Instrumental in leading Morrish Solicitors through this exciting period is managing partner David Sorensen. Appointed in February 2020, shortly before the Covid-19 pandemic, Sorensen has played an essential role in managing the firm and supporting its clients through an unprecedented period.

He commented: "I'm delighted to be managing partner of one of Leeds' oldest independent law firms and to see the firm grow during what has been a challenging but overall positive year for the firm. These promotions and changes demonstrate our growth and our strong pool of talent. I would like to congratulate everyone on their promotion."



Niche family law firm **Lake Legal** has promoted solicitor Hollie Burnett to associate.

Burnett attended Northumbria University and qualified as a solicitor in 2015 at a firm in East Yorkshire. She later relocated to Leeds and joined Lake Legal in May 2017.

As a solicitor, Burnett specialises in financial settlements arising from divorce, cohabitation disputes, pre- and post-nuptial agreements, and child-related issues.

She also sits on the local committee of Resolution, which promotes a non-confrontational approach to family problems.

Following her promotion to associate at Lake Legal, Burnett will become more involved with the marketing and management of the law firm, as well as the development and training of junior members of the team.

Claire Glaister, who has herself risen up the ranks from associate to partner at Lake Legal, said: "Hollie's promotion is a reflection of her talent, commitment to the firm and growing reputation in the market. Hollie has become an integral part of the team and of our business strategy for the future. Hollie has a maturity beyond her years and her promotion is the next stage in what will undoubtedly prove to be a fantastic career."



Hill Dickinson has made two new appointments to its healthcare team in Leeds.

Heather Caddy, legal director, and Will Morris, associate, both join the

Leeds office at Hill Dickinson as part of the health advisory practice under partner Ben Troke.

The expansion of the team comes 12 months after Troke joined Hill Dickinson from Browne Jacobson with a remit to develop the advisory practice in Leeds to serve the firm's fast-growing client base in the region and nationwide.

Welcoming them, Troke said: "Our healthcare team in Leeds serves a huge number of clients UK-wide, including the NHS and independent sector, and expanding the legal services we offer our clients is very much part of the agenda."

"I am delighted to welcome Heather and Will to the team and am very much looking forward to working with them to grow our health advisory practice. Each brings with them a wealth of experience that will add expertise, capability and strength in depth to the team."

Caddy joins as a legal director from Browne Jacobson. She has particular expertise in dealing with complex inquests as well as claims and broader healthcare advisory work for a range of clients from the NHS and independent sector.

Morris has built his legal experience as an in-house lawyer in an NHS trust dealing with inquests, claims and general healthcare advisory work, and adds valuable insight and understanding of issues from a client perspective to Hill Dickinson.

Health advisory is one area of a full healthcare service offering available to Hill Dickinson clients nationally from Leeds. Other health practice specialisms include commercial, employment, real estate, regulatory and litigation. The Leeds office is led by partner Esther Venning.



Clarion has strengthened its employment and family teams with three new appointments.

Suzanne Treen joins Clarion's 10-strong

employment team as a legal director. She has more than 10 years of experience in this area of law, having trained and qualified with a well-known national firm and then spending almost seven years at a commercial law firm in Leeds.

Treen has expertise in advising employers on all aspects of employment law, including large scale reorganisations, TUPE, collective redundancies and executive departures, as well as delivering tailored training programmes.

She has particular experience in dealing with complex employment tribunal proceedings, and she also advises on business immigration matters for UK employers.

Treen is looking forward to expanding Clarion's offering by building its business immigration service and has experience in managing sponsor licences, applying for visas under the points-based system, and making successful sponsor licence applications.

Siobhan Jeffels and Sarah Manning have joined Clarion's family law practice.

Having worked in family law for more than 20 years, Jeffels joins Clarion as a legal director. She has spent the last 10 years as a family solicitor for a North East-based family law firm.

Jeffels helps clients through all areas of family law, including divorce and separation, civil partnerships, pre-nuptial and cohabitation agreements, finance, and child support. She is experienced in handling more complex financial matrimonial issues, for example, farming cases. She has also acted for high-net-worth individuals, land-owners and business owners.

She is Resolution-accredited, making her the fourth member in Clarion's family team who has that specialist accreditation.

Manning joins the Clarion team as a senior associate mediator having worked in a niche family and employment practice in Leeds for the last three years.

She has more than 13 years of experience in family law and qualified as a mediator in 2012.

Manning assists individuals in all aspects of private family law matters, including pre- and post-nuptials, children disputes and finance disputes. She has experience of dealing with mid- to high-net-worth clients on cases of a complex nature, including those involving overseas assets.

She is a board member of the Family Mediation Association, which raises awareness of mediation within the legal sector and the general public.

Justine Osmotherley, partner and head of Clarion's family practice, commented: "The family team has seen three years of exceptional growth with the practice consistently beating targets as demand for our services has increased, based on the strength of our reputation. The recruitment of these two talented lawyers helps grow our technical expertise."

"Siobhan has an impressive track record of handling complex matrimonial cases and with her experience in the farming sector, she will further boost our specialist agricultural offering. Sarah also brings a wealth of experience with her and, as an accredited

mediator, her skills fit well with our commitment to amicable dispute resolution whenever possible. Having built such a cohesive team that shares a common approach to providing outstanding client care, it is also great to find like-minded people who fit with the Clarion ethos."



Wrigleys Solicitors has promoted Matthew Featherstone, a member of its agriculture and rural property team, to partner.

Featherstone qualified as a solicitor in 2014 while training at a Yorkshire-based rural specialist law firm and has been an integral part of the agriculture and rural property

team since he joined Wrigleys in 2017.

He works closely with landed estates and farming clients to advise on all areas of agricultural law, including freehold property, agricultural leases, sporting rights and diversification projects.

Featherstone is also a member of the Agricultural Law Association and is involved with a number of bodies representing rural interests.

His promotion to partnership is based on his ability to create positive relationships, to see things at the client's level, understand what they need in a practical sense and to deliver that in a pragmatic way.

Featherstone said: "I was initially drawn to Wrigleys because of the firm's reputation as a leading firm in agriculture and landed estates and it is extremely exciting to now join the partnership and be a part of growing our reputation in that area. Wrigleys takes pride in taking a long-term view of client relationships and I am very much looking forward to continuing to build on those relationships in the future."

Marie-Louise Hamilton, managing partner at Wrigleys, said: "I am delighted that Matthew has been appointed as a partner in Wrigleys. His ability to provide highly technical, yet pragmatic advice shows Matthew's expertise and deep understanding of his clients' specific needs."



Commercial law firm **BRM Solicitors** has appointed former Lupton Fawcett partner Rob Cooke as an executive director to head up its dispute resolution department.

