

# Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer

The Official Journal of Leeds Law Society

 Leeds  
Law Society

December 2021  
Issue 173



## A special time of year

When we can relax, reflect and reach out,  
ahead of a healthy and prosperous 2022

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"Women's problems":  
How we can support  
female junior lawyers

### News

Andrew Jackson  
advises on further tug  
investment for SMS  
Towage

### Society

Join Leeds Law Society at  
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celebration of Leeds as a  
centre of legal excellence

### Last Word

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the Duathlon World  
Champion in her age  
group last month

### Comment

Patrick Walker  
contemplates the end of  
the world





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# A special time of year

On behalf of all the staff and directors at Leeds Law Society, we hope you have an enjoyable festive break and a happy new year



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

As winter draws in and the year draws to a close, I have been reflecting on my experiences as the president of Leeds Law Society and the opportunity the presidency has afforded me to meet with members and understand the work that is being undertaken across Yorkshire.

I was thrilled to be part of the judging panel for the Yorkshire Legal Awards. It was wonderful to see first-hand the sheer quality of the work undertaken by the lawyers of Leeds and Yorkshire. From important civil cases defending our most vulnerable individuals to huge corporate deals with international elements, Yorkshire truly is a centre of legal excellence (as we have all known for a long time).

It was particularly inspiring to see the work of individuals within firms and all they have done to enhance and improve the legal profession in Yorkshire. I encourage you all to take a few minutes, when you have the opportunity, to read about the winners of the awards and the extraordinary work that has been undertaken.

My thanks are extended to all the entrants for the incredible work they have done over the last year or so and the acclaim and recognition they have brought to Leeds and Yorkshire as a result. The legal community of Leeds and Yorkshire is demonstrably thriving and vibrant and having the opportunity to celebrate our lawyers and work has been a joy.

The lawyers of Leeds and Yorkshire have also continued to adapt to changing working practices through the pandemic and turmoil of 2021, continuing to offer exceptional service to clients and support to individuals and companies in need.

We have all also taken the time to reflect on our society and the improvements that need to be made. The tragic deaths of Geroge Floyd and Sarah Everard have given the legal profession across the county cause to consider how they can be part of positive changes in the profession and wider society.

Looking into 2022, you may have received our invitation to the Leeds Law Society Annual Dinner next year. Given the constantly

shifting landscape surrounding Covid, we are currently monitoring the guidance and recommendations of the experts. It is our hope that the dinner can go ahead as planned but our primary aim is to ensure that the event is held safely and if that is not possible, we will look at alternatives. If and when the dinner does occur, I look forward to seeing you and catching up properly.

In the meantime, we will continue to host events, continuing our focuses on both black letter law, soft skills and diversity and inclusion. We look forward to hosting a number of new events in 2022, with a focus on balancing a legal career with parenting and caring obligations, plus, with the support of our charity of the year, Ahead Partnership, exploring social mobility within the profession and how we can reach potential young lawyers across Leeds.

We also continue our work with the Law Society of England & Wales. As you may have seen, the Law Society of England & Wales is currently consulting on the changes and proposed closure of the Solicitors Indemnity Fund (SIF) by the Solicitors Regulation Authority. The closure of SIF will have repercussions across the profession, whether it is a firm looking to close or merge or former clients looking for a resolution of potential claims. Leeds Law Society and the Yorkshire Union intend to respond to the consultation and we welcome any comments or details of any experiences you have had with SIF that may assist with preparing the response and ensuring it is representative of our membership.

Autumn and winter are a time of many different celebrations; a special time of year for families and friends across Leeds and Yorkshire. Despite the looming shadow of Covid, we hope you have the opportunity to catch up and celebrate with your loved ones safely.

On behalf of all the staff and directors at Leeds Law Society, we hope you have an enjoyable festive break and a happy new year. Have a wonderful time.

# Join Leeds Law Society at the Queens Hotel for a celebration of Leeds as a centre of legal excellence



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Bring colleagues, clients and friends, and join us at Leeds Law Society's flagship black-tie event, hosted by the president of Leeds Law Society, Catherine Woodward. This will be a spectacular evening with music from the talented band, Scott and the Antarctic's.

A welcome drink will be available on arrival and each table will be provided with a 1/2 bottle of wine per person, followed by a scrumptious three-course meal.

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#### Table of 10

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## Yorkshire Legal News

# Keep up-to-date with all of the latest developments

Yorkshire Legal News is the only place you can read about all of the latest lateral moves, promotions, law firm launches, case wins, work within the community and fundraising for charity in the region.

Free-to-read and updated daily, Yorkshire Legal News is also the only place you can find out about the region's premier legal event, the Yorkshire Legal Awards.



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# “Women’s problems”: How we can support female junior lawyers

**Sinéad Frost** is an associate solicitor at Weightmans and the national representative for the Leeds Junior Lawyers Division



There were more women entering the profession than men in 2019/20, according to the Law Society of England and Wales. The average age of qualification was 29. It is therefore more important than ever to consider how the profession can best support young females beginning their careers.

There is an increased awareness of menopause and how we can support women in the law. However, women who open up about the menopause are often more likely to be in more senior positions or more well established in their careers, as the menopause usually affects women aged 45 to 55.

Junior female lawyers starting out in their careers are probably less likely to speak up when they are struggling with a menstrual condition. They want to keep their heads down and get on with things. There is a reluctance to share such personal information.

Unfortunately, I have heard of other junior lawyers experiencing a lack of support from employers, or ignorance from colleagues. By continuing to ignore “women’s problems”, we are missing out on developing female talent within the profession.

Many of my colleagues are aware that I have polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) and adenomyosis.

PCOS can cause hormonal imbalances and side effects

that include irregular periods, heavy bleeding, mood swings, infertility, excessive weight gain or difficulty losing weight, hair growth, and poor skin. It can lead to depression, anxiety and type 2 diabetes.

Adenomyosis is a condition described as similar to endometriosis. The main symptoms of this condition are debilitating pelvic pain and heavy bleeding. It occurs when the tissue that normally lines the womb grows into the muscle wall. While symptoms can be managed with hormonal treatments and pain relief, the ultimate ‘cure’ is a hysterectomy.

Endometriosis is a condition that can cause debilitating pain and heavy periods, together with fatigue and bowel problems. It is a condition where the tissue that normally lines the womb lining grows elsewhere.

As many as one in 10 women have these debilitating conditions and often have a long wait for a diagnosis. The average wait time for an endometriosis diagnosis is seven years.

