



## Diversity and Inclusion Conference 2021

Mental health and wellbeing, LGBTQ+,  
gender, social mobility, disability,  
and race and ethnicity  
were all discussed

### Local

An update on  
Huddersfield & Dewsbury  
Incorporated Law Society  
and its upcoming plans

### News

Ridley & Hall is expanding  
across Yorkshire with the  
acquisition of Newman &  
Bond in Barnsley

### YLA 2021

The region's best lawyers  
and firms celebrate  
at the Yorkshire Legal  
Awards 2021

### Last Word

Working in a fast-paced  
and pivotal practice area,  
the future of hearings by  
remote access, and more

### Comment

Patrick Walker has a  
haircut and tries to regret  
nothing



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# Create the profession we all deserve

One that is equal, fair and meritocratic—and embraces all and enables everyone to bring their whole self to work



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

I am pleased to have opened this year's Diversity and Inclusion Conference. Following the runaway success of our inaugural conference last year, it was incredible to see the huge number of people who attended this year's event; it is indicative of how seriously our profession takes matters relating to diversity and inclusion.

The legal profession continues to make great strides towards inclusion and I am delighted that Leeds Law Society and its members are able to promote this further. We welcomed an exceptional range of speakers to talk of their experiences, and to give practical and constructive advice to attendees.

I believe our profession can only benefit from the inclusion of talented practitioners from all backgrounds and walks of life. With the help of our members, we can ensure that the legal profession flourishes through embracing talent, setting aside any pre-conceptions that may be held.

The experiences that were discussed at the conferences were not unique to Leeds nor, in many aspects, to just the legal profession. However, I am pleased that Leeds and the legal sector continues to take a lead in tackling these issues, with the support of our members and the Law Society of England and Wales.

As part of my involvement in the conference, I was on a panel discussing gender and the law with Lady Hale, Coral Hill, Jerry Garvey, Amandeep Khasriya, and Richard Blann, expertly hosted by fellow Leeds Law Society director Helen Brown. It was fascinating to hear the experiences and tips that my fellow panellists had to share.

I hope those that attended found the conference insightful and informative, inspiring further the diversity and inclusivity of your workplace.

As it is Black History Month, it is important to celebrate diversity and the benefits it brings to the profession in terms of experience and take steps to ensure that this is simply a part of everyday life, rather than an effort consigned to designated months and without any reflection on what small changes can be made to ensure a more equal workplace and profession.

One of the top tips given at the conference, and one that I consider among the most important, is for organisations to listen to the concerns of their staff and consider the changes that might be made. In turn, individuals should feel safe to speak up and work collaboratively with employers and societies.

Through doing this, I hope we can help create the profession we all deserve—an equal, fair and meritocratic one that embraces all and enables everyone to bring their whole self to work.

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“ One of the top tips given at the conference is for organisations to listen to the concerns of their staff and consider the changes that might be made. ”

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# Diversity and Inclusion Conference 2021

**A round-up of the speakers who featured and the topics they discussed**



The fantastic virtual Diversity and Inclusion Conference, organised and hosted by Leeds Law Society and the Law Society of England and Wales, took place from 14 to 30 September, coinciding with National Inclusion Week.

With a theme of 'promoting a modern, diverse and inclusive profession', the conference consisted of virtual events across six days, with pre-recorded sessions being released at the same time. Each focused on a particular strand of diversity and inclusion.

Below you will find brief summaries of the virtual events and a list of speakers involved. To watch any of the sessions, visit: <https://www.leedslawsociety.org.uk/committees/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-inclusion-charter/2021-conference/>.

everyone who struggles with these issues. Topics include improving sleep and organisations that exist to support the legal profession. The panel delves into creating an open and honest culture for discussing mental health and wellbeing, the need for tailored approaches, and more.



## Mental health and wellbeing

*Featuring:*

- Shanika Haynes, Vice President, Leeds Law Society
- Catherine Woodward, President, Leeds Law Society
- Sally Brett, Head of Diversity and Inclusion, Law Society of England and Wales
- James Wilson, The Sleep Geek, Beingwell
- Elizabeth Rimmer, CEO, LawCare
- Caroline Prosser, Legal Director, Hill Dickinson
- Lloyd Rees, Knowledge Lawyer, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer
- Umar Kankiya, Solicitor/Director, Kank Speaks Legal
- Sarah Alonge, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser, Law Society of England and Wales

An open and honest discussion about mental health and wellbeing in the legal profession, with useful insights into how law firms and staff can create a better environment for

## LGBTQ+

*Featuring:*

- Shanika Haynes, Vice President, Leeds Law Society
- Master (Dr) Victoria McCloud, Judge, Judiciary
- Rachel Reese, CEO, Global Butterflies
- Luke Williams, Non-Practising Solicitor, Law Society of England and Wales
- Steven Appleton, Partner and Head of Private Client (Manchester), Brabners
- Clare Fielding, Partner, Town Legal
- Christina Lambi, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser, Law Society of England and Wales

An insightful look at the legal profession becoming more diverse and inclusive for LGBTQ+ people. Several speakers chart their own transition journeys while practising law, before the panel convenes and discusses the need for genuine efforts to improve diversity and inclusion, from the top down, and create a landscape where all practitioners can bring their whole selves to work. There are also tips for law firms seeking to educate staff about LGBTQ+ issues.

## Gender

*Featuring:*

- Helen Brown, Director, Leeds Law Society



- Lady Hale, Baroness Hale of Richmond, Supreme Court of the United Kingdom
- Coral Hill, Editor in Chief, Legal Women
- Amandeep Khasriya, Senior Associate, Moore Barlow
- Richard Blann, Head of Group Litigation and Conduct Investigations Legal, Lloyds Banking Group
- Catherine Woodward, President, Leeds Law Society
- Jerry Garvey, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser, Law Society of England and Wales

This stream of the Diversity and Inclusion Conference opens with a compelling overview of the journey made toward a greater gender balance within the judiciary. Diving deeper into the legal profession's work, speakers provide insightful lessons for viewers that warn the profession against resting on its laurels. The panel discussion then zooms in on issues such as visibility and education around women's health.



### Social Mobility

Featuring:

- Sarah Wales-Canning, Director, Leeds Law Society
- I. Stephanie Boyce, President, Law Society of England and Wales
- Inez Brown, President, Birmingham Law Society
- Nik Miller, CEO, Bridge Group
- Kama Melly QC, Barrister and Deputy Head of Chambers, Park Square Barristers
- Leila Lesan, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser, Law Society of England and Wales

Focusing on the legal profession's barriers to entry based on social status, this stream features excellent speakers who share their pathways into a career as a lawyer and the gaps in support they had to overcome. The panel discussion brings in the points of view of all of the speakers, with highlights including a look at some of the disadvantages that people from certain socio-economic groups face, and research into social mobility within the legal profession.

### Disability

Featuring:

- Matthew Jones, Director, Leeds Law Society
- Jane Burton, Chair, Lawyers with Disabilities Division
- Professor Debbie Foster, Professor of Employment Relations and



- Diversity, Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University
- Dr Natasha Hirst, Researcher, 'Legally Disabled?' Project, Cardiff University
- Lord Shinkwin, House of Lords
- Shama Gupta, Diversity and Inclusion Ambassador, Freeths and the Lawyers with Disabilities Division
- Rhian Smith, Solicitor, Irwin Mitchell Solicitors
- Kate Dean, Director, Enable Disability & Inclusion Consultants
- Chris Seel, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser, Law Society of England and Wales

This stream opens with a look at the key findings from 'Legally Disabled?', a four-year study of the career experiences of people working in the legal profession. This is followed by an excellent overview of a report that led to recommendations being made to the government's disability strategy. The panel then focuses on the experiences of solicitors and how they might have been different if the profession was more diverse and inclusive, as well as engaging with leadership boards and HR, and much more.



### Race and Ethnicity

Featuring:

- Itohan Odukunle, Director, Leeds Law Society
- Dawid KonoteyAhulu, Co-Founder and Director, Redington
- Sandra Yamate, CEO, Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession
- Susanta Banerjee, Principal Owner and Director, SKB Legal
- Coralie McKeivor, Senior Associate, CMS CMNO and Bristol Law Society
- Nikki Deol, Section Head Solicitor—Property and Development, Leeds City Council
- Sarah Alonge, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser, Law Society of England and Wales
- Lubna Shuja, Vice President, Law Society of England and Wales
- Nick Emmerson, Immediate Past President, Leeds Law Society

A comprehensive overview of initiatives and groups aimed at opening up the legal profession to a broader range of racial and ethnic groups, including the fantastic 10,000 Black Interns programme and Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession, and why they are so important. The panel discussion delves into the cost to the profession of losing the experience and talent of people from different racial and ethnic groups, the need to combat racism at all levels rather than just recruitment, and much more.



# Islam in the workplace

**Haseenah Ali**, a trainee solicitor at Irwin Mitchell and sponsorship officer at Leeds JLD, on some of the challenges Muslim legal professionals face and how they can be overcome

Hi, my name is Haseenah and I am a trainee solicitor at Irwin Mitchell who proudly identifies as a Muslim. Throughout my studies, quest to find a training contract and now on my journey as a trainee, I have had to face many questions about my religion. Most of the time these have been positive and informative; save for a brief conversation with an individual, who told me to “lower my sights and not apply to commercial law firms as I won’t fit in”.

Islam as a religion, and its followers, Muslims, are often negatively represented in the media, in that Islam is not compatible with British and/or western culture. However, contrary to the narrative, Islam is a religion of peace and there are many successful Muslims lawyers. For example, Sadiq Khan practised as a solicitor prior to becoming London’s mayor and Nazir Afzal is the former chief crown prosecutor for the Crown Prosecution Service. Bearing in mind the media narrative, it is easy for Muslim legal professionals to feel isolated in the workplace or struggle to comply with their religious commitments.