Cooke has extensive experience in commercial and property litigation and is appointed in a strategic move to further bolster BRM's dispute

resolution department, and as part of continuing expansion plans in Sheffield. He will be based at the firm's Sheffield office at Steel City House, West Street.

BRM services local, regional and national clients, including PLCs, large private companies, owner managed businesses, entrepreneurial small- and medium-sized enterprises, charities, and public sector organisations.

The firm has experienced strong growth across both its offices notwithstanding the challenges of Covid. Its Sheffield office, which opened in 2018, has flourished and is proactively expanding to meet demand, with more appointments to be announced over the next few months.

Adrian Sheehan, head of real estate at BRM, said: "We are

delighted to have recruited an executive director of Rob's seniority and experience, who has been a prominent and respected Litigator in the Sheffield area for over 20 years. Rob reinforces the management and strength of our dispute resolution department, particularly with regard to property litigation. We believe that together, Rob and his new team are one of the most robust offerings in the area"

Sarah Rowland, head of business law at the firm, added: "Rob and I started our legal careers together over 23 years ago, so I have always known of Rob's value to his clients and the respect that they have for him. Rob's appointment will supplement our expanding dispute resolution department and add value to BRM's commercial offering to our clients overall"

Cooke said: "I am thrilled to be joining BRM at such an exciting time, and I am looking forward to driving the dispute resolution department and the Sheffield office forward. I can't wait to get going!"



North Yorkshire law firm **Birdsall & Snowball** has launched a new family law department at its Scarborough office.

The firm, the oldest in Scarborough, has appointed experienced lawyer Alison Lewis as a family solicitor to head up this department.

Lewis, who has recently moved from Leicester to Scarborough, has worked in family law for the past 15 years and is a member of Resolution, the well-respected association of family justice solicitors.

She deals with all aspects of family law, including divorce, civil partnership dissolution, cohabitation, separation agreements, financial issues on separation and injunctions.

Lewis also deals with disputes regarding arrangements for children and acts for grandparents as well as parents in private children law proceedings. As a member of Resolution, Lewis is committed to dealing with family cases in a non-confrontational and constructive way.

She commented: "This is a tremendous opportunity for me. Birdsall & Snowball have an excellent reputation as a first-class law firm across Yorkshire and I am honoured to have been asked to lead their new family law department"

"There is no doubt that the past 12 months have been challenging for everyone and have inevitably placed strains on family relationships. Sadly, as we emerge from lockdown, there will be many families in this area who are struggling with emotional and marital issues.

"I completely understand that trying to resolve family issues can be very emotive and worrying, but my overriding aim is to provide friendly and affordable expert advice and assistance to all my clients at what is often a very difficult time"

Lewis continued: "I always seek to negotiate successful outcomes for my clients without the need for court proceedings, resulting in quicker, more amicable and cost-effective solutions. However, if court proceedings are necessary I will ensure my clients are robustly assisted and represented throughout their case."

Evette Abbey, partner at Birdsall & Snowball, said: "We are delighted to welcome Alison to our team. She has a wealth of experience in family law and we are very pleased to be able to add a family law service to those legal services we already provide at our Scarborough office."

Birdsall & Snowball were established in 1886 and is the longest-running law firm in Scarborough and Filey, and one of the oldest in the region.

The firm provides a range of legal services offering personal and business advice in residential and commercial conveyancing, remortgages, leases and shorthold tenancies, divorce and child care/access advice, lasting powers of attorney, wills and probate, and assistance to the elderly.



Sheffield-based **Taylor&Emmet** has made a raft of promotions to acknowledge the individual efforts made during one of the most challenging years in its history.

A total of 10 members of staff, across five departments, have received commendations for their diligence, dedication and overall contribution to the future of the firm.

Wills and probate expert Ben Brown has been promoted to partner following the success of his niche intestacy tracing and empty homes work. Since joining Taylor&Emmet four years ago and beginning the project alone, he has expanded his client base and reputation nationwide to the point he now leads a team of six.

Taylor&Emmet has also appointed its first ever senior associates, giving the honour to Elizabeth Alderson from residential conveyancing, and commercial property specialist Richard Whiteley.

A further seven employees have been made associates, including residential conveyancers Helen Millard, Rebecca Tsang and Adam Gould, as well as family law's Dawn Lowry and Rachel Barlow, probate expert Clare Gorman, and Bryony Shaw from the commercial property team.

Sharna Poxon, head of HR at Taylor&Emmet, said: "These promotions demonstrate our continued investment in all of our service areas and reflect the rich pool of talent across our firm today. Through our collective efforts, adaptability and resilience, we have come through the last 12 months stronger and fitter for the future in so many ways. We are excited and enthused by what has been accomplished and I would like to congratulate everyone on their achievements"

Taylor&Emmet is also commending employment law specialist Clare Moore, who has been appointed to the role of solicitor, after cross-qualifying from chartered legal executive.

Litigation lawyer Kelly Wharin has been promoted to partner at Sheffield's **MD Law**.

Wharin joined Broomhall-based niche commercial practice MD Law, which specialises in business recovery, insolvency, dispute resolution and commercial litigation, in January 2018 and has more than a decade of experience.

She has built an impressive record of working with companies and individuals, and dealing with a range of disputes and litigation, regularly instructed in high value actions.



She said: "Not only do I enjoy the variety and quality of the work we deal with at MD Law but I have also been privileged to have been involved in the management of the business, including supervising the two trainees we have."

"The people make the firm here and it is a fantastic team. I am

delighted to be promoted to partner. I feel, ever since I started here, that my opinion has really mattered. I look forward to seeing the firm grow further."

Wharin, who specialises in contractual disputes, shareholder/partnership claims, debt recovery and other areas including professional negligence, defamation and contentious probate and trust litigation, joins founder Matthew Dixon, Neil Kelly and Carl Jones as the fourth partner at the firm.

She graduated from the University of Sheffield in 2003 and started her career as a trainee in 2005, qualifying in 2007.

MD Law, which was formed six years ago, acts for and advises insolvency professionals, businesses and individuals across the country.

Founder and partner of MD Law, Matthew Dixon, said: "Congratulations to Kelly on her well deserved promotion. This is a reward for her hard work over the last three years on commercial litigation work but also on the management side of the business"

"Her promotion to partner will be very important as we continue to grow the business organically in the region."



Womble Bond Dickinson has appointed Simon Pilling as the new head of its Leeds office.

Pilling joined Womble Bond Dickinson in 2015 and has led the growth of the Leeds corporate practice.

Born in Yorkshire, Pilling is a well-known dealmaker in the region with almost 30 years of experience as a corporate transactional lawyer. He has significant and varied

experience advising on a broad range of transactions.