Often women are not diagnosed until their early 20s, having struggled through school, university and embarking on their career while suffering from the debilitating symptoms outlined above.

When I started my training contract, my symptoms really started to affect me day to day. My pelvic pain was intense and some days were a struggle to get out of bed. However, I was keen to impress and would force myself into the office, painkillers and hot water bottle in hand, and ‘battle through’.

In the middle of summer, I’d use my hot water bottle as pain





relief and I'd shy away from people asking why I was cold when it was 25+ degrees outside. I didn't have the confidence back then to say I was in pain due to my condition.

Fast forward a year or so, my symptoms escalated and I was really struggling. I was 25 years old, recently qualified and completely miserable because of the symptoms I was experiencing. Weekends were spent on the sofa recovering from a week at work, or forcing myself to go out so I didn't let friends down. My husband was supportive but it was taking its toll on him, too.

I told my supervising partner about my condition and how it was affecting me. I was reluctant to 'come clean' at first. I couldn't have been more wrong. Everyone was very supportive.

On days when I was symptomatic, I worked from home (this was pre-pandemic). I took time out for appointments with my doctor to try and minimise my symptoms. I tried different medications. It was trial and error a lot of the time. However, overall, I was much more productive at work once I had told my employer and had support in place.

It is estimated that endometriosis costs the UK economy £8.2 billion per year due to healthcare, treatment costs, and sickness absence. Support mechanisms put in place by employers could reduce the amount of sickness absence and save money overall.

Shortly before I qualified, my husband and I decided to start a family. Both conditions made it more difficult. I was open with my supervising partner about this, which lifted a huge weight from my shoulders.

There was no need for me to lie about appointments and it meant I could plan work effectively to minimise any impact the appointments had on my workload or colleagues.

I remember struggling mentally as well as physically, having gone through years of pain without any formal diagnosis, and now seemingly unable to have children. I was placed on an NHS waiting list for surgical fertility investigations and treatment. The pandemic was in full swing and I knew there was no way I'd be seen quickly.

I was fortunate enough to have qualified by this point and have private health insurance. I had a minor operation in October 2020 and was formally diagnosed with adenomyosis, which gave me a reason for the pain. I had two weeks off work to recover, and noticed an improvement in my symptoms following the surgery.

The surgery also helped us fertility wise and we welcomed our little boy in September. So far, my symptoms have not returned but I am well prepared to deal with them when they inevitably do. The sleepless nights, on the other hand, are a bit of a killer!

Despite all the issues I have faced, I have worked hard. I was well supported when I applied for promotion at seven months pregnant, and I was successful. The hard work had paid off and I am looking forward to progressing in my career when I return from maternity leave.

Young lawyers with these conditions are not a lost cause. Once we are supported to manage our symptoms, we are able to be just as productive and successful as our counterparts, we just need to be given the support to succeed.

Ways in which employers can be supportive include:

- Training and raised awareness among staff regarding menstrual conditions and their effects on women in the workplace.
- Assuring staff that health issues will remain confidential, to encourage them to speak up.
- Allowing flexible working and remote working if the role can reasonably be fulfilled from home.
- Having a fertility policy that allows men and women time off for appointments. This is likely to promote more open discussion.
- Signing up to schemes such as Endometriosis UK's Friendly Employer scheme. This demonstrates commitment to employee wellbeing and eradicating stigma.
- Offering health insurance as an employee benefit, to minimise time off work while on the waiting list for treatment.

To anyone suffering at the moment:

- Keep a diary of your symptoms and bring this with you to see a doctor.
- Be open and honest with your employer. They cannot support you if they do not know what is wrong.
- Check if you have health insurance and if this will cover investigations or treatment.
- Remember you are not alone. These conditions are (sadly) quite common. Seek support from your peers or charities such as Endometriosis UK. Often, they can offer guidance on managing symptoms in addition to your doctor.
- Remember how far you have come so far and utilise that determination as you progress in your legal career!

## Andrew Jackson advises on further tug investment for SMS Towage

Andrew Jackson Solicitors has advised SMS Towage on the acquisition of the Lloydsman tugboat, as the marine firm continues its expansion into ports in Northeast England.

Rebecca Forder, a member of the firm's shipping and transport team, led the legal team advising SMS on its purchase from Latvian towage firm PKL Flote of the Lloydsman, sister ship to the already owned Pullman, both of which were built at the Sanmar Shipyard in Turkey.

Delivering engine power of 3,000kw, the purchase of Lloydsman takes SMS Towage's total fleet to 20, which covers the ports of Belfast, South Wales, Portsmouth, the Humber and the Northeast ports, from Blyth to the River Tees.

Paul Escreet, chairman of SMS Towage, commented: "Tugs play a vital role in helping vessels manoeuvre and berth safely at the ports and jetties at all UK ports. This further investment in our fleet means we can better serve our ever-growing customer base at these strategic ports, thereby strengthening the services we provide to our clients."

Commenting on the complexity of the acquisition, Escreet continued: "There were numerous hurdles to overcome with the purchase of Lloydsman. Ordinarily the vessel would need to enter dry dock to be surveyed before being accepted on the UK Flag. However, dry dock facilities were unavailable in Latvia, but following negotiations with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), it was agreed that the survey could



**Simon Clarke, director at SMS Towage, with Dominic Ward**

be undertaken when the tug arrived in the UK, which avoided time consuming and expensive delays."

"We continue to be delighted with the advice and help we receive from Andrew Jackson's shipping and transport team," he added.

Dominic Ward, senior partner and head of the shipping and transport team at Andrew Jackson, said: "Having worked with SMS Towage for over 20 years, we are particularly delighted to have been able to secure the vessel's smooth transition into the UK, as the company continues with their successful fleet expansion and growth into the North East of England."

## Parklane Plowden clinical negligence barrister succeeds in brain injury trial worth up to £20m



A specialist clinical negligence barrister from Leeds and Newcastle-based Parklane Plowden Chambers has won a trial in a claim that may be worth up to £20 million.

Howard Elgot (pictured) represented the claimant against Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust. The case centred on an allegation that an obstetrician failed

to give appropriate advice after being told that the mother was worried about reduced fetal movements. This led to the child being left with serious brain injuries.

According to Parklane Plowden, this is one of the year's biggest and most significant fully contested clinical negligence liability

trials. The full judgment can be read here: <https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/QB/2021/3228.pdf>.

The trial took place over three days in London's High Court before Justice Cotter. He was told by the defendant NHS trust's barrister during the handing down of the judgment that no offers of settlement had been made to the claimant by the trust at any time during the litigation process.