## What are the religious commitments?

The commitments in Islam are known as the Pillars of Islam and comprise of:

- Shahadah (declaration of faith);
- Prayer (there are five daily prayers);
- Zakat (the giving to charity);
- Fasting; and
- Pilgrimage.

Many of us will be familiar with the daily prayers and fasting. Fasting usually occurs in the month of Ramadan (the ninth month of the Islamic calendar) and was most recently completed by Muslims this year from 13 April to 12 May. In the month of Ramadan, we, as Muslims, fast during the hours of sunlight to sunset and refrain from eating and drinking. ‘Not even water?’ is a common question many non-Muslims will ask their friends and colleagues and I can confirm not even water is allowed during the fasting hours.

The next commitment is praying. There are five daily prayers

and throughout the various seasons, Muslims may have to pray any two or three of these during traditional business hours. It is estimated, on average, that workers will spend around 3,507 days at work over the course of their lifetime. Therefore, the number of prayers will quickly add up.

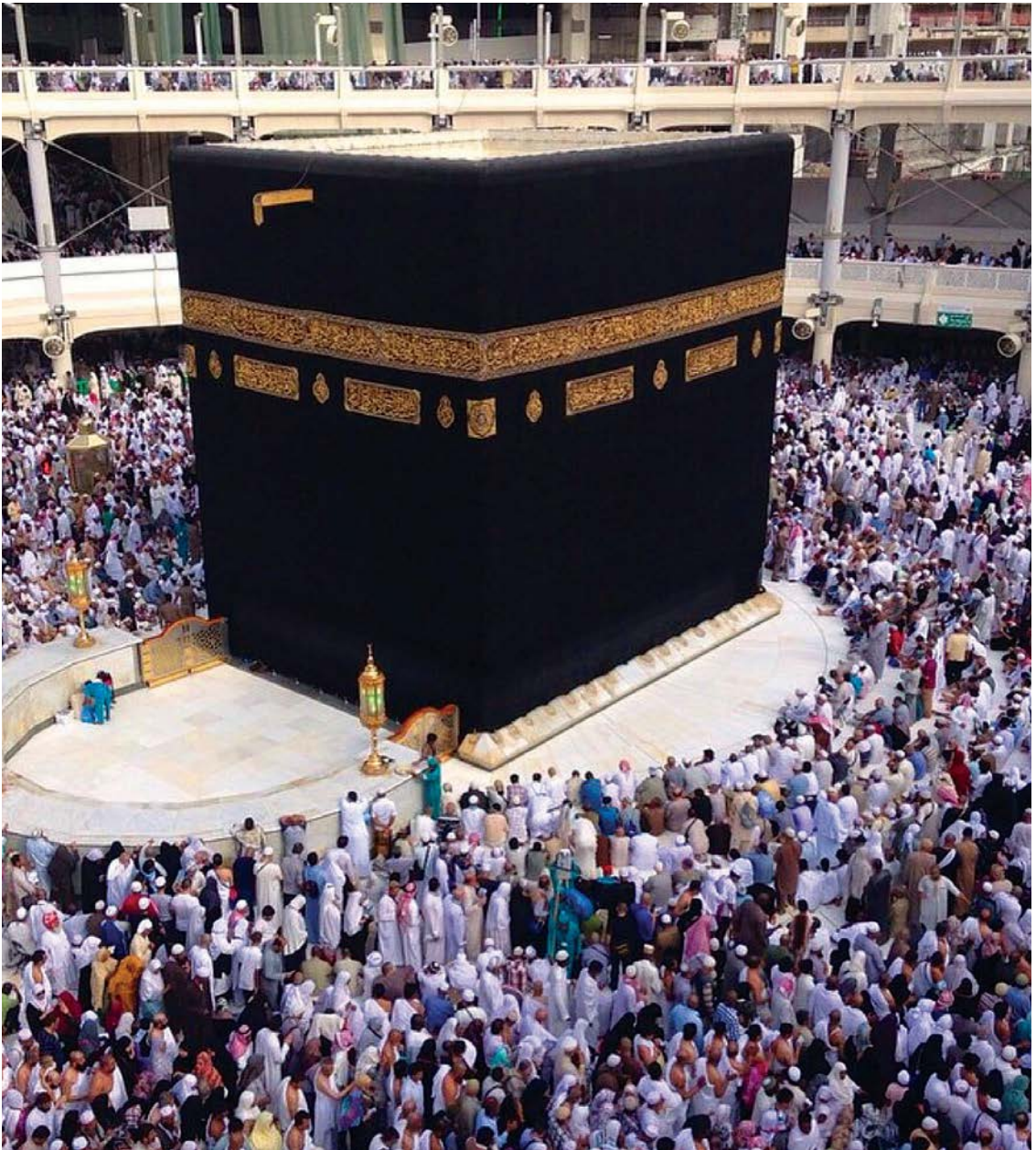
With these two key elements of the religion in mind, what are the challenges I and my fellow Muslim colleagues face?

1. Productivity issues during Ramadan: with summer fasts exceeding 16 hours, individual workers’ productivity can drop. Imagine waking up at 4am to have a big breakfast, staying up for early morning prayers (known as Fajr) and then working for around eight to 10 hours with no lunch or an afternoon coffee to re-energise. This, coupled with the fact that the sun does not set until around 10pm during the summer months, we, as Muslims, will not be having our evening meal until late, which will be followed by evening prayers and then going to sleep quite late into the evening only to wake up again at 4am the following morning. This process is repeated for around 30 days and despite being a physically and emotionally draining month, it is still a very rewarding and spiritual time.
2. Access to a prayer room/multi-faith room: with some daily prayers falling during the working day, Muslims might need to break off to attend prayers during the lunch hour and/or late afternoon.
3. Not directly related to the two points above, but one of the other challenges many Muslim legal professionals face is attending events (whether internal or external) where alcohol is predominately provided.

## So how can these challenges be overcome?

Well, for point one above, productivity issues can be overcome by allowing workers to utilise the firm’s flexible working policy (if there is one) or in its absence, to start and finish later so employees can catch up on their sleep. I know at my firm I was encouraged to use the flexible working policy and was encouraged to start late (or have an extended break during the day). Another way this challenge can be overcome is by allowing employees to work during their lunch break so they





**The Kaaba, Mecca, during an Umrah Pilgrimage**

may be able to leave earlier.

In relation to accessing a prayer room, firms can overcome this challenge by providing a designated prayer space. This does not need to be dedicated to Muslims only and should be accessible to people of all faiths and encouraged to be used as a place of reflection. In the absence of a formal quiet room, a spare meeting room can be made available to allow prayers to be offered.

Finally, the Junior Lawyers Division (JLD) has introduced guidance on creating a healthy alcohol culture in the legal profession and this guidance is applicable in relation to events

where alcohol is being served. While some Muslims may be comfortable attending events where alcohol is served, others may not be. This issue can be overcome by having non-alcoholic alternatives or events where no alcohol is served to promote an environment of inclusivity.

In conclusion, I hope this article has provided an insight into some of the challenges Muslim legal professionals face and how they can be overcome. If you are interested in learning more about Islam, the challenges I have faced or would like to talk about your experiences, then please contact Leeds JLD and I would be happy to have a chat.

## Technology investment network NorthInvest extends partnership with Gordons

Digital and tech startup investment network NorthInvest has extended its strategic partnership with law firm Gordons following a successful three-year relationship.

Gordons has worked closely with NorthInvest's senior management team since 2018, supporting its goal to identify, connect and develop early-stage tech startups throughout the North of England and enable them to fulfil their potential. The partnership has now been extended by the network until 2024.

As sole legal adviser, Gordons advises investors and provides guidance to startups to help make sure their businesses are ready for investment.

With the support of Gordons, NorthInvest has achieved significant growth and helped tech and digital startups across in the north to raise angel investment and access crucial support. Last year alone, the network facilitated £9 million worth of investment in 19 companies.

Commenting on the partnership extension, Helen Oldham, founding director at NorthInvest, said: "The last 18 months have been challenging, but it's been fantastic to see both the motivation of founders and the appetite from angels continue through those difficult times."

"NorthInvest is about enabling startups and innovators across the North to access funding, gain recognition and realise their potential."

"Over the past three years, Gordons have supported the achievement of our objectives with their legal expertise and excellent connections throughout the region."

"It therefore makes perfect sense for us to extend the partnership to support our ventures and investors in the North for a further three years."

Gordons has offices in Leeds and Bradford and employs 170 people. The firm's emerging companies clients include film production company HTYT, marketing technology platform



**NorthInvest founding director Helen Oldham (left) and Gordons's NorthInvest relationship lead, Amy Pierechod (right)**

ContentCal, and bid and construction industry software producer C-Link.

Amy Pierechod, who leads Gordons's relationship with NorthInvest, said: "The North remains a key area for tech and digital talent and our work with NorthInvest demonstrates the potential for this region."

"We work with NorthInvest investors to help make the deal process as streamlined as possible and we are incredibly privileged to be able to help connect northern investors with startups at a critical stage in their development. We've worked with some fantastic businesses already, including award-winning organisations with real potential for growth."

"This renewal for another three years shows our continued commitment to emerging companies and the tech sector in the region. Leading the partnership from our side, I'm also keen to help nurture female founders and empower more women to try angel investment."

## Hill Dickinson advises on £2b+ of completed deals in H1 2021



Law firm Hill Dickinson, whose corporate and banking team grew with the addition of an offering in Leeds earlier this year, advised on 78 completed deals with an aggregate value of more than £2 billion during the first half of 2021.

The performance represents a very significant increase on the equivalent period in 2020.

Although the number of deals was broadly the same as in 2020 (78 completed deals in H1 2021 v 80 in H1 2020), the aggregate value of the deals almost doubled, from £1.1 billion in 2020 to £2 billion in 2021.

Hill Dickinson anticipated this increased client demand for corporate and banking services and expanded in response, launching a corporate offering in the firm's Leeds office with the

appointment of Sandip Khroud.

Recent hires have boosted the corporate and banking team to more than 75 specialist lawyers across the firm's UK and international offices in Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, London and Hong Kong.