His team advises many regional, national and international clients on high-profile, high-value transactions. Recent deals include advising LDC on the creation of a new national lettings and estate agency group in a £100 million transaction to merge Lomond Capital and Linley & Simpson; and advising private equity firm Nimbus on its investment into the Yorkshire manufacturing business Hawthorn Timber.

Pilling takes over the role of office head from real estate partner Mark Owen, who held the position for nearly 10 years.

Pilling said: "Since our entry into the Leeds legal market in 2012, Mark has successfully led the growth of our Yorkshire practice to become one of the top firms in the region. Whilst Mark is retiring from the partnership, he will remain with us as senior counsel and will continue in his role in Womble Bond Dickinson's real estate team leading the firm's relationship with a number of key clients and advising on strategic land acquisitions."

"Under Mark's leadership, the office has become central to the wider Womble Bond Dickinson success story. We have created a great team supporting a fantastic range of local, national and international clients that provide our lawyers with many opportunities to work on exciting projects across a range of different sectors and geographies."



Junior Lawyers
Leeds



Life as a trainee in a pandemic

Ellie Stansfield, vice-chair of the Leeds Junior Lawyers Division, reveals what it's been like to be a trainee over the past 14 months

You often hear about 'a day in the life of a trainee solicitor', but life as a trainee solicitor has certainly changed since March 2020.

Training contracts have become increasingly difficult to obtain, often being referred to as 'gold dust', with competition in the legal market ever-growing. I was delighted to secure mine at Blacks Solicitors, however, my next worry was whether it would begin as planned due to the nature of firms recruiting in advance and the impending news about the virus. Little did I know, 2020 would not just be the year of my start date, it would also be the year of the Covid-19 pandemic.

No one knew how the next few months would pan out after lockdown was announced. Some firms postponed training contracts to a later date and some even revoked them. Luckily, I started my training contract as planned on 1 September 2020. So far, I have only experienced life as a trainee solicitor while in a global pandemic. I wanted to reflect on the last nine months and share my experiences,

talk about the lessons I have learnt and most importantly, highlight the positives of being a remote trainee.

How networking changed

There were obvious changes to my training contract, such as the need to work from home (where the novelty soon wore off) and adapting to unfamiliar technology online, including e-bundles. What surprised me most was the access and availability to still 'meet' people during this time. I

attended many virtual webinars and seminars, and was still able to network using the breakout room function. I also attended events that would have originally been held outside of West Yorkshire and therefore would have been inaccessible to me, including a brilliant event hosted by UCL featuring an interview with Baroness Hale (who I learnt grew up close to my home roots in North Yorkshire).

I networked over cocktail making classes, cheese tasting sessions, virtual book clubs (all hosted by the Leeds Junior Lawyers Division (JLD), of course) and found myself adapting well to the change. While I could have stood still with the world, it was time to continue and



work on the visibility of my personal brand. This is something that other Leeds JLD members and I learnt from Deborah Ogden, during her 'Visibility: The power of your personal brand for a stand-out legal career' launch presentation. Even having my practical skills course modules online was not all bad, as I still made new contacts in and out of Leeds. I do not, however, wish to have to take an exam online with a live proctor ever again!

Spending more time at home also meant more time in the community. I started up a baking business in the first lockdown, which meant I got to meet so many locals and independent businesses. We all supported each other, using our social media platforms to share and promote one another. I even got to know my neighbours better too. I often think that had the pandemic not happened, I would not have expanded my connections and relationship within the community so well. The Leeds JLD community also provided a wealth of networking opportunities and a support system, and I will always advocate junior lawyers becoming a member to benefit from this.

Remote working

Most will agree, in normal circumstances, exposure to colleagues and interacting with clients, counsel and third parties is second to none. Unfortunately, I have had limited experience to utilise this in the pandemic, so this is where I am most grateful for my time spent as a paralegal. I have previously been a paralegal in commercial property and family, which also happen to be the areas of law where I have spent my first two seats as a trainee. Without this prior experience, remote working may have been a lot more daunting and scarier than it has been. The knowledge, support, and experience, not only of the area of law, but of Blacks's systems and the teams themselves, was invaluable to me during this time. For me, this emphasises the importance and value of being a paralegal prior to commencing a training contract.

Of course, another important factor when it comes to remote working is the level of interaction and supervision

from your colleagues. I was invited to participate in weekly team calls, had daily check-in calls from my head of department, weekly video calls with the managing partner and a regular catch-up call from HR, all of which ensured I was more than adequately supported.

Going forward

Although working and training from a place you call home is not always the easiest thing to do while being away from family and friends, I do think the trainees who have experienced training in the pandemic will be much stronger, more resilient individuals. We have learnt how to adapt to change, which is something I see only as an advantage.

The legal world would have eventually caught up with technology and working from home, and although the circumstances in which it has happened have been far from easy, it definitely escalated the process for the better. This has made training contracts more adaptable and has allowed trainees to better allocate their time. I believe trainees have a lot more autonomy over opportunities and commitments without the need to commute, whether that be to the office or to and from courts.

Being able to attend hearings and meetings virtually has meant trainees did not have to miss out and have grown with the changes. Not only is this cost effective for firms, but it has also enabled them to continue giving trainees the exposure and experience they require. Bundles can now be submitted electronically too (saving the trees!). Another benefit is that people's mindsets are changing for the better. Productivity is no longer being judged on the number of people in the office working at their desks, which demonstrates that employers have trust in their employees.

As trainees, we are all doing this together. It is important to remember that you are not alone, so while you may have worries and concerns, the likelihood of them being experienced by all of us is high. Mistakes are still made, and it is imperative to rely on your support to tackle any challenges. Please ensure you check out the events we are currently holding at www.leedsjld.com/events.



Future-proofing is vital

Helen Gardner, the new head of legal at Caddick Developments, on building an in-house team to complement a successful property development company

Congratulations on your promotion—what's Caddick's thinking behind creating this role and giving you the go-ahead to build your department?

Creating this new role and team is key as we further grow the Caddick business. As head of legal, I'll be working across the group to help ensure a consistent approach and help improve the efficiency of how we all operate together.

As a group, we are able to offer a unique vertically integrated service in terms of identifying, developing and bringing sites to market, which involves a lot of different elements from our land, developments and construction teams. For example, the complexities involved in a site acquisition will be very different to the issues faced when it comes to construction, so it's really important that we have visibility of all those milestones, enabling our projects to run smoothly. It makes sense to have someone in-house who can manage this and see the wider picture.

What are some of the current legal challenges/tasks that a developer as large and prominent as Caddick must tackle?

Property law can be extremely complex and we're seeing constant changes as new legislation evolves. Rules often differ between local authorities, so keeping on top of current legislation is essential.

We pride ourselves on being responsive to demand, and spotting opportunities and trends before they happen. But by its very nature, the development of property can take years from taking a site from the initial concept through to completion, so being able to future-proof what we do is vital.