Commenting on the settlement, Howard said: "I am extremely happy for the client and his family. They have been involved in this litigation for many years and I pay credit to their patience and perseverance in the light of the stubborn refusal of the Trust to countenance settlement of the claim on any terms."

Howard is instructed by Chris Moore, joint head of the clinical negligence practice at London, Hull and Manchester-based Hudgell Solicitors.

## Walker Morris appointed to Avant Homes legal panel

Avant Homes has appointed Leeds-based Walker Morris to its formal legal panel to provide real estate and planning advice together with support across a range of associated practice areas and disciplines.

The successful appointment was the result of a thorough tender process, with Walker Morris being selected for its strong capabilities and experience in the housebuilder sector across a variety of disciplines and continues the long-standing relationship the firm enjoys as advisers to the new owners.

Avant Homes is a House Builders Federation five-star

rated housebuilder operating across the UK. With offices in Yorkshire, Northeast England, the Midlands and Scotland, it employs more than 700 people.

Steve Nixon, partner at Walker Morris, commented: "We are delighted to have been appointed to Avant's legal panel. The appointment is testament to our ability in delivering specialist advice to the housing sector."

"It provides a fantastic opportunity for the firm and recognises our national presence within the housing sector, where we already have long-standing client relationships with a number of leading housing providers."

## Womble Bond Dickinson helps Anaergia secure €100m of funding for energy from waste projects in Italy

Womble Bond Dickinson has advised Anaergia, a global leader in the production of clean energy, fertilizer, and recycled water from virtually any waste stream, on its €100 million junior loan note funding programme with Arjun Infrastructure Partners.

The funding from Arjun, an independent European infrastructure asset manager, will support Anaergia's development of between 10 and 12 new organic waste to renewable natural gas projects in Italy.

The Womble Bond Dickinson team advising Anaergia was led by Leeds-based partner and head of the law firm's UK banking and finance team, John Connor, and solicitor Jake Unsworth (pictured, left and right).

The firm provided key finance expertise and worked with Anaergia advisers in other jurisdictions, including law firms Ergon Legal and BonelliErede in Italy, NautaDutilh and Nysingh in the Netherlands, Noerr in Germany, and Lawson & Lundell in Canada.

Arjun was advised by Ashurst, led by partner Alex Biles.

Connor commented: "It has been a pleasure working with the Anaergia team, Arjun and Ashurst on this exciting transaction, which realises Anaergia's commitment

to creating new biogas facilities in Italy. The deal successfully completes as COP26, based in Glasgow and fittingly in partnership with Italy, comes to a close."

"As we embark on a decade of climate action, Womble Bond Dickinson and its lawyers are proud to be supporting the delivery of clean and innovative energy projects that will play an important role in reducing emissions and protecting the environment."

Thor Erickson, general counsel at Anaergia, added: "Italy continues to be a leader in adding new organics diversion facilities and this market presents many growth opportunities for Anaergia."

"We've grateful to the whole Womble Bond Dickinson team for their excellent legal advice and commitment to this cross-border project. John and Jake worked around the clock so we could complete the transaction on time."

Womble Bond Dickinson advises lenders and borrowers across a range of facility types and sectors. The law firm has been advising clients in the energy sector for decades, and the team has a great depth of experience of the issues facing energy and power generation businesses.



## Blacks Solicitors invests in specialist leasehold enfranchisement offering

Blacks Solicitors has set up a dedicated specialist leasehold enfranchisement team, further expanding its extensive property services.

The specialist offering was previously integrated within the residential property team, but the Leeds-based firm has decided to launch a standalone leasehold enfranchisement service due to a significant growth in demand brought about by the pandemic's impact on the market.

Blacks Solicitors's new team is made up of three members, led by solicitor partner Anushka Nicholas, and includes recent hire Shamaila Khan, who has recently been promoted to senior associate licensed conveyancer.

The team focuses on statutory and negotiated lease extensions, collective enfranchisement, right to manage claims,

licences for alterations, deeds of variations to leases, and 'right of first refusal' under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1987.

Additionally, the team works with landlords and managing agents to deliver bespoke leasehold management services, including assisting with legal requirements on the sale of leasehold properties, and advising on the interpretation and application of lease clauses.

Nicholas commented: "There is a need in the region and beyond for expert advice in this specialist area of law. At Blacks, we spotted this gap in the market, and were well positioned to further invest in this area of expertise."

"With so many requests for leasehold enfranchisement services, we wanted to create a bespoke team to consolidate our specialist service offering, and grow our national client base."



Shamaila Khan, Anushka Nicholas and Finley Lund, trainee paralegal

## Gordons advises AO on new distribution centre

Law firm Gordons has advised online home electricals retailer AO on its new warehouse in Crewe, Cheshire, which will add 305,360sqft of new distribution space to the company's logistics network.

Crewe 305 is the second warehouse constructed by logistics developer Panattoni at Crewe Commercial Park and the biggest consented in the area for more than a decade.

The deal marks the second distribution facility secured in Crewe by the Yorkshire-based law firm for AO following last June's occupation of a 110,000sqft warehouse in the town by the retailer.

Founded in 2000 and with its UK head office in Bolton, AO has been a Gordons client since 2018. The firm's commercial property partner, Sarah Ratcliffe, commercial property solicitor Sophie McFeely, and construction solicitor, Dawn Walker, advised on all elements of the transaction.

Crewe 305 is the largest commercial property build of the

year in the Northwest. AO Logistics has started to occupy the site at Crewe Commercial Park, building on its existing logistics hub with its three warehouses in the town.

It will house more than 200,000 appliances, with the increased stockholding capacity meaning that products will always be available when customers need them.

A spokesperson for AO Logistics said: "The rapid expansion of AO Logistics is really a testament to the hard work of our people and how much we've grown over the last 18 months. We can't wait to see how this investment benefits our operation."

Gordons, with offices in Leeds and Bradford and employing 170 people, is a specialist retail law firm. Its clients include B&M, Heron Foods, Iceland Foods, Morrisons, Ocado and Wren Kitchens.

Ratcliffe added: "Crewe 305 is in an excellent strategic location which will further enable AO to implement its

impressive growth strategy. We are very pleased to have helped AO secure this high-quality logistics space."

AO is continuing to invest heavily in its logistics network to support future growth. Over the last 18 months, the company has increased its warehousing capacity by more than 80% rapidly growing its distribution network and creating over 1,200 jobs across the business.



## Andrew Jackson advises nursery on property acquisition in York

Andrew Jackson Solicitors has advised the owners of Little Green Rascals, York's first organic and eco-friendly day nursery provider, on their acquisition of premises on Tadcaster Road, the former site of Welcome to Yorkshire, for an undisclosed sum.