Ian Riggs (pictured), national head of corporate at Hill Dickinson, commented: "I am delighted once again to be able to report an excellent performance by our national corporate team in the first half of 2021. The period saw very significant levels of activity, which was a continuation of the strong recovery in deal volumes that we saw in the second half of 2020. The UK markets have remained resilient and we have been exceptionally busy during the most recent lockdown advising on transactions spanning a range of sectors and markets."

He added: "Conducting this number of deals remotely, and often at high speed, has been challenging but our people have demonstrated huge commitment to ensure that we continue to support our clients and deliver bespoke commercial solutions in these difficult times. I would like to thank our team members for their hard work and dedication, and our clients for their continued instructions."

## Myton Law becomes first affiliate for rail safety body

Yorkshire's Myton Law has become the first law firm to be accepted as an affiliate of the independent rail safety body, the Rail Safety Standards Board (RSSB).

RSSB was established in 2003 following the Ladbroke Grove accident. Its core purpose is to help the industry work together to drive improvements in the rail system.

The board supports its membership of around 400, including passenger train operators, freight train operators, infrastructure managers and owners, and rolling stock manufacturers and owners, in order to improve health, safety and wellbeing performance.

Keen to involve specialist law firms working in the rail industry, RSSB has recruited Myton Law as its first affiliate from the legal sector.

A specialist rail, logistics and shipping legal practice, Myton Law advises key players in the rail industry.

Commenting on the appointment, Mark Phillips, chief executive officer of RSSB, said: "It's fantastic to welcome Myton Law on board, to connect and collaborate with the rail industry in this way. We really look forward to working with their team to achieve positive benefits for both Myton



**Chris Thornes and Mark Phillips**

Law, and for our wider community of members, affiliates and stakeholders."

Chris Thornes, head of rail law at Myton Law, added: "Safety is always a large element of the contractual work we undertake for clients in the rail sector, so it is good to be invited to collaborate with RSSB. The Myton Law rail team look forward to working with RSSB to contribute to its objective of ensuring that all areas of operation are as safe as possible."

## Clarion launches hybrid mediation service to help divorcing couples stay out of court



Leeds law firm Clarion has added another option to its family services with the launch of a hybrid mediation model to help clients with any children or financial disputes reach agreement without embarking on a costly, time-consuming and potentially stressful court process.

Senior associate Sarah Manning (pictured) has recently completed hybrid mediation training and has been accredited by Resolution as a specialist in this niche area.

Hybrid mediation, which has only recently been introduced by

Resolution, is a means of resolving disputes in an amicable, non-confrontational manner that meets the needs of both parties.

Unlike the standard model of mediation, both parties are able to have their legal advisers and other professionals present, as well as the mediator being able to hold confidences in order to assist in the negotiation process.

Manning, lead mediator at Clarion, explained: "As a firm, we always start by assessing whether mediation is a viable option. Often mediation is a quicker, more amicable and less stressful process, as well as allowing all parties to retain some control over the outcome rather than relying on the uncertainty of a judge's decision if the matter was in court"

"Up until now, the standard model of mediation was not appropriate in some situations, such as those involving domestic violence or complex, high conflict cases. However, this new hybrid model allows the mediator to hold confidences that do not need to be shared with the other party, aiding the mediator in assisting the parties in reaching a decision, and increasing trust

and confidence in the mediator."

"In high conflict cases or for more vulnerable clients who require additional support, such as those where domestic violence is involved or personality disorders, the fact that hybrid mediation allows parties to remain in separate rooms at all times with their legal adviser or even to participate via video conference calls, is a huge benefit."

Manning continued: "It's also good news that the government, having already funded £1 million into mediation, has recently announced the extension of its voucher scheme, enabling new clients to claim £500 towards their mediation sessions to encourage more people with disputes involving children matters, to use mediation to reach a resolution. As the courts continue to struggle with the post-Covid backlog, it is an option more people are exploring."

Justine Osmotherley, partner and head of the family team, commented: "I am delighted that Sarah has now completed the hybrid mediation course and is able to expand our mediation offering to separating parties."

"The hybrid mediation model complements our overall ethos here at Clarion to explore alternative dispute resolution methods rather than proceeding straight to litigation. The concept is excellent for those parties in high conflict or for high net worth cases where traditionally mediation may not have been suitable."

Having worked in family law for 13 years and qualified as a family mediator in 2012, Manning has a robust approach to mediation and specialises in children and financial matters.

Manning has a wealth of experience in mid- to high-net-worth cases, as well as dealing with overseas matters, complex pensions, and business owners.

She was shortlisted in 2020 as Mediator of the Year for the National Mediation Awards and is also a board member for Family Mediation Association.



## Exchange Chambers barrister instructed in major rail company claim

A Leeds barrister at Exchange Chambers has been instructed in a major claim against rail companies overcharging their passengers.

David Went from Exchange Chambers is acting in an application to commence an opt-out collective action in the Competition Appeal Tribunal against Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) and its parent companies, The Go-Ahead Group and Keolis UK.

The claim alleges that GTR is infringing UK competition rules by issuing fares restricting travel to Southern and/or Thameslink train brands on the London-Brighton mainline, and then inflating the prices passengers must pay for fares allowing travel on two or all three of its train brands (Gatwick Express, Southern and Thameslink).

The claim also alleges that GTR unlawfully inflates fares where passengers use Oyster or contactless payment facilities to tap in or tap out at London Victoria platforms 13 and 14 (including

passengers who start or finish travel at GTR stations north of London).

The claim states that the fare-setting regulatory regime does not entitle GTR to issue fares limited to only Southern and/or Thameslink train brands (except for advance fares) but requires its fares to permit travel on all three brands.

Moreover, by charging higher prices for fares permitting travel on two or all three of its train brands, GTR is abusing its dominant position in the market for rail services on the London-Brighton mainline in breach of Chapter II of the Competition Act 1998.

Preliminary indications show that millions of passenger journeys will have been affected by the alleged unlawful conduct of GTR.

This legal action is being funded by LCM Funding UK, an experienced third-party litigation funder, and insurance is in place to cover adverse fees or costs.

David Went was instructed by Maitland Walker.

## Blacks Solicitors celebrates success of holiday and home parks team

Blacks Solicitors is celebrating after securing strong results for its holiday and home parks team despite the pandemic.

A 15% increase in turnover was experienced from 2019 to 2021 and the team has been involved in park deals with a total value of more than £20 million.

The 10 strong team across a range of disciplines, including employment and commercial property, successfully completed a wide range of instructions from a number of sector clients, and won a string of new clients in 2020 and 2021 despite the impact of Covid-19.

A key factor in the team's growth has been the recruitment and retention of talent. Katy McPhie, senior associate in the planning team, was recruited in August 2020 to provide specialist planning related support to parks clients and the team has continued to retain talented advisers who are attuned to the needs of the sector.

Covid-19 has had a particular impact on the specialist sector, with the team at Blacks Solicitors advising clients on holiday park closures, customers challenging terms or not paying pitch fees, and continuing to guide clients through the sale and purchase of park businesses while considering the unique issues the virus has had on such transactions.

Aimee Hutchinson, a partner in the holiday and home parks team at Blacks Solicitors, commented: "Although it's been a challenging year, we've had significant opportunities to support a growing specialist sector and build on the good relationships we've been developing for some time. Our growth and new client wins have played a key part in our decision to recruit Katy and have contributed to the successful retention of team members all of which has in turn strengthened our ability to attract new clients and win work despite the impacts of the pandemic."

"We're expecting to be very busy assisting and advising businesses on opportunities as the sector reopens and the further legislative change that is on the horizon for the residential park sector in relation to being a 'fit and proper' person."

As lockdown restrictions have eased, opportunities have increased for the home and holiday parks team at Blacks Solicitors due to the growth in the staycation market.

The renewed focus on the sector and the impact of Covid-19 has also led to an increase in the acquisitions and disposals of parks, with the team at Blacks Solicitors using their specialist industry knowledge to act for both purchasers and sellers.



Saby Sambhi, Nick Rhodes, Ben Finley, Aimee Hutchinson, Phil Parkinson, Nick Dyson and Katy McPhie



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## Medical Solicitors opens its third branch in Yorkshire



**Simon Wilson and Caroline Moore**

Niche medicolegal firm Medical Solicitors has opened a new office in Hull, its third in Yorkshire. The branch, based at The Deep Business Centre on the Humber Estuary, opened on 20 September. Medical negligence solicitor Simon Wilson has joined the firm to lead the new East Yorkshire office.

Medical Solicitors said

the new office space will help Wilson and the firm, which has offices in Sheffield and York, strengthen their foothold in the region and meet the growing demand for clinical negligence claims.

Wilson said: "I have known Caroline [Moore, director of Medical Solicitors] for many years and have seen how her business has gone from strength to strength. I am delighted to have the opportunity to be involved in growing the business further with the addition of the Hull office, which adds another string to the bow of Medical Solicitors and allows further development."

Wilson has spent 25 years in the clinical negligence field since he was handed his first caseload shortly after qualifying in 1996.

During that time, he has established and developed clinical negligence departments at various law firms, and was involved at management level at his last firm. He helped raise its national profile through his involvement in business development and marketing.

Throughout his career, Wilson has developed many areas of specialism within medical negligence, such as cases involving stroke, bile duct injuries, deep vein thrombosis/pulmonary embolism, and orthopaedic claims. He also has expertise in the coronial system and has represented many families through the inquest process.

Moore said: "I have known and liked Simon for many years and I am thrilled to be welcoming him to our team of senior lawyers. As well as being a skilled litigator, he has a wealth of strategic, commercial and managerial experience. This opportunity has also allowed us to complete a 'Yorkshire Triangle' with three offices now in the region. Who knew The Deep in Hull offered such fantastic office space and conferencing facilities?"

As the culture capital of the North, the expansion into Hull is an exciting move for Medical Solicitors. The waterside location overlooks the Humber, with the business centre offering environmentally friendly practices as part of its pledge to improve conservation in the city.