Your department will work on Oakgate Group projects, which have several developments based in historic cities. What are some of the legal issues you'll be handling?

Oakgate is an exciting part of our group to be involved with as they bring a range of commercial and residential opportunities to market. The legal complexities of this type of work are particularly interesting as there are several points we need to carefully consider, including planning policy at both a local and national level, community sentiment and historical matters involving restoration and refurbishment.

It's important to work closely with representatives and be conscious of local surroundings. For example, we have several



projects in and around the historical city of York, so our plans here need to be really sensitive to existing developments and complementary to what stands before.

How do you find the differences between working in-house and in private practice?

I've been qualified as a lawyer for over 20 years and worked within Caddick for eight. Being able to dedicate all my time to one organisation allows me to focus on our goals and strategy, while also working closely with our senior team to make a real impact on our overall performance and growth. My remit is to ascertain what is needed throughout a transaction from a legal perspective for the group, and then draw appropriate parts of the team together.

Working in-house has also allowed me to be more involved with the wider picture while still utilising a strong network of trusted external advisors. It's a really exciting time to be in the property sector, and working within an organisation like Caddick provides the opportunity to be at the forefront of the industry.

You're looking to build your department—can you share any insight into roles you're looking to fill and skills and experience you want to add?

Caddick has a current GDV pipeline of £7 billion, so it's vital that our in-house team have the skills and knowledge to back our ambitions. With many exciting industrial, logistics and residential projects in our development pipeline, such as SOYO, a £300 million mixed-use scheme in the centre of Leeds, it's important we have the right people in place to ensure the businesses needs are adequately catered for.

The opportunity is there for someone to grasp with both hands, and as a close-knit team, working together for a shared goal will be essential for any new recruits. We've already embarked on our recruitment process, with the aim of building a vibrant, experienced and engaged legal department throughout the year.



A local focus

Jordan Brown, president of Scarborough Law Society, on working to benefit and bring together the local legal profession and area

Scarborough Law Society was founded circa 1904. I was recently provided with the original 'Rules' of the society, which recite its objectives. Some of these include the preservation of the privileges of solicitors; the protection of their interests; the promotion of honourable practice; the settlement of disputed points of practice; the decision of questions of professional usage or courtesy; the promotion of the interests of the profession in Scarborough and generally; the settlement of any question affecting the interests of the profession; the management of the Law Library; and the promotion of the cause of legal education either by making grants or by offering and awarding prizes or other rewards.

I became president of Scarborough Law Society in September 2020. Our other elected officers are Carey Smith (vice president), Laura Thorne (secretary) and Teresa Bennion (treasurer).

The majority of the aforementioned objectives still remain in place within our current constitution, particularly the awarding of prizes within legal education. Each year, we visit Scarborough Sixth Form College and talk to those studying law. We provide information about a future career in law within the local area to help the students make an informed decision about their career paths. We also present a cash prize to a member of Scarborough Sixth Form College for their achievement throughout the year as nominated by their tutor.

We continue to be present in the Scarborough area and aim to bring together all 40 members of our society. We host an annual members' dinner every November, which is always a success. It provides an opportunity for those who have not been able to attend any social events to relax and catch up with other members. Our guest speakers at this dinner usually include recently retired solicitors, law lecturers and other personnel who have made an impact within the Scarborough area.

We also arrange various social events throughout the year and raise money for our nominated charity. The annual legal quiz is always very popular. We always extend the invitation to other local businesses to ensure we raise as much money as possible for the charity and we are continuously delighted with the response we receive. The teams can include those from local accountants, dentists and shops within Scarborough, and we are grateful for their support.

As we can all agree, it has been a difficult 14 months, particularly within the legal sector, with changes to our working life and increased volumes of cases. We have adapted to the new 'norm' and I suppose our priorities have changed. It has been particularly challenging for Scarborough Law Society to be as active as we previously were, however, looking ahead, I am positive all members of our society will all be able to meet up once again and come together, particularly for our annual members' dinner in November.

I aim to keep active communication between our members and other law societies and to recruit non-members to enable



our society to grow. I would certainly like to arrange more social events for members and to provide more training events to allow further networking opportunities. We will continue discussing topical subjects and respond to consultations as and when necessary as a society, taking into account the views of our members.

For now, we continue to host virtual meetings and invite guest speakers, with the current president of the Yorkshire Union of Law Societies, Natalie Cosgrove, and Law Society Council member, David Barracough, attending our last meeting to talk to us. We were able to discuss how all members across Yorkshire can offer support to each other and offer initiatives and ideas for how our society can move forward post-lockdown.

I know Scarborough Law Society will remain active to all solicitors and firms within the local area for years to come. We are always here to welcome those who wish to get in contact with us so please do—via scarboroughlawsociety@gmail.com or 01723 515555.

Entries are open for the Yorkshire Legal Awards 2021

Visit www.yorkshirelegalnews.co.uk/yorkshire-legal-awards to begin the entry process

Key dates for your diary

Entry deadline: 25 June 2021

Awards ceremony: 7 October 2021

FAQs

- **What is the dress-code?**
Black-tie and formal wear.
- **What time do the awards begin?**
7pm sharp, until late.
- **What is the structure of the evening?**
The evening begins with a champagne reception. Dinner follows, with the awards ceremony and then entertainment to end the evening.

• Is there a set menu?

Yes, across three courses. But individual dietary requirements are catered for. Let us know when you book your tickets / confirm who will be attending.

• What if my question isn't covered here?

Get in touch with Simon Krawczynski via simon.krawczynski@barkerbrooks.co.uk.

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The Yorkshire Legal Awards brings together the region's legal community to recognise and celebrate its many achievements.

Launched in 2000 to recognise the outstanding talent across our region, this is a key date on the calendar and offers professionals the chance to come together for a memorable evening of networking, socialising and celebrating. The award categories cover everyone from the biggest corporate firms to leading barristers, from senior partners to rising stars, and the event itself is a glittering black-tie affair, and always sells out—so early booking is recommended.

The awards are judged by a prestigious independent panel made up of experts from across the Yorkshire legal community. Representatives from the region's leading societies, business groups and local public bodies lend their expertise and experience to assess hundreds of written and video entries, and decide who should be recognised as Yorkshire's leading legal lights. The panel is reconstituted every year to ensure variety

The Yorkshire Legal Awards is the ideal event to meet key decision makers within the legal profession.

in views and backgrounds, and is bound by confidentiality and conflict of interest requirements to ensure its integrity and independence.

2021 categories

The Yorkshire Legal Awards is open to individuals and teams in private practice and in-house, at law firms and companies across the region. Each category is designed to recognise the outstanding achievements of the entrant. Of course, if there is something you'd like to mention but isn't covered in the criteria, make sure that you include it anyway. The deadline for entries is 25 June 2021.