The newly acquired 6,000sqft premises were previously leased by Little Green Rascals and are the company's largest setting. They are housed in a late Victorian town house that was designed by Fred Rowntree of the 'Scarborough Rowntrees' and is a fine example of turn-of-the-century domestic architecture.

Andrew Jackson provided legal advice on the property acquisition, led by commercial property associate Samuel Peake. The funding facility from Barclays was put together by relationship director Paul Craske.

Founded in 2009 by mother of three and entrepreneur Vanessa Warn and her husband, Ben, multi award-winning Little Green Rascals operates across seven nurseries, employing more than 200 staff, who cater for over 1,000 families in and around York.

Vanessa Warn commented: "This purchase cements our commitment to providing outstanding childcare in York, whilst ensuring our sustainability and provision for families in the area for the future. It also fits well with our growth strategy to own freeholds as we continue to grow the business."

"Andrew Jackson Solicitors were instrumental in getting the deal over the line; we were expertly supported by Samuel Peake who guided us every step of the way."

Peake added: "Andrew Jackson is delighted to have supported Vanessa and Ben on this purchase, as Little Green Rascals continues to go from strength to strength. The acquisition of the Tadcaster Road premises reflects their commitment to invest in the business and will help them to drive forward their vision for Little Green Rascals as a leading childcare provider with an ethical conscience."

Craske said: "Ben and Vanessa really impressed me with their growth plans, professionalism and knowledge of the sector together with their vision for the future of childcare. It's inspiring to support local businesses like Little Green Rascals and the opportunity to acquire this historic building was another important step in their growth strategy."



Paul Craske,  
Samuel Peake and  
Vanessa Warn



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## Switalskis expertise gains national recognition



The work of Yorkshire firm Switalskis Solicitors in supporting victims of historic abuse and parents affected by infant deaths has been recognised with two prestigious wins at the 2021 Personal Injury Awards.

The firm's child abuse compensation team was awarded Claimant Team of the Year and associate solicitor Natalie Cosgrove (pictured, middle) was named Clinical Negligence Lawyer of the Year at an awards ceremony in Leeds on 23 November.

The annual awards highlight and celebrate the achievements of people and organisations across the personal injury sector. In further recognition of Switalskis's strength of offering in this area, the firm's serious injury team was shortlisted in the Catastrophic Injury Team of the Year category.

The Switalskis child abuse compensation team has helped many claimants receive justice and compensation for past abuse, most notably under the Lambeth Redress Scheme, where they have helped survivors recover more than £15 million collectively since the scheme began.

The judges said: "Switalskis has a go-to team for child abuse cases. They are actively committed to making things better for their clients and continue to do exceptional work."

Cosgrove has worked tirelessly for parents affected by birth injuries and infant deaths for a number of years and this year has attracted the attention of mainstream national media, including Channel 4 News and The Independent, raising awareness of failings in maternity services in several NHS Trusts across the country and encouraging other parents affected to get the support they need.

Speaking about Cosgrove's accolade, judges in the highly competitive Clinical Negligence Lawyer of the Year category said that she is "excellent, an absolute star."

Switalskis managing director John Durkan commented: "I'm absolutely thrilled with the deserved recognition given to our teams at the Personal Injury Awards. This is not only testament to the hard work and dedication of these incredible people, but also a celebration of the work Switalskis carries out on a day-to-day basis across many of its practice areas helping the most vulnerable in society."

## Lupton Fawcett lawyer becomes associate member of disputes association

Lupton Fawcett lawyer Kelly Gilbert has become an associate member of the Association of Contentious Trusts and Probate Specialists (ACTAPS).

Gilbert (pictured), a senior solicitor, works in the dispute resolution team at Leeds-, Sheffield- and York-based Lupton Fawcett, advising clients involved in personal and commercial disputes.

She has completed a two-year course to become an associate member of ACTAPS, which provides a forum for lawyers who specialise in disputes regarding wills, trusts and probate.

Gilbert specialises in several areas of dispute resolution, including contentious probate, inheritance tax claims, and partnership and shareholder disputes.

She said: "I'm thrilled to have become an associate member of ACTAPS which will enable me to share experience and knowledge with other dispute resolution specialists, thereby providing up-to-date, high-quality advice to clients."



## Parklane Plowden unveils evolved brand



Leeds and Newcastle-based barristers' set Parklane Plowden Chambers has revealed an evolved brand identity and a new website to further implement its investment strategy for continued growth.

This latest news follows the set's announcement in July that it is undertaking a six-figure refurbishment of its 11,000sqft premises on Westgate in Leeds city centre, which is due to complete this year.

Parklane Plowden said these initiatives have been undertaken to both modernise the chambers and create a resilient platform for ongoing expansion.

The brand identity now features the acronym PLP, which is how the set is often referred to by its clients. In addition,

Parklane Plowden has a new brand positioning line of "making a positive difference".

This is derived from the chambers' vision statement, which is "to make a positive difference in everything we do through expert advice and advocacy, excellent client care and by being the place where talented people want to work".

Parklane Plowden's new website has been designed to provide an enhanced user experience and includes a knowledge and news hub called Positive Thinking, featuring insight from barristers across the set, as well as from third-party experts.

Speaking about the launch, head of chambers James Murphy (pictured) said: "We are really excited to announce our evolved brand identity and website as part of our ongoing ambitious growth and investment strategy."

"Across chambers, we felt now was the right time to reflect on our vision, mission and values and refresh our external and internal communications to truly represent them. They will also be brought to life by our refurbished premises which will provide an outstanding environment for our barristers and clients in which to work, meet and relax."

"At Parklane Plowden Chambers, we are committed to making a positive difference in everything we do. Whether it be by providing specialist legal expertise to our clients, supporting our barristers to grow their practices or through pro bono legal work and fundraising, making a positive difference is our guiding principle."

## Rollits solicitor becomes full member of STEP

York law firm Rollits has reinforced the confidence of clients in its will and probate team with all five specialist solicitors now appointed to the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP).

Emma Fawke (pictured), who qualified as a solicitor in 2011, has become a full member of STEP after successfully passing her exams and is now a qualified trusts and estates practitioner with Rollits, which has offices in Hull and York.

As a specialist in wills, estate planning, lasting powers of attorney and Court of Protection matters, in addition to probate and administration of estates, Fawke is also a member of Solicitors for the Elderly, which she achieved in 2019.