This is the second new office to open for Medical Solicitors in a year. Last November, the firm launched the branch in York, which is led by medical negligence specialist Sarah Johnson.

## Ridley & Hall extends reach with Newman & Bond acquisition

Ridley & Hall, the Huddersfield-headquartered law firm, is expanding across Yorkshire with the acquisition of Newman & Bond in Barnsley.

With offices in Huddersfield, Leeds and Pontefract, Ridley & Hall specialises in family, private client, niche litigation and property law, serving clients in Yorkshire and across the UK.

The acquisition of Newman & Bond, which provides residential and commercial property advice, family law services, and wills, probate and estate planning, complements and strengthens Ridley & Hall's service offering and extends its geographic reach.

The acquisition sees Jane Munden and Jill Leece joining Ridley & Hall as partners along with the rest of the 15-strong Barnsley firm, to work alongside family, property and private client law colleagues. The team will continue to be based at its premises in Church Street, Barnsley.

Despite Covid disruption last year, Ridley & Hall recovered well and has continued to see solid financial results with turnover increasing to more than £3 million in 2020/2021.

This follows the acquisition of Pontefract firm Bashforth Young in 2019 and the opening of an office in Leeds in 2018, as well as organic growth.

Emma Pearmaine, managing director of Ridley & Hall, said: "Newman & Bond has established a strong reputation as a specialist, independent firm, and its services are a great fit with Ridley & Hall, further strengthening our family, private client and property law expertise. Like us, they are long-established, are known for the quality of their work and also provide legal aid services."



**Adam Fletcher, Jill Leece, James Cook, Jane Munden, Emma Pearmaine, Anthony Elston and Sarah Young**

"This latest acquisition continues our strategy of joining forces with like-minded firms in other parts of the region who share our focus on providing outstanding and affordable legal advice."

"The location between our Huddersfield and Pontefract offices gives us a local presence in South Yorkshire and a loyal client base; we are excited to be working with such experienced colleagues as we continue to grow the firm."

Leece commented: "We are really pleased to join Ridley & Hall. Jane and I both consider this to be a fantastic opportunity for our people and our clients, all of whom will benefit from being part of a larger firm who share our values and dedication to quality legal services."

With offices in Huddersfield, Leeds, Pontefract and now Barnsley, Ridley & Hall has grown to a 100-strong team.

## New hybrid working policy takes effect at Womble Bond Dickinson



Law firm Womble Bond Dickinson has adopted a hybrid working model for all of its UK locations, including its large office in Leeds.

Womble Bond Dickinson staff now have the flexibility to combine home and office working, blending personal preferences with business and clients' needs without any mandatory requirements being set across the business other than for those in learning roles.

The decision follows a firm-wide employee and partner survey asking how lawyers, professional advisers and business professionals wanted to work post-pandemic.

The new model was introduced across Womble Bond Dickinson UK from 6 September and provides a framework for people to agree whether they wish to be a home worker; office-based (with the possibility of working from home on an occasional basis); or a hybrid worker, splitting time between locations, with the flexibility to choose if and when they go into the office.

Jonathan Blair (pictured), Womble Bond Dickinson's UK managing partner, commented: "Within three days of the first national lockdown back in March 2020, our 1,100-strong UK workforce were set up and working from home. It was a major logistical feat but not only has it worked well, it has shaped the future of our workplace now that restrictions are easing."

"Our new approach builds on the huge progress we have

made over the last year and acknowledges the incredible work of our people in that time. Technological developments like electronic signatures have transformed our business practices and with investment in Microsoft Teams and other collaborative technologies, we have found new ways of hybrid working that suit our people without adversely affecting productivity or our ability to deliver excellent client service."

"As we open our offices up, a more flexible, hybrid model of working brings efficiencies in the way we spend our time, as well as making a continued impact on our environmental sustainability, reducing travel and our carbon footprint."

Commenting on the survey that led to the new hybrid working model at the firm, Blair said: "We asked our people how they had found the last year, to tell us about the benefits and the challenges, and how they would prefer to work in the long term. A large majority said they wanted a blend of home and office working, had thrived working from home during the pandemic, and really wanted it to become a permanent feature of how our business operates."

"At the opposite end of the spectrum, many of our people also told us they were missing the office environment, wanting to socialise more, improve cross team collaboration, support new joiners and make the most out of on-site training opportunities."

"Hybrid working offers a blend of all of these things and builds on the approach we already had in place, with many people working something other than the standard 9-5 full-time office-based role."

## Secerna gives a taste of life as a patent attorney

Secerna opened the doors of its York head office to a group of undergraduates for a taster day, as the intellectual property law firm seeks out the next generation of talented patent attorneys.

The day was designed to share insights into working in IP and life in a law firm dedicated to the practice area. It included practical tasks designed to show undergraduates the skills required for client projects, alongside opportunities to speak to and shadow members of the Secerna team to find out about life as a patent attorney and the route to qualification.

Lydia Entwistle, a molecular biology undergraduate from the University of York, said: "I'm aspiring towards a career in IP, and it's been fantastic to learn more about the technical side of the role today. I didn't expect to be thrown into real life tasks but working through them in teams with someone who knows what they're doing was a great learning opportunity, and talking to Secerna trainees has given me so much more insight than I'd be able to get otherwise."

Secerna chairman Jason Boakes said the firm is keen to continue to attract and provide development paths for talented young science and technology graduates looking for an alternative to a career in industry: "We wanted to show how rewarding and challenging a role as a patent attorney can be, and days like today enable us to share insights into how IP law works, what goes into obtaining a patent and answer questions."

"We were very impressed with the group that visited. They have demonstrated that they have the raw skills required to



The attendees of the taster day at the Secerna office in York

make excellent attorneys and I hope that we have inspired them to pursue a career as a patent attorney."

According to Warwick University physics undergraduate, Liam Jones, the taster day did exactly that: "I was leaning towards a career in IP anyway, and I've enjoyed today so much. It has definitely cemented that ambition."

## Stowe Family Law expands in Yorkshire



Stowe Family Law is continuing to grow its regional presence in Yorkshire with a new office opening in Malton and new talent joining the firm in Leeds.

The opening of the Malton office highlights Stowe's commitment to the Yorkshire region, where the firm began operating in Leeds, with its inaugural office opening in 1982.

The specialist family law firm now has 38 offices nationwide, including nine in Yorkshire.

Its new Malton office will be led by senior solicitor Juliet Walker, who is experienced in all aspects of family law, including advising and representing clients in the process of divorce, unmarried separation, civil partnership dissolution, and child law matters.

Meanwhile, Stowe's Leeds office is expanding further as the firm enhances its talent pool with two recruits this month.

Sarah Sowden (pictured, left) has joined the team as a senior solicitor, while Jake Mitchell (pictured, right) is welcomed as a solicitor, taking the Yorkshire team to 21.

The new appointments strengthen the team's experience in a wide range of family law matters, including divorce, separation, financial settlements, nuptial agreements and arrangements for children. The team also offers specialisms in adoption, surrogacy, mediation, and a collaborative family law practice.

Rachel Roberts, Stowe's regional director for Yorkshire, said: "As the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic continues, we have seen a sharp rise in enquiries across Yorkshire and particularly in the Leeds area. Opening the new office in Malton and growing the team in Leeds allows us to maintain the highest support levels for our clients throughout the pandemic and beyond."

"With Jake and Sarah's arrival, we now have a team of twenty-one in Yorkshire, and I am happy to welcome them both to the firm. Their combined experience in family law and knowledge will complement our existing offering and help clients to achieve their desired outcomes."

Roberts continued: "As part of the country's largest specialist family law firm, we can offer people across Yorkshire access to an unrivalled nationwide network of knowledge and experience on their doorstep."

## Taylor&Emmet adds defibrillators to all branches

Taylor&Emmet has installed lifesaving equipment at all five of its offices across South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire, to benefit staff, visitors, and the general public.

The law firm invested almost £5,000 in the defibrillators, which are situated in reception areas, where they can be accessed easily in emergency situations.

Taylor&Emmet's branches in Sheffield, Rotherham, Dronfield and Bakewell have been registered with HeartSafe so passersby and occupants of neighbouring buildings can locate a defibrillator quickly, if necessary. The state-of-the-art equipment provides users with spoken instructions, to ensure no time is wasted when they are needed.

Lee Stacey, facilities manager at Taylor&Emmet, said: "This

significant investment is part of a wider project by the firm focusing on the health and wellbeing of our employees. As well as installing defibrillators, we have trained a number of mental health first aiders and run a programme of lifestyle challenges to encourage colleagues to improve their work/life balance."

Soon after the defibrillator at Taylor&Emmet's Arundel Gate headquarters in Sheffield was ordered, paramedics had to be called to assist a member of staff who fell ill at work. Stacey added: "Thankfully, we didn't have to use the defibrillator on this occasion, but it brought home the importance of having it on site. Our colleague gave us a scare, but they are now well on the road to recovery."



Taylor&Emmet's facilities manager, Lee Stacey, with one of the defibrillators that have been installed at its offices



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## Paul Berwin takes on marathon

Berwins founder and managing director Paul Berwin completed the London Marathon 2021 this month, 40 years after first competing in the race.

Berwin is seeking to hit a £5,000 fundraising target. At the time of writing, he had raised more than £4,200. Visit his fundraising page to donate: <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/PaulBerwin1/1>.

A keen runner, Berwin was among the 7,000 competitors who lined up to compete in the race's inaugural run on a rainy morning back in March 1981. Since then, he has completed five other marathons along with scores of other events both independently and as an active member of the Harrogate Harriers.

This year, he took part to support two charities with deep roots in the region: Henshaws and the Leeds Jewish Welfare Board (LJWB).

Reflecting on the race, Berwin said that the marathon isn't just an opportunity to compete with likeminded athletes: "One

of the real drivers for me is the fundraising element. Both Henshaws and LJWB are very much community charities, whose incomes have taken a real hit in the last year or so, but the call for whose services has by no means diminished. The knowledge that, thanks to the generosity of so many, my participation will be benefitting such worthy causes will certainly spur me on."