Organisations

Suitable for law firms, barristers chambers and in-house legal departments

- Chambers of the Year
- Diversity & Inclusion Award
- In-House Team of the Year
- Law Firm of the Year: Small
- Law Firm of the Year: Medium
- Law Firm of the Year: Large
- Niche Law Firm of the Year

Individuals

Suitable for individuals practising within Yorkshire, in private practice. In-house lawyers are eligible to enter all but Partner and Managing Partner of the Year

- In-House Lawyer of the Year
- Managing Partner of the Year
- Partner of the Year
- Rising Star of the Year
- Trainee Solicitor of the Year
- Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year

Practice areas

Suitable for individuals and teams

- Banking & Finance Law
- Commercial Property
- Corporate & Commercial
- Criminal Law
- Debt Recovery
- Employment Law
- Family Law
- Intellectual Property
- Litigation & Dispute Resolution
- Private Client
- Regulatory & Compliance
- Residential Property

Judging

The awards are judged by a prestigious independent panel made up of experts from across the Yorkshire legal community. Representatives from the region's leading societies, business groups and local public bodies lend their expertise and experience to assess hundreds of written and video entries, and decide who should be recognised as Yorkshire's leading legal lights. The panel is reconstituted every year to ensure variety in views and backgrounds, and is bound by confidentiality and conflict of interest requirements to ensure its integrity and independence. The full judging panel will be confirmed soon.

How to enter

Entering the Yorkshire Legal Awards is easy and free. Follow these simple steps and you'll produce a submission that our independent panel of judges will find clear, concise and memorable

Pick your categories: There are lots of categories to choose from. Read the criteria carefully for each and decide which will give you the best opportunity to demonstrate your strengths.

Choose the form of your entry:

We accept written submissions of between 250 and 1,000 words per category. Written submissions are at their best after several drafts, with input from everyone involved. Remember that your entry needs to stand out from the crowd, so keep it active, free of jargon, and don't forget to proof your words before entering. Alternatively, you can enter a video submission. You'll have a maximum of three minutes to demonstrate why you, your team or business should win the particular category. Videos are easy to digest and revisit, and they allow the judges to put a face to an entry.

Submit your nomination online via the entry form:

Entries can only be accepted via the entry form. Fill out all of the required information, and make sure you choose the correct category from the list. The form must be filled out and submitted for every category. The form removes all formatting, so don't worry about italics, bolding, underlining or hyperlinking, as these won't make it through our system. Furthermore, no supporting documents and attachments are allowed, so don't use the attach buttons for CVs, promo videos, PDFs and Word docs—these won't make it through our system, either. Client testimonials must be collated by you and included within your written submission (and are included in the word count). Anything sent separately will not be accepted. For video entries, fill out the entry form as normal, mention that you are submitting a video, and submit the video file via www.wetransfer.com to simon.krawczynski@barkerbrooks.co.uk.

Attach your logo: If you make it to the shortlist, we'll need a high resolution version of your logo for the ceremony, programme and associated marketing campaigns. We accept the .JPEG, .PNG and .PDF formats, but prefer .EPS wherever possible. If you don't have this, don't worry.

A reminder of the 2020 winners and recipients

- **Law Firm of the Year: Small**
Howard & Byrne
- **Law Firm of the Year: Medium**
Clarion
- **Law Firm of the Year: Large**
Stewarts
- **Employment Law**
Consilia Legal
- **Banking & Finance Law**
Devonshires
- **Regulatory & Compliance**
Eversheds Sutherland
- **Residential Property**
Banner Jones Solicitors
- **Commercial Property**
Schofield Sweeney
- **Litigation & Dispute Resolution**
Schofield Sweeney
- **Debt Recovery**
Acclaim Credit Management and Recovery
- **Family Law**
Ridley & Hall
- **Rising Star of the Year**
Shanika Varga of Stowe Family Law
- **Diversity & Inclusion**
Thrive Law
- **Private Client**
Pervinder Kaur of Addleshaw Goddard
- **Niche Law Firm of the Year**
FTA Law
- **Corporate & Commercial**
Addleshaw Goddard
- **Criminal Law**
Howard & Byrne
- **Chambers of the Year**
Park Square Barristers
- **Trainee Solicitor of the Year**
Danny Jacobson of Hawkswell Kilvington
- **Intellectual Property**
Haseltine Lake Kempner
- **Partner of the Year**
James McAulay of ABR Solicitors
- **Managing Partner of the Year**
Emma Permaine of Ridley & Hall
- **Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year**
David Barracrough

Attach nominee's photo: This is for the individual awards. Colour photos are preferred, and high resolution .JPEG is best.

Sit back and wait for news: That's it, you're done! Approximately two weeks following the entry deadline, our judging panel will convene to make their final decisions. We'll then get in touch with every entrant to give them the good news.

Emotional and financial abuse—reasonable financial provision?

Cameron Stocks of Hardwicke Chambers and **James Urquhart-Burton** of Ridley & Hall Solicitors reflect on a recent case involving allegations of emotional and financial abuse



James Urquhart-Burton

The case required the authors to consider whether the lasting effects of abuse could give rise to a claim for reasonable financial provision under the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependents) Act 1975 by a daughter against her father's estate.

Background

The father of Martha, a 27-year-old woman, died in February 2019. He left a will dated 27 August 2014 that provided for his partner of five years, but made no provision whatsoever for Martha, his only child.

Sadly, Martha had suffered repeated emotional and financial abuse from her father throughout her childhood and into her adult years. Her father was dependent on alcohol, which resulted in him being prone to outbursts, emotional

manipulation and violent altercations. However, Martha and her father had a close relationship in her early adult years. She cared for him and checked up on him daily to try and stop his mental health from spiralling.

Martha was maintained by her father during her childhood and early adult years, although this financial maintenance was used as means of controlling her, with all assistance cut off when her actions displeased him in some way.

This pattern continued throughout the remainder of her father's life, with periods of reconciliation in which her father would offer financial support, such as clearing an overdraft, followed by random outbursts of abuse and the withdrawal of assistance, including sending photos of the recently amended will to taunt that Martha had been excluded from it. Sadly, Martha never managed to fully reconcile with her father before he lost his battle with alcohol addiction in February 2019.

Despite the difficulties she endured, Martha managed to turn adversity into success. She utilised her experience to work in women's rights, training police officers to recognise and respond to public acts of intimidation against women and lobbying MPs, which led to a review of hate crime by the Law Commission.

As a result of her work, Martha obtained a prestigious grant that allowed her to co-found a charity to act as a national base for feminist campaigning and upskilling of women.

Martha's financial position was precarious. While in full-time employment, she was due to take a pay cut to focus on the charity. In addition, she resided in London, had significant living expenses, student debts and was undergoing counselling to process her relationship with her father and his subsequent death.