She said: "The whole private capital team of five lawyers across our two offices now have STEP membership, which is a kite mark for what we do. It indicates the knowledge and experience we all have in dealing with private client matters."

Commenting on Fawke's success, John Lane, head of the Rollits private capital department, said: "We are all extremely proud of Emma's achievement. She has worked very hard to complete her exams alongside her day-to-day work and in the midst of a pandemic and that hard work has paid off. We congratulate her on her STEP qualification."

The department's work includes raising awareness of the importance of having a will, and that process is supported every year by the Make a Will Fortnight.

Fawke said: "In addition to generating funds for our local hospice it's also about raising awareness of the importance of having a proper will, which is massive in terms of making sure a person's estate is handled in line with their wishes and



because it enables you to identify who has the responsibility for handling the estate immediately."

"It makes sense to get a properly drawn up will in the first place rather than have to pay substantial fees to rectify something afterwards."

# Moving on up

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



Ian Anderson has joined **Schofield Sweeney's** environmental and regulatory team in Leeds.

Anderson has extensive experience in regulatory matters, including complex fraud, money laundering, and HMRC/tax prosecutions, as well as shotgun and firearms licensing.

His expertise compliments and expands the firm's existing environmental and regulatory

offering. The team advises clients who are facing investigations, prosecutions, enforcements, and those dealing with environmental, waste and flooding issues.

Anderson's recent high-profile cases include the acquittal of a lead defendant in a fraudulent trading case, a not guilty verdict in a conspiracy to defraud trial, negotiating the withdrawal of all charges against a roofing company prosecuted by Trading Standards, and several successful Crown Court appeals in shotgun and firearms licensing matters.

He has also advised a national housebuilder on the Construction Design Management Regulations and has been admitted to the roll of solicitors in Northern Ireland to enable him to act in the largest tax fraud investigation ever prosecuted at Belfast Crown Court.

Commenting on his appointment, Anderson said: "This is an exciting step forward in my career, building on my experience in complex financial and regulatory cases. I am joining a team with a great reputation and impressive plans for the future. I hope to enable the firm to develop a broad regulatory offering, building on their market-leading environmental practice."

Schofield Sweeney's environmental and regulatory team is led by Craig Burman, dealing with both contentious and non-contentious issues, including environmental and regulatory compliance, incidents, accidents, health and safety and environmental enforcement, contaminated land, flooding and drainage, local authority matters, and land-related development.

Burman said: "I am delighted that Ian is joining us with his extensive and varied regulatory expertise. We share a joint vision for the future and I can't wait to put the exciting plans we have into action."



Huddersfield-based law firm **Ridley & Hall** is continuing to expand its commercial property team with the appointment of Ava Krajniewski as a solicitor.

After qualifying in 2019, Krajniewski has spent the last two years working in the property practice at Ramsdens Solicitors in Halifax.

She has experience in all areas of commercial property work, including sales and purchases, leases and lease renewals, and assignments. She has also undertaken residential property work.

Krajniewski joins the Ridley & Hall team following the appointment of Adam Ali as a solicitor in the commercial property practice in February 2020, working alongside partner David Amies, based at the Huddersfield office.

With the firm's acquisition of Barnsley-based Newman & Bond in September 2021, another two specialist lawyers focused on this area, Jill Leece and Adam Leece, joined Ridley & Hall, which has grown its commercial property practice from two solicitors in January to a team of five.

Amies, head of commercial property at Ridley & Hall, commented: "With her varied experience in commercial property, Ava will be a welcome addition to the team as we continue to see growing demand for our services."

He continued: "After an initial few weeks of slowdown when the pandemic first hit, we have been extremely busy with record levels of work over the last 18 months and we are continuing to expand our commercial property practice alongside this."

"The combination of Ridley & Hall's strong reputation, together with the addition of Newman & Bond in the autumn and a buoyant market, means that it is vital that we invest in growing our team to ensure we provide the high levels of service our clients expect."

Krajniewski said: "Ridley & Hall has established a strong reputation both locally and nationally and this is a great opportunity to be part of the firm's success story as it continues to expand. It not only has strong links with the local community, but is also known as a supportive employer which recognises and nurtures strengths within the team."

"The recent acquisition of Newman & Bond is a further



demonstration that Ridley & Hall is really going places, and it's a particularly exciting time to be part of the commercial property practice and drive further growth."



**Lupton Fawcett** has strengthened its corporate team with the appointment of two solicitors.

Rachel Faulconbridge and Danielle Gibbon both join the firm as newly qualified corporate solicitors, furthering the team's strength in depth while continuing to drive Lupton Fawcett's commitment to development and diversity.

Lupton Fawcett's reputation for providing excellent corporate legal advice and services is showcased in the latest legal rankings. The corporate team was promoted to Band 2 by Chambers UK 2022 and is led by Giles Clegg, who is also ranked in Chambers.

Clegg said: "I am delighted to welcome Rachel and Danielle to the corporate team. We have seen a significant increase in deal flow in the second half of the year. Rachel and Danielle join a team that is committed to outstanding client service and has a structured training programme that promotes development of all members of the team."

He added: "The new Chambers ranking moved us up a band, demonstrating our success and progression as a team. To be awarded the ranking whilst dealing with the impact of the pandemic is a real achievement. We have a very strong pipeline of work going into next year and remain committed to recruiting outstanding corporate lawyers at all levels into the team."

The Chambers UK 2022 guide ranks Lupton Fawcett in another three practices areas: employment, family and intellectual property. The firm is also included in The Times Best Law Firms 2022.

Experienced commercial property lawyer Vicky Banks has joined the 42-strong real estate practice at **Clarion** as a legal director.

With almost 20 years of experience in real estate law, Banks has spent most of her career working in the property practice of an international legal business, based at its London office.

Banks's expertise includes advising on investment, management, refinancing and development matters for investor landlords, pension funds, small commercial landlords, developers, and occupiers. This includes acting on disposals, acquisitions and management matters of investment portfolios and individual sites, and also advising occupiers on lettings.

Partner Martin Grange, who leads Clarion's real estate practice, commented: "Vicky has an in-depth understanding of property law, having worked for a leading firm in London for nearly 20 years before returning to Yorkshire. With our strong reputation



and a buoyant property market, we are seeing burgeoning demand for our services and she will be a welcome boost to the team as we continue to add clients to our portfolio."

Grange added: "Vicky brings further senior knowledge and support to the practice with her wide, deep experience in dealing with acquisition, development and lettings of redevelopment sites. We look forward to her adding her expertise to more complex matters as well as helping to develop less experienced lawyers."