**Paul Berwin running the London Marathon in 1981**



## Wake Smith team conquer Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge

Adventurous employees from Sheffield's Wake Smith Solicitors completed the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge in less than 12 hours to raise more than £1,800 for a city charity.

Kate Lax, Scott Haslam, Dan Haigh, Paul Gibbon, Neil Salter, Duncan Shepherd, Holly Navarro, Dylan Friend and Jessica Rowbotham successfully finished the 24-mile challenge, climbing more than 1,585 metres.

The walk through the stunning Yorkshire scenery of the Dales National Park to include Pen-y-ghent, Ingleborough and Wharfedale, was part of the firm's annual fundraising campaign for St Luke's Hospice.

Lax, director at Wake Smith and charitable board member, said: "It was an incredibly tough challenge but we managed to

complete all three peaks in under 12 hours."

"By far, the hardest physical challenge I certainly have ever faced, but we had a good team who supported one another through to the end. We are all certainly feeling it today!"

"This was an amazing effort from our team and we have managed to raise an impressive £1,800 which is a phenomenal amount, so well done to everyone."

St Luke's cares for people throughout Sheffield with terminal illnesses. They help to control patients' symptoms, alleviate pain, and give them the best possible quality of life, all without charge.

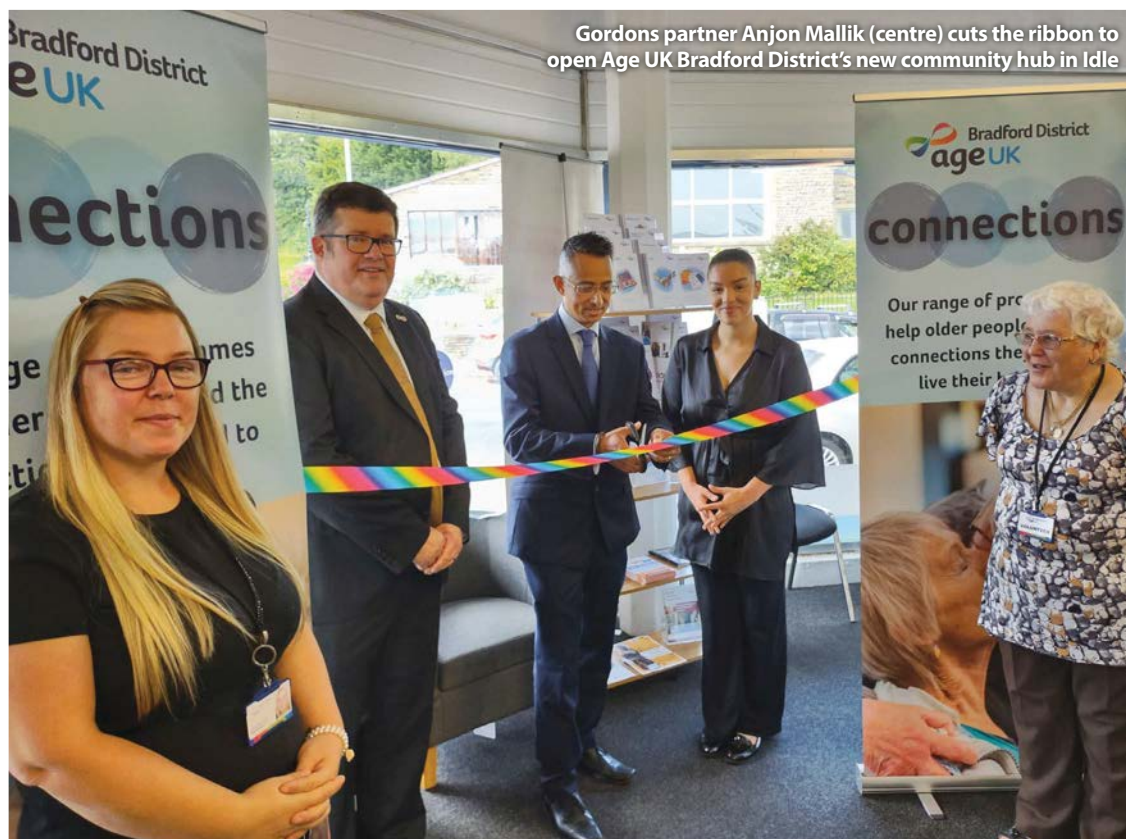
To make a donation, visit the JustGiving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/kate-lax6>.



**Wake Smith's team completes the Three Peaks challenge**



## Gordons supports launch of new Bradford community hub with £15K of fundraising



Gordons partner Anjon Mallik (centre) cuts the ribbon to open Age UK Bradford District's new community hub in Idle

Local charity Age UK Bradford District has opened a new community hub in Idle with the support of staff at Yorkshire law firm Gordons, who have raised £15,000.

Idle is the first of six new hubs to open in the Bradford area over the course of the summer. Others are due to be launched soon in Allerton, Wrose, Queensbury, Shipley and Keighley.

The facilities offer a range of functions, including information, help and support, advice, activities and shopping, with a focus on needs identified by older people across the district.

They have been made possible thanks to support from local people and donations from local businesses, including Gordons, which has been raising funds for Age UK Bradford District as its official charity partner since 2020.

Gordons colleagues generated the funds last year through initiatives such as Age UK's Abbey Dash, a 10k race from Leeds city centre to Kirkstall Abbey and back, cycling events, a quiz, and auctions.

When Covid-19 struck, staff from the firm raised £1,500 in donations within the first week of lockdown and a further £1,000 by sponsoring each other to complete tasks as part of the nationwide 2.6 Challenge to support charities during the pandemic.

In addition, the firm also donated 70 Christmas hampers and staff wrote letters to people who Age UK Bradford District were supporting.

Mark Rounding, chief executive for Age UK Bradford District, said: "These hubs are a huge step forward for Age UK Bradford District and they will change the lives of people who use them. The developments simply would not have been possible without the generous support of everyone at Gordons and our other corporate partners."

"Covid-19 has brought new challenges for charities but to be able to open these new facilities at this time is a testament to our supporters. The team at Gordons have been brilliant in continuing to raise funds through the pandemic"

Age UK Bradford District has been helping older people for more than 25 years. It has 30 dedicated staff and more than 300 volunteers helping deliver services to the whole of the Bradford metropolitan district, including Bingley, Keighley, Ilkley and Shipley, as well as surrounding villages and rural areas.

Gordons partner Anjon Mallik added: "We are incredibly proud to have played a part in enabling Age UK Bradford District to open its new community hub in Idle."

"Our fundraising initiatives are always great fun and they have helped to bring our people and their families together over the last 15 months. However, it is also very rewarding to be able to make such a difference to an excellent charity like Age UK"

"Over the past ten years we have raised more than £175,000 for chosen charities operating within Yorkshire and we will continue to give our people the platform to raise funds for good causes."

# Moving on up

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



**McCormicks Solicitors** of Harrogate has appointed a new trainee, Lucy Harbron.

Harbron graduated from Newcastle University with a degree in history. She completed the graduate diploma in law and legal practice course at the University of Law in Leeds in June before joining McCormicks.

She is assisting the head of family, Stephen Hopwood, in acting for a broad range of clients, dealing primarily with finance and children.

She also assists the criminal and private client departments with all aspects of their work as part of her training, but her long-term aim is to be a family lawyer.

Harbron, who grew up in Hertfordshire, is a keen netball player and is vice-captain of the Harrogate Challengers, which plays across the district.

McCormicks managing partner Stephen Hopwood said: "Lucy is already proving a great asset to the team and I look forward to seeing her progress."

Commercial law firm **Square One Law** has welcomed new partner Dawn Carlisle to its Leeds office.

She is a highly experienced property lawyer with more than 25 years of experience gained at well-respected national commercial firms in Leeds. She has also worked in-house.

Square One Law is celebrating its 10th anniversary and has grown from a single office in Newcastle in 2011 to now also having a presence in Leeds and Darlington, so is well placed for clients across the northern region.

It acts for a range of clients, including Turntide Transport, Able UK, Atom Bank, Shepherd Offshore, Marico, Glentool and Rushbond, and has been involved in high-profile deals and projects.

Leeds office partner Matthew Thompson said: "We are delighted to welcome Dawn to the ever-expanding Leeds

team. She is very well connected, both in the Yorkshire region and further afield, and works for a range of developers who operate in a variety of sectors, including residential, student-accommodation, retail, industrial, hotel and leisure."

"Dawn is an excellent fit for Square One Law, as she is a lawyer of exceptional calibre, a fantastic team player and extremely motivated by doing a first-class job for her clients."

Carlisle said: "I'm really happy to have joined the Square One Law team. When I realised the ethos of the team here—its heart being led by the importance of close working relationships with clients and colleagues alike, its agility and, also, its energy and commitment to inspire, develop and progress colleagues in all areas of the business I knew it was the right place for me."

Partner Kate Johnson, who joined the firm earlier this year, added: "I was attracted to Square One Law because of its unequivocal commitment to client service and the way it places clients at the heart of everything it does. Everyone is committed to the one firm, one culture approach which creates an energising and motivating environment in which to work."

"It is clear that Square One Law is a firm which is going places, so I am excited about continuing to build the Leeds office with Matt, and now Dawn, from the strong platform which has been created over the last 18 months."



Leeds-based commercial law firm **Tyr Law** has recruited partner Ashley Jaques.

Jaques has 17 years of experience in business restructuring and insolvency, and joins from DWF to lead the restructuring team at Tyr.

The law firm's new partner specialises in property-based insolvencies and receiverships, together with director advisory and

transactional matters.

In addition, Jaques has significant experience acting on behalf of insolvency practitioners, financial institutions, companies, directors, property agents and turnaround professionals from across the country on all aspects of corporate recovery and restructuring work.