The 1975 act

As in *Ilott v Mitson* [2017] UKSC 17, independent adult children are able to pursue a claim under the 1975 act for reasonable financial provision. However, any applicant needs to be able to demonstrate a need for reasonable financial provision, defined in s1(2)(b) of the 1975 act as "such financial provision as it would be reasonable in all the circumstances of the case for the applicant to receive for his maintenance".



Cameron Stocks

As set out by the Supreme Court in *Ilott*, maintenance “cannot extend to any or everything which it would be desirable for the claimant to have. It must import provision to meet the everyday expenses of living.”

Further, in cases involving an independent adult child or other non-spouse/civil partner applicants, financial need plus a qualifying relationship is not always sufficient to found a claim. In *Ilott*, Lord Hughes endorsed a passage from *In Re Coventry* [1980] Ch 461 in which Oliver J observed the following:

“There must, as it seems to me, be established some sort of moral claim by the applicant to be maintained by the deceased or at the expense of his estate beyond the mere fact of a blood relationship, some reason why it can be said that, in the circumstances, it is unreasonable that no or no greater provision was in fact made.”

While each case turns on its own facts, cases involving historic abuse from a parent that has had a lasting impact upon an applicant, combined with a need for maintenance would, on the face of it, give rise to the type of “moral claim” considered in *Ilott*.

In the authors’ view, this is especially so where the abuse has directly/indirectly given rise to the maintenance need in question. For example, it may be that the applicant’s education was affected by the abuse suffered which has had a detrimental impact on their ability to seek gainful employment to alleviate financial pressures, or the applicant may require extensive counselling or therapy to recover from the impact of the deceased’s actions and this therapy is results in a financial need.

While not directly on point, support for such an approach can be distilled from the recent decision of *Re R (Deceased)* [2021] EWHC 936 (Ch). This case concerned a claim from minor children who had almost reached majority. They had no contact with their deceased father, who had discontinued child maintenance half a decade before his death as a result. The applicants were ultimately successful in their claim and interestingly, one of the maintenance needs advanced on behalf of the children was for counselling to be provided to help deal with the fallout from their parents’ divorce on their emotional health and wellbeing. Among the remainder of the award, Master Teverson made provision for 50% of the cost of private counselling for one year in the sum of £2,990.

The authority demonstrated an acceptance by the court that the costs of counselling to deal with emotional harm caused by a deceased testator could give rise to a maintenance need, for which provision could be awarded to cover.

Claims comprising abuse are challenging and involve consideration of incredibly sensitive matters. Often, such abuse is concealed and demonstrating its existence may require expert evidence. It is the authors’ view that such cases are perfectly suited to alternative dispute resolution at an early stage to avoid the inherent risks of litigation and to protect clients from having to relive unpleasant experiences in court.

The practicalities

Practitioners should be cautious of taking on potential claims brought by adult children, particularly in the absence of any moral argument that the applicant should be maintained by the estate.

James reflects: “I was shocked to learn about the injustice Martha had experienced, which continued to haunt her after her father’s death. At Ridley & Hall, we specialise in financial abuse claims as well as contentious probate, so Martha’s case sat very well with our passion and commitment for addressing financial abuse.”

“A detailed statement from her was vital, despite the painful memories this invariably brought back.”

The authors were prepared to act for Martha on a conditional fee agreement (CFA), which is unusual in cases involving adult children, but the authors felt that the aggravating element of economic abuse meant that the claim had to be argued. Because claims under the 1975 act are founded on financial need, affordability is commonly an issue and in Martha’s case, a CFA was really the only viable option for her.

Any letter of claim must clearly state the financial remedy that is sought by the claimant. This can be easily overlooked at such an early stage of the claim, but it draws the parties’ focus to quantum and can be tweaked as time progresses and the applicant’s circumstances change.

Fortunately for Martha, following protracted pre-action correspondence, the parties agreed to a pre-issue mediation at which the intended claim for reasonable financial provision was settled on favourable terms, allowing Martha to move forward and turn her attention to her charitable endeavours.

A final word from the claimant

Martha says: “I’m overjoyed at the result of the mediation and would encourage other legal professionals to seriously consider the impact of abuse in these claims. If we accept that abuse is about power and control, we must consider the abuser’s will as an ultimate and particularly painful tool of abuse.”

“In accepting this case on a ‘no win no fee’ basis, my family and I were given the opportunity to have the treatment that we endured finally recognised. After a lifetime of feeling powerless to my father’s abuse, injustice had become the norm.

“I feel incredibly fortunate to have had the opportunity to rectify this.”



Peter Wright

The London Law Institution, the predecessor to the Law Society, was founded in 1823. Solicitors in London wanted to raise the reputation of the profession by setting standards and ensuring good practice. Reflecting national aspirations, the London Law Institution became the Law Institution and what is now the Law Society was formally founded on 2 June 1825 when a committee of management was appointed.

Putting those dates in context and demonstrating that Yorkshire was predictably ahead of the game, it should be mentioned that the Yorkshire Law Society was founded in 1786, nearly 40 years before the Law Institution. In 1786, York was still, officially at least, the second city of England after London and the only assize town in Yorkshire. York was inevitably at that time the focus of attention for lawyers in Yorkshire and, when the Yorkshire Law Society was founded, its members were drawn from throughout the county. The monopoly of the Yorkshire Law Society was, however, to last only 20 years and in 1805 Leeds Law Society was formed. This reflected the shift in population and economic influence that has led to Leeds becoming one of the pre-eminent legal centres outside London.

The Law Society was granted its first Royal Charter in 1831 as The Society of Attorneys, Solicitors, Proctors and others not being Barristers, practising in the Courts of Law and Equity of the United Kingdom. A further Royal Charter in 1903 changed the name to the Law Society.

The Grade 11* listed Law Society's Hall at 113 Chancery Lane was built in 1832 and further extended in 1902/1904.

The building remains the headquarters of the Law Society.

In 1834, the Law Society first initiated proceedings against dishonest practitioners and by 1907 a statutory disciplinary committee had been formed with power to investigate solicitors' accounts and to issue annual practising certificates.

The Solicitor's Act 1860 permitted the Law Society to establish a three-tier examination system and in 1903 the Law Society established the Law Society School of Law, which later merged with the law tutorial firm, Gibson and Wheldon, to become the independent College of Law, now the University of Law.