Banks said: "Clarion has a fantastic reputation as a strong Yorkshire firm and I particularly like the fact it has a single office, with all specialisms together under one roof. The real estate practice has an amazing spread of work across a variety of clients. Having more than doubled its team over the last two years and with six partners, I am looking forward to being part of such a skilled and varied team."



An experienced solicitor specialising in corporate restructuring and insolvency has joined **Gordons** as its head of restructuring.

Jonathan Jackson, who was previously at law firm Addleshaw Goddard, has significant experience representing corporates, financial institutions, private equity firms and other stakeholders on all aspects of corporate restructuring and insolvency process.

At Gordons, Jackson will support clients with corporate restructuring, distressed property transactions and corporate insolvency issues, including administrations, receiverships and liquidations.

Commenting on his appointment, Jackson said: "Gordons has a strong reputation in the marketplace as a progressive and agile law firm. Importantly for me, Gordons is also renowned for its long-term relationships and excellent client service as much as it is for the commercially-focused results it delivers."

Jackson added: "Many businesses have faced significant

challenges over the last 18 months, and Gordons has expertly been helping clients navigate this turbulent period.”

“I am now working closely with colleagues across the firm to provide additional corporate restructuring and insolvency support and advice, if needed.”

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Leeds-based Legal Studio has appointed **Steve Haggett** as its latest new consultant.

Haggett joins Clare Young and Malcolm Emery at Legal Studio to further strengthen the firm’s private client team.

He is a private client lawyer with more than 25 years of industry experience and is a full member of the Society of Trust & Estate Practitioners.

Prior to joining Legal Studio, Haggett led the trust and tax team for a top 100 law firm before setting up his own boutique firm with his wife.

Haggett’s work regularly covers a range of issues, including wills, lasting powers of attorney, both estate and trust administration, along with associated financial and tax planning.

He is regularly asked to act as both professional executor and trustee, as well as to represent clients with complex inheritance tax, capital gains tax, pre-owned asset, and other tax issues requiring management.

His specialisms include advising individuals to ensure that any bespoke tax and estate planning is both robust and flexible to achieve long-term family protection and wealth preservation.

Outside of work, Haggett enjoys keeping fit and active and spending time with his family.

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**Hill Dickinson** has promoted a record number of associate lawyers to senior associate positions in its latest promotions round, including David Baines in Leeds.

Hill Dickinson said the move reflects a period of intense work and commitment throughout the pandemic

and the success of the firm’s people-first strategy, combining lateral recruitment at the most senior levels with clear and achievable promotion paths for everyone from within.

A total of 28 lawyers across all three of the firm’s core business groups become senior associates with effect from 1 November 2021—more than in any other year since the current system of announcing promotions each November began.

In Leeds, Baines is a senior associate in the firm’s healthcare commercial team. His experience includes IT outsourcing and technology contracts, data protection advice, and intellectual property matters.

Congratulating them on their achievement, Hill Dickinson chief executive Peter Jackson said: “I am delighted to see so many of our people successfully advancing their legal careers with Hill Dickinson. It feels particularly rewarding to make this number of promotions to senior associate in a single round, reflecting our ongoing commitment to growing our people. This is a very proud moment not only for them but for us as a firm.”

He added: “Of this year’s senior associate promotions, 17 are women—over 60%. Our challenge now is to maintain the ratio of women progressing upward through the ranks so that, in time,

we also achieve greater balance at our most senior levels. As a law firm, we are putting huge effort into achieving that vision and our flexible and agile working policies play a big part in that.”

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Leeds- Harrogate- and York-based **Jones Myers** has promoted family lawyer Anthony Parrish, who has more than two decades experience in family law, to partner.

Parrish, who joined the niche family law firm as a solicitor in 2007, is a member of its children’s department.

His extensive expertise in family law includes representing children, teenagers, parents, and local authorities. Parrish is also experienced in international child abduction cases and adoption work.

Jones Myers partner Kate Banerjee, who leads the children’s department, said: “Anthony’s promotion, which is aligned with our firm’s ongoing expansion, is extremely well deserved.”

“A valuable and committed member of our team for the past 14 years, Anthony is commended for giving realistic advice in a sensitive and appropriate way, which is tailored to suit the individual needs of our clients. We wish him continued success.”

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**Womble Bond Dickinson** has strengthened its public sector and local government practice with a number of senior hires across the UK, including managing associate Helen Robinson, who joins in Leeds.

Robinson has more than 12 years of experience working in and advising local authorities.

She was a senior planning and highways lawyer at North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC), a role that saw her advise the council on all aspects of planning, highways, public rights of way and major infrastructure projects. She was also lead information governance lawyer.

Also joining the firm’s projects and procurement and planning teams are legal directors Sian Ballingall and Sarah White, based in Southampton and London, respectively, and Newcastle-based associate Umi Filby.

Iain Greenshields, head of public sector at Womble Bond Dickinson, commented: “[The firm] has taken a very conscious decision to focus more on public sector work in the last eighteen months, and the recruitment of Helen, Sian, Sarah, and Umi shows the scale of our commitment in this area.”

“Our local government practice in particular has more than doubled in the last four years, and we feel the time is right to invest in that sector now, to offer an enhanced service and team to our local authority clients.”

The new hires follow the appointment last year of partner

Deborah Ramshaw, who advises central and local government departments and agencies, NHS bodies, utilities in the postal, energy and transport sectors, education clients, and registered housing providers on a range of procurement matters and legislation.



Clare Presley has become the first partner to be appointed at **Roche Legal** and will play a key role in the expansion of the York-based firm of solicitors.

Presley is a specialised private client solicitor with 13 years of experience of working in the York area.

She is also a fully accredited member of Solicitors for the Elderly (SFE), an independent, national organisation of lawyers who provide specialist legal advice for older and vulnerable clients, their families, and carers.

The law firm's founder and managing partner, Rachel Roche, said of the role Presley will play as a partner: "Like many businesses, we have made changes to adapt to what has been an uncertain time and have brought together a team of bright, energetic, organised, and flexible individuals, who are willing to work together to take the firm to the next level and as a partner, Clare is central to this."

Presley, who has achieved the Older Client Care in Practice Award from SFE, added: "Client care is central to everything we do at Roche Legal and we are committed to ensuring the process is as streamlined as possible."

"Before the impact of the pandemic many clients may not have heard of Zoom, or used WhatsApp, and it is clear that technology plays, and will continue to play, an increasing role. Roche Legal remains at the forefront of embracing innovative ideas."