Jaques is the 10th partner at Tyr, which has gone through a sustained period of growth over recent years.

Managing partner Dean Jowett said: "Ashley is a fantastic recruit. His arrival brings the final key specialism to our full service offering. Ashley has a wealth of experience in the sector and a great reputation in the market."

"We have consistently recruited lawyers of the highest calibre, and this has paid dividends, both in terms of the exceptional service we can offer across specialisms to our clients and also our ability to attract top quality work and clients locally, nationally and internationally."



Jaques added: "This is a fantastic opportunity for me to build a restructuring practice in a firm that is already so highly regarded in the market. I am looking forward to meeting the firm's existing clients and working with my contacts to build and develop relationships to help the firm to continue its phenomenal growth."



Licensing, regulatory and litigation law firm **Woods Whur** has appointed Chris Rees-Gay as a partner.

Rees-Gay re-joins the Leeds-headquartered firm from Pinsent Masons. He was originally an assistant solicitor at Woods Whur.

He returns to Woods Whur as a partner specialising in alcohol, entertainment and gambling.

His practice deals with all aspects of licensing, both contentious and non-contentious. He has experience of submitting all forms of licensing applications, appearing at licensing sub-committees and appeal hearings in Magistrates' Courts.

In gambling, for example, Rees-Gay's focus in recent years has been acting for operators (both remote and non-remote) on high-profile Gambling Commission operating licence reviews. In most cases, he has managed to secure a 'regulatory settlement' for the operator, ensuring that they were able to continue trading.

He has also assisted William Hill Online on a significant world-wide jurisdiction project, as part of its application for a Nevada gaming licence. In addition, he has advised a US operator on a Europe-wide multi-jurisdiction project, determining whether the product offered would be deemed a lottery.

Elsewhere, Rees-Gay has acted in all types of Licensing Act 2003 premises licences, and has undertaken contested hearings for one of the largest supermarket retailers in the country, against police, environmental health and residential opposition, and has a proven track record.

As well as acting for large national companies, he also represents a number of independent operators based in Leeds.

The **Switalskis** group has appointed Tim Halstead to director and chair of the management board at the growing Yorkshire law firm.

Halstead joined Switalskis as chief operating officer in September 2020 to work alongside managing director John Durkan, across the group's 12 offices and support the firm's expansion plans.

In his role as chair, he will lead the seven-strong management board as it continues to pursue a growth strategy that has seen



the group acquire medical negligence specialists Pryors Solicitors and Doncaster firm Atherton Godfrey in the last 12 months. The firm also welcomed the former Keebles Sheffield family and child care law team in June, and expects to make similar announcements in the year ahead.

Halstead spent 26 years as managing partner at Shulmans, helping to grow the firm to an £18 million turnover business, before moving to Switalskis. He said: "It was the Switalskis culture and approach that attracted me to the firm, which puts people and clients ahead of everything else. It has given me a strong platform on which to build and help to put structures in place to accommodate the rapid growth we have seen over the last year."

"Looking ahead, my role will involve embedding the new firms and teams into the business, supporting those teams to do their jobs well, and leading the attraction of more talented individuals into the company. There are lawyers out there looking for law firms that take their work seriously and take the welfare of their people just as seriously. That's what I've found to be the case at Switalskis, and that culture is helping us build a very strong team. We've got some great work, and we're looking for more people to help us do it."

Durkan added: "Tim has added immense value to the business over the last 12 months. His knowledge and industry experience will continue to support our strategic direction and help us capitalise on future opportunities as he takes on the role of director and chair of our management board, which I have no doubt will continue to thrive under his leadership."

Yorkshire law firm **Morrish Solicitors** has made and plans new appointments to several of its teams, including Mark Laird as head of property.

Laird has many years of experience working in property law. He qualified as a Chartered Legal Executive in 2007 and since then has specialised in all aspects of residential conveyancing.

David Sorensen, managing partner at Morrish, commented: "We are very excited for Mark to be our new head of property. Our property team have worked very hard during the entire pandemic and Mark joins us as we start to move out of the lockdowns and with his experience, skills and dynamism will help us to continue to grow."

Roisin Hulme will also be joining Morrish as a medical negligence solicitor. Her appointment reflects the ongoing growth in this team.





Until 2017, Hulme worked on personal injury claims, initially representing victims of occupational stress and road traffic accidents. Since then, she has specialised in medical negligence law, and is experienced in handling a variety of claims, including delayed diagnosis, surgical errors, accident and emergency, and dental.

On top of these appointments, trainee solicitors Hanan Hewitson and Carrie King are set to qualify as solicitors in early September.

Hewitson will join the firm's employment rights team and King will join the personal injury and dispute resolution teams. Both will also act as mentors as part of Morrish's new mentoring scheme.

Hewitson commented: "I have worked towards qualifying as a solicitor for the last 10 years, so I am very excited the day has finally come. I am looking forward to starting this new chapter in my career and remaining at the firm that has

done so much for me."

King added: "Having worked for Morrish for seven years, I was thrilled when asked to start as a NQ solicitor come September. I have thoroughly enjoyed my two years of training and I look forward to the next chapter."

In addition, Morrish is launching a new apprenticeship scheme in 2022. The firm will seek to take on one university graduate and one A-level student, offering a work-based pathway to the profession for ambitious and highly competent learners.

This year, Lawrence Ofori and Erin Garnham will begin their training contracts with the firm next month, bringing the firm's total number of trainee solicitors to five. Both started their careers at Morrish in 2020, supporting the medical negligence and employment teams, respectively, as legal assistants.

Garnham said: "I am overjoyed to be offered the opportunity to begin my legal career at a fantastic firm. I am looking forward to what the future holds for me as a trainee solicitor."

Ofori added: "I am delighted to have attained a training contract at Morrish. It's been a culmination of years of hard work and determination but an invaluable experience. I cannot wait to get started within the new role and contribute towards the future success of the firm."

Two new legal assistants, Matthew Logue and Lucy Wilson, will also be joining the personal injury team at Morrish in September.

Logue will assist solicitors Martin Bare, Dominic Hughes and Tanya Kilmartin with their growing caseloads, while Wilson will work alongside partner John Morrison.

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York-based law firm **Guest Walker** has made a number of key senior appointments to strengthen its life planning and property management departments.

Rowena Rogers, head of life planning, has been appointed a director and joins the senior management team, which includes John Walker, Helen Burrows, Deborah Barton and commercial property solicitor Alison Munro, who became a director last year.

In charge of life planning since 2019, Rogers advises clients on all aspects of personal asset management and associated property matters, including wills and probate, powers of attorney, deputyship, trusts, and tax and estate planning.

The life planning department has also doubled in size with the appointment of new senior solicitors Hudda Morgan and Nick Clarke.

Morgan is a senior solicitor with more than 25 years of experience and has an established reputation as a specialist in this field, particularly in complex probates and estate administration.

Clarke joined the life planning department in April 2021. Clarke has more than 25 years of experience and advises clients on powers of attorney and wills and probate, as well as on personal asset management such as gifts, trusts and estate planning.

With demand for residential conveyancing soaring during the Covid-19 pandemic, Guest Walker has appointed Amanda Alden as a conveyancing executive. Alden joins long-term department members Rachel Butterfield and Vicky Middleton.

Alden worked for Bromets Jackson Heath in Tadcaster for more than 20 years. At Guest Walker, the new conveyancing executive will work on traditional residential conveyancing such as house, apartment, and flat sales, purchases, re-mortgages, transfers of equity, equity release, and purchasing new builds, as well as providing advice on investing in buy-to-let property.

John Walker, director at Guest Walker, said: "Whilst the past 18



months have had many challenges, we are proud of the firm's resilience and, as the demand for our services has continued to grow at pace, we are delighted to have been able to make some exceptional appointments. As the firm continues to expand, we are steadfast in our commitment to continuing to offer our clients a truly personal service that has been our ethos from the very beginning."

"The expansion of our specialist life planning team means we are able to offer more of our clients a holistic approach to all of their property, business and personal matters making their lives easier and taking away the complications of otherwise having to work with multiple firms."



**LCF Residential**, the conveyancing division of law firm LCF Law, has appointed well-known licensed conveyancer Tracey Lynam to head up conveyancing services in its Ilkley office.

LCF Residential works with home buyers and sellers, as well as estate agents and nearly every UK mortgage lender. Its 30-strong

team are based across LCF Law's offices in Leeds, Bradford, Harrogate and Ilkley.

Lynam previously worked at LCF Law between 2001 and 2004 and since then has worked for several other leading residential conveyancing firms in Yorkshire.

Commenting on her return to the firm, Lynam, who lives just outside Ilkley and has family in the town, said: "When the

opportunity arose to make the move back to LCF Law's Ilkley office, it was a perfect fit for me. I live locally and after working at several city centre firms, I really missed the face-to-face client contact and personal interaction that you get working at a local office for local clients."

"It's great to be back and I'm really enjoying the role and the challenges it presents in the current market, which is extremely active as the stamp duty holiday comes to an end and returns to previous stamp duty rates at the end of September."

Julie Davis, head of residential property at LCF Residential, said: "LCF Residential has been particularly busy over the last few months, following the extension of the stamp duty holiday, and demand continues to grow for our services. Tracey has plenty of experience and a fantastic reputation in the industry, which made her an obvious choice to lead our team in Ilkley."



Specialist chancery and commercial barrister Annette Thomson has joined **Parklane Plowden Chambers**.

Thomson joins the Leeds and Newcastle-based chambers after being called to the Bar in December 2020. She practises across all aspects of chancery and commercial law, with particular expertise in dispute resolution,

contentious probate, and property and commercial litigation.

Prior to being called to the English Bar, Thomson practised as a member of the Bar in her native South Africa between 2010 and 2017. She has also worked as an advocate and solicitor, specialising in commercial law.

Parklane Plowden's chancery and commercial practice director, Stephen Render, said: "Being able to welcome Annette to chambers is great news and further enhances the specialist chancery and commercial law expertise we are able to offer clients across the North Eastern Circuit and beyond."