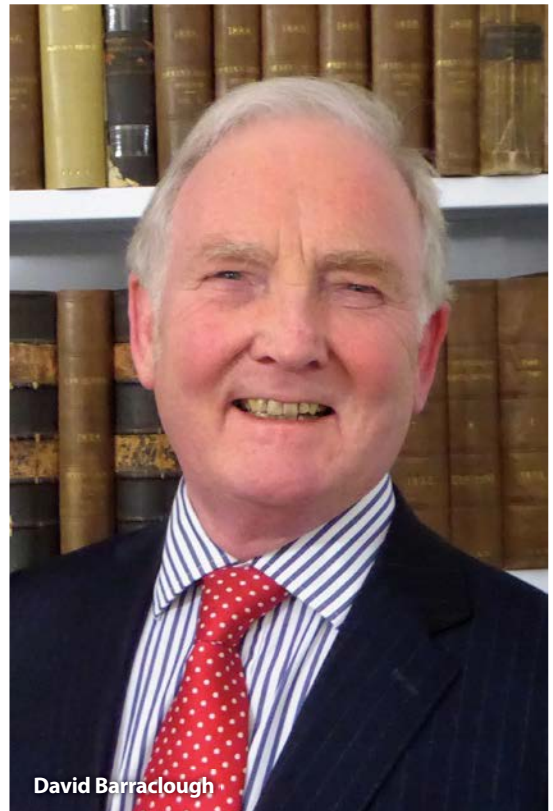
In 1922, the Law Society admitted the first women members. As at 31 July 2019, out of a total of 195,821 solicitors on the Roll, 146,953 of those solicitors held practising certificates and of those holding practising certificates, 75,764 were women, outnumbering men by 4,575.

Following the review by Sir David Clementi in 2004, the Law Society split its representative and regulatory functions. The regulatory body for solicitors is now the Solicitors Regulation Authority. Though technically still a board of the Law Society, the Solicitors Regulation

Authority regulates and enforces regulation completely independently of the Law Society. The Law Society remains the approved regulator but following the Legal Services Act 2007, the Legal Services Board oversees all the approved regulators, including the Bar Council, which has divested its regulatory functions to the Bar Standards Board.



Mark Newby



David Barraclough

The Royal Charter granted in 1845 allowed the Law Society to incorporate, established the Law Society Council as its governing body, and defined the objectives and powers of the Law Society to govern its affairs. The 1845 Royal Charter remains the principle governing instrument of the Law Society.

The Law Society Council agrees the strategic direction of the work of the Law Society and its functions, including the representation of the views of the society's members, setting the practising certificate fee, approving the annual business plan and budget, determining the position of the society on significant policy issues, making changes to the society's rules and fulfilling the society's residual role as an approved regulator.

There are approximately 100 members of the Law Society Council who sit for a four-year term and can be re-elected. The council is supported by the board, which oversees the effective implementation of the strategy and business plan as set out by the Law Society Council, deals with financial matters and risk management on behalf of the council, recommends approval of the budget to the council and essentially ensures that the Law Society is well governed. The board is chaired by Robert Bourns, a former president of the Law Society, and is supported by the Policy and Regulatory Affairs Committee, the Membership and Communications Committee, the Finance and Investment Committee, and the People and Remuneration Committee.

At present, the Law Society Council comprises approximately 60 members representing 42 geographical constituencies and approximately 40 members representing special interest groups and areas of practice, though following recommendations made by the Council Membership Committee, the composition of the Law Society Council is to change with a reduction in the number of geographical seats and a corresponding increase in the number of special interest and area of practice seats. These changes are intended to make the composition of the Law Society Council more closely reflect the composition of the profession itself.

The Law Society Yorkshire constituency is represented by three Law Society Council members: Peter Wright, Mark Newby and David Barraclough. Peter is a member of the board and chairs the Policy and Regulatory Affairs Committee. He is the founder and managing director of Digital Law based in Barnsley, which specialises solely in online, data and cyber law. Mark sits on the Criminal Law Committee and has been elected to be the next chair of the Scrutiny and Performance Review Committee. Mark is a principal member with Jordans based in Doncaster and Sheffield and is a Higher Court Advocate. David sits on the Membership and Communications Committee and has represented Yorkshire on the Council Membership Committee for 10 years. David has retired from practice in Leeds as a commercial property lawyer and is the immediate past president of the Yorkshire Union of Law Societies and the Under Sheriff of West Yorkshire.

Welcome home

Exchange Chambers barrister **Anna Bond** has returned to Leeds after her career took her to London. She explains how her move back home led to her being instructed on more serious and complex cases in the Crown Court

In February 2021, I moved to Exchange Chambers in Leeds to join the criminal team practising in courts throughout the North Eastern Circuit. This was a decision I had thought long and hard about and one I am so glad I made.

I decided I wanted to be a barrister when I was 11 years old after my dad was killed in a road traffic accident. Due to the nature of the accident, a barrister was instructed to prosecute the case. My mum told me stories of his intellect and skill and I became infatuated with the role that barristers play in our criminal justice system. At the age of 20, when I was in my last year of my law degree at the University of Leeds, I was lucky enough to do a mini pupillage with the barrister my mum had told me about. That's when I knew I wanted to do nothing else.

But I took a slightly longer route to the Bar. I decided to go into teaching to gain some life experience as I didn't feel quite ready for the responsibility that comes with this profession at 21. Not only that, the Bar professional training course (which at that time cost in excess of £15,000) was far too expensive for a girl from a single parent working class family—my mum is a full-time carer for my sister who has complex disabilities and so I couldn't depend on her for financial support.

I taught English and religious education to students aged 11 to 18 before becoming head of law at a sixth form in East London. In 2017, I joined the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple, one of the four Inns of Courts that barristers have to be a member of, and applied for a scholarship to enable me to train. Thankfully, I was given a full scholarship that covered the entire cost of the Bar professional training course, which I then undertook part-time so that I could continue to teach full-time. I applied for pupillage in 2018 and, owing to the fact that my only connections to the Bar were in London, decided to apply for sets on the South Eastern Circuit. I was lucky enough to be offered pupillage by QEB Hollis Whiteman and commenced that pupillage in September 2019.

I thoroughly enjoyed pupillage. I was in the Magistrates' Court every day covering all manner of criminal cases. But it became apparent very quickly that I wanted to come back home. I was attracted to Exchange Chambers due to the fact that they had a strong base in Leeds—as well as Liverpool and Manchester—and also because of the type of cases I would have the opportunity to work on.

Since joining Exchange, my practice has developed significantly. The biggest difference is that I have been instructed in cases in the Crown Court almost exclusively, save for private driving cases in the Magistrates' Court. I have thoroughly enjoyed this change and have had the opportunity to work on more serious and more complex cases. For example, I am currently instructed in trials



involving accusations of serious assault and threatening with a bladed article. I am regularly instructed to represent defendants who have pleaded guilty and need to be sentenced. I also recently defended a woman for sentence at York Crown Court; she had pleaded guilty to a serious offence of dangerous driving, which she had committed after losing her father, and I was able to persuade the judge to give her a suspended sentence. Cases like these are of course close to my heart and I feel grateful that I am now able to defend them.