"Because Rachel has been ahead of the curve in the way new technology has been integrated into how we work, we are able to offer clients a range of meeting options and it is about being flexible. People are also very proud of being from York and value a local connection."

Intellectual property law firm **Secerna** has welcomed a new trainee patent attorney to its team in York, bolstering its biotech expertise.

Niamh Crabtree joins the intellectual property law firm to support a client base of multinational corporations, FTSE- and NYSE-listed companies, universities, spin-out companies, small businesses, and innovators.

Having graduated from the University of Durham with a Mbiol in biosciences, Crabtree has attained considerable knowledge in antibodies and biologics, immunology and nucleic acid technologies. In her role, Crabtree will work across a broad range of sectors including biotechnology and life sciences.

After hearing about a career in intellectual property at a university careers fair, Crabtree said that part of the appeal of joining Secerna lay in the firm's size and the opportunities this presented: "Working at Secerna is giving me the chance to be very hands-on with big cases right from day one. This has meant that I have gained a lot more practical experience than many others in my position."

"This, and the fact that I get to work extremely closely with the partners and learn from them, made joining an easy decision."

She added: "I knew that lab work wasn't where my passion



lay. However, I love to learn and stay up to date with new technologies, which a career in intellectual property allows me to do. In my short time with the firm, I have already worked on a wide range of cases, including those in my field of expertise as well as in areas such as engineering. I love to learn about new technologies, so this has been tremendously fun and interesting."

Secerna partner Charlotte Watkins said: "We are very happy to welcome Niamh to our team. Her knowledge and hard work are already proving to be a considerable asset to Secerna and we are very excited to see how her career develops over the coming years."

"As well as celebrating our tenth anniversary this year, the business has seen considerable growth. We are keen to continue attracting top talent at a senior level as well as appealing to the brightest minds looking to enter the intellectual property field"

**Berwins** has made a significant investment in its life team with the appointment of three new private client lawyers.

Derek Hellawell, Kate Atkins and Jeremy Bristow have joined the team as part of ongoing investment in the firm's personnel and will spearhead expansion in their respective areas.

Hellawell is a specialist in supporting clients dealing with the legal issues that arise after a bereavement, while Atkins has extensive Court of Protection experience, working with families when a loved one becomes unable to make their own decisions.

Bristow, who has previously worked at three top 100 law firms across London and South England, advises on a wide range of private client matters, including wills and succession planning.

The appointments will allow Berwins to maintain a focus on delivering the highest levels of legal expertise, while adding the resilience and expertise to further develop the practice, according to the law firm.

Commenting on the appointments, team leader Julie Jewers said "We're thrilled to have appointed three lawyers of such high calibre. Each has a proven track record of proactively caring for clients and crafting legal solutions which make a real difference to the lives of those they support"

"Their mix of expertise will blend with knowledge and experience already within the team and adding further resilience to the rounded service we offer to clients."





# Helping the homeless is in everyone's power

Schofield Sweeney and Simon on the Streets

Simon on the Streets, which offers support to homeless and vulnerable people across Bradford, Leeds and Kirklees, recently partnered with Schofield Sweeney to support its upcoming fundraising event, Simon's Sleepover, a concept developed in response to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Here, the charity's CEO, Natalie Moran, and its fundraising manager, Leah Charlson, discuss the new event and the importance of corporate partners to the work of Simon on the Streets, while the law firm's Richard Jobs and Ann-Marie Keighley (pictured) explain why the firm became involved.

## **How widespread is homelessness in Bradford, Leeds and Kirklees right now? Does it usually get worse over winter and Christmas?**

**Moran:** Homelessness appears to be more prominent in the city centre areas of Bradford, Kirklees and Leeds, with fewer people sleeping on the outskirts, although in Leeds more people have been accommodated out of the city centre and then end up sleeping in that area if accommodation breaks down, or they have gravitated to that area because other known rough sleepers have been accommodated there, for example, Beeston, Armley and Harehills.

It does usually get worse during the winter months and Christmas.

## **What support and services does Simon on the Streets provide?**

**Charlson:** We offer emotional and practical support, such as contacting local authorities to arrange homelessness assessments and referrals to other housing providers. This support includes linking people into health and drug services, as well as helping people to attend appointments, obtain ID documents, and to re-engage with services or other support workers. We also provide support to maintain tenancies, when moving from the streets, and to obtain food and other basic needs. We support people with settled status applications and following up the process.

Finally, we work with partner agencies to ensure that we can provide a holistic support package for the people that we are supporting. We also advocate for people who we are working with, while working on their self-esteem to become self-sufficient wherever possible.

## **How important are corporate partners to the charity's work?**

**Moran:** Our corporate partners are vitally important to the

work we do at Simon on the Streets. We are a fully independent charity, which means that we receive no statutory funding. This independence allows us to flex our service delivery to meet the needs of every individual we engage with, in whatever form and however long that may take.

We are already seeing increased numbers of homeless people on the streets of Leeds, Bradford, and Kirklees. During the pandemic, many people were placed in vacant hotels and hostels through the governments 'Everyone in' campaign, however, this has now ended.

Added to the fact that the eviction ban has come to an end, as has the furlough scheme, sadly we need to prepare ourselves for significant increases in people losing their homes and as a result, the support we receive from our corporate partners is needed more than ever.

**What did the fundraising event involve and how was it updated in light of the pandemic? How much has been raised?**

**Charlson:** As an organisation, we hold an annual 'Big Sleep Out' event as our flagship fundraiser. Unfortunately, considering the Covid-19 pandemic, we had to find a way to update the format of the event to allow people to take part in their own groups or individually, and so Simon's Sleepover was born!

Simon's Sleepover saw us ask our supporters to spend a night anywhere but their own bed. We had supporters who slept on their sofas, in their gardens and even with their colleagues on their office floors. Donations are still coming in for the event, so we are currently seeing a total of around £3,500, however, donations can still be received up to a month after the event—we are excited for the final total!

**Why did Schofield Sweeney choose to get involved?**

**Jobs:** Coming out of the pandemic, we wanted to support a homeless charity. Covid-19 has exacerbated this crisis. Apparently, 253,000 people in England were homeless and living in temporary accommodation during the pandemic. That is the highest figure for 14 years. Those trapped in temporary accommodation is something of a hidden problem, as we sometimes think of homelessness as people living on the street. It is not.

We need to remember those living on sofas or moving between hostels; the emotional and mental consequences for those trapped in that way of life are heart-rendering. The poorest people in our society are bearing the economic brunt of Covid and many people are being forced into temporary accommodation.