"Annette has a broad range of experience having previously practised as a barrister in South Africa and a solicitor and advocate in the UK. This experience makes her ideally suited to representing clients across a variety of chancery and commercial law cases."

Formed in 2007 following the merger of Parklane Chambers in Leeds and Plowden Chambers in Newcastle, Parklane Plowden is home to 110 members.

Parklane Plowden recently announced six-figure refurbishment plans for its chambers on Westgate in Leeds city centre and has temporarily located to Avenue HQ. In addition to its Leeds chambers, the set also has chambers on Lombard Street in Newcastle city centre.

Commenting on joining the chambers, Thomson said: "Parklane Plowden enjoys a great reputation for the strength of its chancery and commercial law practice and I'm really pleased to become a member of the chambers."

"I'm looking forward to working closely with the set's excellent clerking team to further expand my practice and enhance the chambers' chancery and commercial offering."

In addition to chancery and commercial, Parklane Plowden specialises across another six key practice areas. These include personal injury, clinical negligence, family, Court of Protection, insurance, and litigation costs and funding.



# The region's best lawyers and firms celebrate at the Yorkshire Legal Awards 2021

**Hägen Wolf, BW Legal** and **Mills & Reeve** were named the Law Firms of the Year on 7 October

This year's Yorkshire Legal Awards returned to an in-person ceremony at New Dock Hall in Leeds, with hundreds of guests in attendance to celebrate the successes and achievements of the local and regional profession.

The 2021 Small, Medium and Large Law Firms of the Year are Hägen Wolf, BW Legal and Mills & Reeve, respectively.

Addleshaw Goddard and Thrive Law were the biggest winners—picking up three awards and two, respectively—to cap off a Yorkshire Legal Awards 2021 ceremony in which 23 categories were closely fought. Of the awards for practitioners, Neil Hudgell, managing partner of Hudgell Solicitors, is the 2021 Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year.

Reflecting on the judging process and the quality on display, Natalie Cosgrove, president of the Yorkshire Union of Law Societies, a healthcare lawyer at Switalskis Solicitors and chair of the independent judging panel for 2021, said: "Whilst nominees clearly want to win awards, we are lawyers after all, it is built into our very being. I would just suggest that this is more. So much more."

"I have read every single entry, as have all the judges and those entries were vast. We have all at times felt overwhelmed, in awe, and so incredibly proud of what we have to offer here in Yorkshire."

Read more about the winners on the following two pages.



# All the winners and what the judges had to say



**Chambers of the Year**  
(sponsored by Porche Centre Leeds)

**Parklane Plowden Chambers**

"The 2021 Chambers of the Year is a dynamic set doing excellent work across a good range of practice areas. It is also taking its corporate social responsibility activity seriously, doing a lot of charity work and providing significant pro bono support."



**Commercial Property Award**  
(sponsored by InfoTrack)

**Addleshaw Goddard**

"The winner of this award is completing highly impressive commercial property deals for important clients in the North, as well as investing in technology to save on costs and improve processes. It is also carrying out excellent diversity initiatives, including some that involve clients."



**Corporate & Commercial Award**  
**Gordons**

"This winner is an example of Yorkshire's finest, with excellent work being carried out on some impressive transactions for its client base in the region. The winner of the 2021 Corporate & Commercial Award also has a good pro bono offering."



**Criminal Law Award**  
**Howard and Byrne**

"The winner of 2021 Criminal Law Award is a local firm with international reach. It provides a consistently good service and invests in quality training to keep its staff at the forefront of this vital practice area."



**Debt Recovery Award**  
(sponsored by High Court Enforcement Group)

**Lupton Fawcett**

"The winner of this award is developing a focused and effective debt recovery offering that is delivering results for clients, via a flexible and innovative approach, while engaging with external organisations to assist those that cannot afford to take legal advice."



**Diversity & Inclusion Award**  
**Addleshaw Goddard**

"This firm is working extremely hard on diversity and inclusion and deserves the recognition of this award. Its focus is broad and impactful, particularly in recruitment, where it is really impressive. An example for others to follow."



**Employment Law Award**  
(sponsored by St Phillips Chambers)

**Thrive Law**

"The winner of 2021 Employment Law Award is highly forward-thinking for a niche firm and is consistently putting its ethos for mental health into practice. It is more than a law firm and contributes to the culture of the legal profession. The judges are amazed by how much this firm has achieved."



**Family Law Award**  
(sponsored by Spire Barristers)

**Stowe Family Law (Yorkshire Team)**

"The winning family law team are solid and pragmatic in a sometimes confrontational area of law. They have a well-earned reputation for being steady hands and a pleasure to work with."



**In-House Award**  
(sponsored by DLA Piper)  
**British Business Bank**

"The winner of the In-House Award is doing an incredibly important job and is an admirable contributor to the Yorkshire economy. In particular, its legal team carried out quality work to support the roll-out of vital programmes at pace and scale during the pandemic."



**Intellectual Property Award**  
**Appleyard Lees**

"This firm is very good at what it does and goes the extra mile to look after clients. Its IP work is of the highest quality, as is its contribution to the local community, particularly through its growth fund for startups seeking IP protection."



**Law Firm of the Year: Large**  
**Mills & Reeve**

"The 2021 Law Firm of the Year: Large is impressive in many respects, including its work in a range of practice areas, receiving high plaudits for its role as an employer and improving the client experience, among many others. For a national firm, it is also very active in Leeds."





**Law Firm of the Year: Medium**  
**BW Legal**

"This firm is victorious in a highly competitive category with many candidates. The winner stands out for its impressive growth and level of recognition, both of which were achieved in a short space of time. It is also producing impressive results in several areas."



**Law Firm of the Year: Small**  
**Hägen Wolf**

"The winner of Law Firm of the Year: Small is an impressive firm that continues to attract big clients, and it managed to grow during the pandemic year. Its approach to measuring success is particularly innovative, and it is big believer in investing in its people to keep pushing the firm forward."



**Litigation & Dispute Resolution Award**  
**Switalskis Solicitors**

"Litigation and dispute resolution work of the kind this firm is being recognised for is highly demanding and difficult. Its child abuse compensation team are doing a fantastic job, with their work attracting national attention. They are very worthy winners."



**Managing Partner of the Year**

**Andrew Meehan, Harrogate Family Law**

"The 2021 Managing Partner of the Year is clearly a top-ranking lawyer, but who has also built a superb law firm from scratch that nurtures its employees and brings the best out of them, while taking treating clients with the utmost care. The winner is also deeply involved in the wider profession and local community."



**Niche Law Firm of the Year**

**Thrive Law**

"This law firm is fairly new, but it is doing extremely well in a competitive area of law. Its growing team champion good wellbeing and go above and beyond their roles as lawyers."



**Partner of the Year**

**Ben Townsend, Stewarts Law**

"The winner of this award wowed the judges as a superb professional who develops junior colleagues and is consistently supportive. This Partner of the Year creates a progressive atmosphere for others to thrive in—a very worthy winner."



**Private Client Award**

**Bell & Buxton Solicitors**

"The winning team of the 2021 Private Client Award is well-led, deeply integrated with the local community and highly client-focused. An example for others to follow."



**Regulatory & Compliance Award**

**Eversheds Sutherland International (Environment, Health and Safety Team)**

"The winning team does a lot of high-profile work in Leeds that you wouldn't necessarily expect to be carried out in the city. They are a clear winner that also do a lot of impressive charity work."



**Residential Property Award**

**(sponsored by Future Climate Info, with a colleague of the winner accepting the award)**

**Lindsey Frith, Ramsdens Solicitors**

"This lawyer is the stand-out winner of this award for pushing their team forward during the pandemic and a particularly difficult year. The winner demonstrated a level of hard work that impressed the judges."



**Rising Star of the Year**

**(sponsored by Park Square Barristers)**

**Haleema Ishaq, Addleshaw Goddard**

"The winner of Rising Star of the Year for 2021 has risen through the ranks of the firm thanks to a superb attitude and lots of talent. The winner impressed the judges for never giving up and is very much a role model for other potential legal stars in Yorkshire."



**Trainee Solicitor of the Year**

**(sponsored by The Apprenticeship Guide)**

**Ellie Hirst, Chadwick Lawrence**

"This trainee has achieved so much in a short space of time, demonstrating an aptitude beyond their years. The judges were impressed with this trainee for taking on so much and believe they are a promising sign for the future of the profession."



**Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year**

**Neil Hudgell, Hudgell Solicitors**

"The 2021 Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year award goes to a lawyer for their pro bono representation of clients in a huge case that attracted national headlines. Their work was vital, superb and incredibly impressive. They are also well thought of by their peers."

# Practice area risks arising from Covid-19

**Suzanne Wharton**, partner and head of professional and commercial risk in the **North at DAC Beachcroft**, on the current challenges in litigation, conveyancing and more

Changes to working practices brought about by the pandemic will inevitably have given rise to increased exposures for law firms, which will manifest themselves by way of claims over the next few years. The obvious risks relate to the difficulties that remote working represents for supervisors and an increased risk of cyber and data breaches, with some practice areas being particularly affected.

**Litigation:** Many litigators will now be used to remote hearings and mediations, but care should be taken to ensure clients are comfortable with and prepared for the logistics of remote attendance. Limitation and procedural deadlines must still be met, and additional time should be factored in as clients may have difficulties responding quickly, for example, during a lockdown. Claims arising from missed deadlines will increase and a return to office working will likely reveal these issues as fee earners start to interact and supervisors review files. There may also be claims arising from settlement advice, where clients allege that a change in their circumstances means that advice pre-dating the pandemic may no longer be appropriate.