I also feel grateful to be back in the North. I am thoroughly enjoying being back in the city I lived in for three years as a student and re-visiting the places I haven't been to for far too long. Despite the fact my work is now more complex and demanding, my work-life balance has improved significantly since I made the move and I am able to enjoy all that Leeds and the surrounding cities have to offer. I very much look forward to taking even more advantage of the vibrancy of Leeds and in-person meetings with other members of the profession as lockdown is lifted.

No laughing matter



Patrick Walker is an independent mediator:
www.imediate.co.uk

Patrick Walker is forced to examine himself in the mirror, doesn't like what he sees, but bakes a cure

Until a few days ago, I had no idea what a nasolabial fold was. It is a sign of age that I have looked it up and equally a sign of age that they are so visible as to alert my attention. I do not think I am vain, but one of the downsides of being on Zoom all day is that you are effectively spending hours looking in the mirror. Anyway, it does not sound so bad when you call them 'laughter lines', at least until it is pointed out that they are exacerbated by smiling and laughing, or that one treatment is "puckering the lips in an upward motion as if kissing the ceiling". Sometimes, parties in mediations try to 'read' me saying, "it must be bad news, you do not look happy", and my usual response is that I never look happy when I am thinking. But now I have the new excuse that I'm just keeping my nasolabial folds in check!

While video mediation is often contrasted

with 'face to face' mediation, the truth is that Zoom provides a gallery of faces, allowing us not only to see the person speaking, but to see reactions and for every participant to be equally involved. While each has the option of turning off the camera, nobody is relegated to the far end of a boardroom or hidden behind another member of the team. It has been described as 'two button chemistry' because it is often limited to the head and neckline, but if hand movements, for example, are lost, this is more than compensated by facial clarity.

I understand entirely that some people feel 'Zoomed out' and are anxious to increase personal contact, and I agree that Zoom is no substitute for meeting up with friends or family members, or for a real pub quiz. But most of my clients now prefer video mediation, with its convenience, safety, saving of travel time and costs, and most of

all, because it really works. To be honest, I am not entirely sure why it is so successful. Perhaps it is avoiding travel and the stress of missing the last train home, the typically shorter day, the absence of venue costs, the clarity of documents shared and annotated on screen, or the knowledge that a particular Covid risk has been entirely avoided.

But I suspect that in addition to these reasons, it works because every individual gets an equal seat at the table—what I refer to as 'equality of face'. The downside may be having to look at the mediator's laughter lines, but a little more research has provided the good news I really needed. Apparently, the lines can be accentuated by weight loss. With that in mind, next time you see me on screen, do not be surprised if you see me tuck into a large slice of cake—it's purely medicinal!



A coordinated approach

Nadine Marston, a newly appointed partner at niche employment law firm Boardside, on business immigration, Brexit's impact, and living and working in Yorkshire

Congratulations on your appointment at Boardside—how does it feel to be at a new firm?

It has been exciting to return to work in a professional environment after a career break bringing up my three young children. Female lawyers returning to their careers after a period of maternity often isn't readily talked about, but I believe that being outside the profession for a while gives you a wider perspective and the ability to see the bigger picture.

I feel very fortunate to have been offered this amazing opportunity by Richard Port, founding partner at Harrogate-based Boardside, to spearhead its new offering in my area of expertise—business immigration. Thanks to the tremendous support of colleagues, clients and support staff, it has been surprisingly easy to slot back in! The timing of my return has been fortuitous, as we have seen an increase in demand from clients seeking the latest immigration and employment advice following Brexit and the resulting legislative changes.

Tell us a bit about your background and career—how did you get into this area of law?

Having grown up in Leeds, I moved south to study at Cambridge before completing my legal studies at the College of Law in Chester. I worked as a solicitor in London for 13 years, initially with CMS Cameron McKenna, and subsequently as a partner with PwC Legal. During that time, both firms were recognised by all the legal directories as leading practices in UK business immigration law. Clients included a significant proportion of the investment banks in the city, multinational companies in the oil and gas, pharmaceuticals, management consultancy, IT, and insurance sectors, as well as high-net-worth/high-profile individuals.

Business immigration is a niche area of law and there are relatively few firms outside London that offer this specialised service to clients. I enjoy being able to assist clients on a personal basis with the logistics of their potential relocation, at the same time as working in the heart of a corporate environment. For the majority of my time, I am working closely with HR teams within businesses, helping them to navigate the ever-changing challenges in dealing with new mobility patterns.

While in London, I often undertook secondments at our clients' offices, so as to fully understand their business requirements, to combat any specific challenges, to uncover opportunities and to ensure their compliance with the law. I specialised in the financial services sector, providing advice on a full range of business immigration matters to corporate and individual clients, from work permit holders and highly skilled migrants to investors.

Our strategy now at Boardside is to offer a coordinated approach to our clients' HR concerns, and immigration is an important aspect of this.

How complex is business immigration in 2021—are Yorkshire businesses as prepared as they need to be?

The Yorkshire business community is facing considerable challenges in 2021 in managing its current overseas nationals' workforce and in-sourcing future talent. Brexit and the resulting changes to immigration legislation after 1 January 2021 have posed a hurdle to many UK employers. In

response to Brexit, it is essential that businesses plan ahead, both in relation to considering future recruitment needs and in looking after the requirements of current employees.

In addition, employers and their staff must ensure compliance with the fast-changing laws.

Government immigration rules focus on compliance in relation to recruitment practices, the right to work, and maintaining adequate documentation. More focus needs to be put on these issues by Yorkshire's small and medium-sized businesses. At Boardside, we are concentrating on advising companies and individuals on navigating the new Brexit legislation in relation to employment and business immigration matters.

What needs to be their key focus right now and what do they need to keep an eye on?

Employment law has been at the forefront of current business news, against the backdrop of Covid-19 and resulting redundancies. Immigration is essential in a world where businesses are growing globally, and the mobility of employees is paramount. The UK's departure from the EU has, in particular, brought about a new set of challenges for businesses.

It is important for businesses to focus on the current legal and regulatory issues associated with global mobility. We have been helping clients to become familiar with the new immigration rules, which came into effect from 1 January 2021. A good starting point is for businesses to audit their HR files to ensure that immigration processes are robust and compliant.

On a personal level, what attracted you to living and working in Yorkshire?

I thoroughly enjoyed the buzz of London while in my 20s and early 30s, but I felt that Yorkshire had more to offer my family as a whole. I readily swapped the crowded tubes and long daily commute for the rolling hills and friendly locals of the Yorkshire Dales. I can honestly say that I wouldn't move back to London for all the money in the world. I am loving living in Nidderdale with my husband (who is very much a Yorkshireman born and bred!), children, cat, sheep and (most recently) a horse. That certainly wouldn't be possible in London!





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