**Conveyancing:** In a survey by DAC Beachcroft, 50% of law firms considered that conveyancing and real estate would be most impacted by Covid. Stamp duty land tax incentives meant conveyancers were very busy. Home working (potentially without access to the same support as would be available in the office) and juggling fee-earning with caring responsibilities puts additional pressure on practitioners, leading in some circumstances, to mistakes. This scenario also applies to multiple dwelling relief claims which continue to cause frustrations. There is also an increased risk of lender claims if potential fraud indicators are missed due to these pressures, or not being able to meet clients in person. Conveyancing solicitors have also had to adapt quickly to changes in rules relating to house moves. A failure to adapt to those changes could give rise to a claim.

**Landlord and tenant:** Where commercial tenants have been adversely affected by the pandemic and lockdown, and are unable to pay rent, landlords may be anxious to secure possession promptly. We anticipate claims arising from notices not being served correctly, and clients alleging that they were not kept up-to-date with the Coronavirus Act restrictions protecting tenants from forfeiture.

**Wills and probate:** Given the risk to health, particularly for those deemed vulnerable, solicitors may have found themselves under pressure to produce wills more quickly. To minimise the risk of claims, firms must have procedures in place to be able to action urgent instructions, in order to reduce the risk of claims from disappointed beneficiaries if a will is not executed in time. Practitioners should take additional care—particularly when dealing with clients via video conferencing software—to be satisfied that the testator is not under undue influence, and has the necessary capacity. The temporary measures permitting remote execution of wills may assist clients where conventional execution is impossible. However, claims may arise where solicitors are insufficiently familiar with the detailed guidance on remote execution.

**Family law:** While courts are still dealing with family law matters, delays have been exacerbated by Covid. To avoid complaints and potential claims, solicitors should ensure clients are kept up-to-date on delays, and alternative options are explored, such as mediation or negotiation if a speedier resolution is desirable. Advice on financial settlement may well need to be reviewed, especially if a client's financial circumstances have changed as a result of the pandemic.

In conclusion, the full impact of lockdown has yet to be felt. Our experience is that claims against professionals are notoriously 'long tail' and will likely be exacerbated, if commentators are correct in their predictions that we are facing another recession. For property lawyers, this will inevitably result in another round of claims by lenders as the property market falls, repossessions increase and lenders start to see losses as their security is devalued.





# Huddersfield & Dewsbury Incorporated Law Society

**James Staton**, president of **Huddersfield & Dewsbury Incorporated Law Society**, on how the society is faring and its upcoming plans

Like the rest of the country, the last 18 months has been an unusual time for local law societies such as Huddersfield & Dewsbury Incorporated Law Society. My predecessor as president, James Smith, kept the society going with monthly remote committee meetings. I was privileged to become president at the society's first virtual AGM. For most of 2021, we have continued with monthly virtual committee meetings, but the last two have been held face to face and it was good to meet up again with colleagues from across the district.

The society serves the Kirklees area centred upon Huddersfield and Dewsbury, both towns with an industrial heritage based on textiles. Although the textile industry has declined, there remains a strong industrial base focused on chemicals and engineering. The majority of firms that make up the society's membership are traditional high street practices, but there is a handful of specialist criminal and personal injury firms, as well as the offices of larger firms that are more regionally based across Yorkshire, such as Chadwick Lawrence, Ramsdens, Switalskis and my own firm, Schofield Sweeney. Clients in the area maintain a strong loyalty to lawyers who are based locally.

Although serving the lawyers of Huddersfield and Dewsbury, the society has an international perspective being the only local law society twinned with a national one, the Law Society of Uganda. For more than 20 years, the society's Uganda Twinning Committee has supported lawyers and the legal profession in Uganda, sending in November each year a delegation of four solicitors to provide training to Ugandan lawyers.

The Ugandan connection was the brainchild of Nigel Priestley, senior partner at Ridley & Hall. Nigel has long had an interest in Uganda and has been the driving force of the Twinning Committee. In the New Year's Honours List for 2021, his services to law were recognised by the award of an MBE. The pandemic prevented a team delivering any training in Uganda in 2020 and the society is currently considering how to continue the link with Uganda in the post-pandemic world.

The largest employer locally is the University of Huddersfield and the society

has strong links with it, not least because our hardworking secretary, Natalie Prowse, is a senior lecturer in law at the university. Many solicitors in the area are former students as are several of the committee, including our current vice president, Alistair James of Ramsdens. Society members have given masterclasses and lectures to students on several occasions, and local lawyers and students have joined forces to support the annual national legal quiz in support of the Access to Justice Foundation.

The committee of the society is not just open to solicitors, there are trainees on the committee and the chair of the conveyancing sub-committee, SallyAnn Masih, is a conveyancer in the residential team at my firm. We have recently been joined on the committee by two more young lawyers, Alannah Crux and Tasneem Patel. As a solicitor for almost 40 years, it is good to see enthusiastic young lawyers wanting to play their part in supporting the local profession.

The society is an active one. In a normal year, it hosts a range of training seminars as well as other events, but as with 2020, this year the committee has been hampered in organising activities because of the continuing restrictions caused by the pandemic. However, the society is due to hold its annual dinner on 22 October 2021 at the Manor House, Lindley, and the committee is making plans to resume its traditional activities, including the 'Round the Res' run/walk at Scammonden Reservoir, which raises funds for the president's chosen charity, the annual softball competition and curry evening/quiz, both of which have been fundraisers for the Uganda Twinning Committee, and the giant games evening. All of these events have been well supported by other local professionals such as accountants, surveyors and banks.

The society has good links with the local court, regularly holding events with district judges that have proved useful for lawyers who appear before them.

Fortunately, Huddersfield has retained its county court while many others, including that at Dewsbury, have been forced to close. One of the longstanding judges, District Judge Barraclough, retired this year, but District Judge Uppal, a former partner of Switalskis, has been appointed to sit at Huddersfield in his place.

I am pleased to say that Huddersfield & Dewsbury Incorporated Law Society remains strong and that its committee is looking forward to a year of renewed activity in 2022.





# The bald truth



**Patrick Walker** is an independent mediator:  
[www.imediate.co.uk](http://www.imediate.co.uk)

**Patrick Walker** has a haircut and tries to regret nothing

I sat in the hairdresser's chair confronting an uncomfortable truth. My hair is thinning rapidly and no amount of directional combing can disguise it. I peered at the stack of hair products on the shelves in front of me, and asked whether there was something I should purchase to slow this ageing process, or at least improve the appearance. With an uncharacteristic lack of entrepreneurship, Gio (I shall call him that because that's his name) replied, "to be honest Patrick you're b\*ggared—you just have to accept what you are given."

In a sense he was stating the bleeding obvious for there is no 'age defying' cream, no turning back the clock and no way that age enhances hair growth—except perhaps in the nostrils! But at the same time, his comment made me wonder whether my often feeble attempts to stay fit and healthy were simply pointless expressions of age denial.

Perhaps the answer is that we have to not only accept but look after what we are given, which means that my excesses of ice cream and cake must be offset by cycling, walking and vigorous turning of the compost heap. And after watching a double vaccinated friend admitted

to intensive care, I think it means continuing caution, particularly in crowded places. I write this in a full LNER carriage in which 90% of the passengers are ignoring the train company's request to wear face coverings. I am wearing mine and on a two-hour journey it is a nuisance. I really don't know where lies the right balance between caution and enjoying as normal a life as possible. The staff can't decide either, as exactly half are masked.

My plan is to be guided by the 'no regrets' test. Where risks exist (whether from Covid, being knocked off my bike or anything else), there must be sufficient joy, reward or excitement to have no regrets if it goes wrong. In the very short term, this means removing my mask to enjoy some coffee and a bacon roll, and, looking forward, I hope it means the revival of my 2020 plan to cycle across Spain.

Of course, such a trip will not preserve youth and I may end up questioning a stubborn refusal to consider electric assistance. But even making a plan is exciting and by the time I go my balding head will offer less wind resistance. And as I read somewhere recently, 'a man is not old until regrets take the place of dreams'!



# Joanne Coen, partner and head of the child care department at Ramsdens Solicitors



Working in a fast-paced and pivotal practice area, the future of hearings by remote access, and more

## ***How did you get into this area of law and ultimately become head of the department at Ramsdens?***

Following an opening at a very early stage of my career to practice general family law, I was aware of the specialised area of proceedings relating to children and the often complex and varied number of medical experts involved in that process. That motivated me to gain the panel status and recognition as a Children's Solicitor. As the work grew, I had the fortune of superb, eminent solicitors joining me and we quickly became a department recognised in its own right. I've always had a keen interest in maximising efficiencies, which is vital for the standard of work produced and the business.

## ***How is care evolving as an area of law and what is being demanded of you as a practitioner?***

The work we do is intense and at an incredibly fast pace. The court process rightly demands that work is undertaken quickly and this places significant demands on my team, working consistently long hours, producing documents overnight and, more recently, attending hearings by remote access. Most of us can now appreciate how draining it is conducting meetings and hearings on screen all day.

## ***Can you tell us about the two cases you're working on that recently featured in *The Times*?***

The type of cases we deal with are confidential and we must not reveal any of the detail except where the court gives permission. These cases had a particular issue that the Court of Appeal dealt

with, which was to look at when to hold fact-finding hearings and whether, on the individual facts of each case, it was "right and necessary" to conduct a fact-finding exercise.

Having any case considered by the Court of Appeal is momentous and having two separate cases conducted by Ramsdens heard on the same day is exceptional and speaks volumes about this care team. I am enormously proud of the work we do and the exceptional standard to which it is delivered.

## ***More generally, how is your practice area managing the pandemic and its impact? Are there changes brought about by the pandemic that you would like to see made permanent?***

Definitely. Nothing beats meeting someone in person, particularly a child, but the use of various visual platforms has had such a positive impact on quickly being able to see clients on screen and joining hearings without the delay of travel. The use of such technology is much more widely available and accepted now.

## ***Finally, what's it like living and working in Yorkshire, and how would you sell it to anyone interested in making the move?***

I make no apology for repeating what has been said so often—Yorkshire has the most beautiful and varied landscape that I will never tire of. From the coast, to the Moors and the cities, we have it all. But in particular, it's the people who make Yorkshire so special: their warmth, honesty and plain speaking!



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