Like a lot of firms, we look to partner with a different charity each year. We do have a pre-existing relationship with the charity, having partnered with them previously in 2017/18. Our charity committee draws up a shortlist of potential charities each year and all of the staff vote on which one they want to support. It is a decision we take collectively. So many people within the firm feel passionate about the work that the charity does. Having partnered with them before, we knew the hard work and dedication those involved bring to making a difference.

**Keighley:** We have offices in Leeds, Bradford and Huddersfield, the same areas that Simon on the Streets provides support.

The work the charity's outreach workers and volunteers undertake is incredible, and we are delighted to do what we can



to support the charity, which offers so much to individuals at a time when they need it more than ever.

Having supported Simon on the Streets twice over the years demonstrates how much the cause resonates with everyone. Many of us see people who are struggling and feel quite helpless, not knowing what to do for the best, but keen to show we care. Supporting Simon on the Streets allows us to give back and help make a difference, whether it's getting involved with the sleepover, taking part in a cycle challenge or helping promote Simon on the Streets and their services in our region.

**How can the legal community in Leeds and Yorkshire join Schofield Sweeney and other corporate supporters in future fundraising events?**

**Moran:** There are so many ways that the legal community in Leeds and Yorkshire can join Schofield Sweeney and other corporate supporters in our future fundraising events. When looking for ways organisations can support us, we look at what would best fit them. We don't have a 'one size fits all' approach. Whether it is financial donations, sponsorship, products and goods or professional expertise, it all helps us to continue to deliver our services and provides a significant impact in the communities we work within.

If anyone within the legal community in Leeds & Yorkshire would like to discuss how they could join Schofield Sweeney in supporting the work of Simon on the Streets, please contact our fundraising manager, Leah, who would love to discuss this further: [leah@simononthestreets.co.uk](mailto:leah@simononthestreets.co.uk)

**What other actions can lawyers take to help to alleviate homeless in Yorkshire?**

**Jobs:** A partnership between a law firm and a charity such as Simon on the Streets can unlock all sorts of different opportunities to help. Leo Jones-Rowe, a partner in our commercial litigation team, is a trustee at the charity. He was able to help the charity's campaign to scrap the Vagrancy Act 1824, which makes it a criminal offence to rough sleep or beg. At the end of the day, criminalising rough sleeping does nothing to help those on the streets to break the cycle of homelessness.

Leo, with his legal background, was able to research the legislation and then present some of the issues to Hilary Benn MP. It's great to be able to help these efforts to bring about meaningful change and reform an area of the law that is actually part of the problem.

# Post six-year run-off cover and the Solicitors Indemnity Fund

**David Barraclough** is a Law Society Council member

On 23 November 2021, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) opened the consultation on its regulatory position in relation to the future of post six-year run-off cover (PSYROC) for solicitors and law firms and the future of the Solicitors Indemnity Fund (SIF). The consultation will remain open for a period of 12 weeks until 15 February 2022, after which the SRA will collate and analyse the responses received and make a decision on which option to take forward.

The purpose of PSYROC through SIF is to provide cover for claims over and above the six-year run-off period that is covered through the open market. Run-off cover and PSYROC serve two principal purposes:

- To provide continuity of client financial protection; and
- To provide security for retired solicitors, which the SRA refers to in its consultation as the “sleep easy” factor.

The SRA had planned to close SIF on 30 September 2021, but following extensive lobbying by the Law Society of England and Walkes, the SRA agreed to postpone the closure of SIF to 30 September 2022 to allow further consultation on the future of SIF. Though the SRA is seeking views on the options available, the authority has already indicated that its preferred option is to discontinue PSYROC and close SIF. The SRA claims that the costs of continuing PSYROC compared to the volume and value of claims outweigh the efficiency of delivering consumer protection.

Responding to the opening of the consultation, the president of the Law Society, I. Stephanie Boyce, said: “The SRA has today outlined its intention to make the marketplace less safe for consumers by getting rid of PSYROC and SIF. Solicitors want consumers to be protected and one of the things on which the profession prides itself is that it offers a service from highly trained professionals who are adequately and appropriately insured for the rare occasions something goes wrong... The SRA is suggesting that this comprehensive protection is removed but is yet to demonstrate that the removal of PSYROC will have any material impact on the cost of legal services or lead to any improvement in the market for legal services.”

By way of background, SIF was formed in 1987 and provided professional indemnity insurance for solicitors through a mutual fund. By the late 1990s, there was a view that SIF premiums were too high and that an open market solution might be cheaper. The profession voted to close SIF and obtain professional indemnity insurance on the open market. SIF was put into run-off and closed to new entrants in September 2000. Firms that had closed prior to September 2000 remain covered by SIF and will continue to be covered by the fund even if the SRA closes it in September 2022.

Conscious of the reserves SIF had built up, the Law Society took the decision in 2004 that some of those funds would be



used to provide post six-year cover for those firms that had closed after September 2000 without a successor practice. This is known as supplementary run-off cover or PSYROC. The intention was that this additional cover would continue for claims notified prior to September 2017.

In 2007, the Legal Services Act was enacted to separate the representative and regulatory functions of the Law Society and resulted in the creation of the SRA, which was given exclusive jurisdiction to deal with the regulation of solicitors. The Legal Services Act defined regulatory functions as including indemnification arrangements and SIF falls within that definition.

In 2012, at the request of the Law Society, the SRA agreed to postpone the closure of SIF to September 2020. A further request in 2016 to postpone the closure until September 2023 was refused. In 2020, the Law Society again requested the SRA for postponement to September 2023, mindful of the lack of interest in the insurance market in providing “SIF replacement” cover and, with reluctance, the SRA agreed to a further postponement, to September 2021. As indicated above, following extensive lobbying by the Law Society, the SRA agreed to a further postponement to September 2022.

It is vitally important that all solicitors, particularly those contemplating retirement, read and respond to the consultation. It is also vitally important that retired solicitors who would primarily be affected by the closure of SIF are informed of the consultation in order that they too can read and respond to the consultation.

The consultation can be found on the SRA website in the “About us” section.



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**Patrick Walker** contemplates the end of the end of the world

As I walked the dogs early this morning, I felt that if there is a God, he was almost certainly watching from the brilliant moon that was framed by blue sky and was determined to make its presence felt long after dawn. Only as the sun edged out from behind the hill did the moon reluctantly concede the day. Then the orange sky matched the few remaining leaves on the trees, and the frosted grass glistened like a cloak made of precious stones.

It is true that the cloak had a lot of holes in it—brown circles where energetic moles had thrust up fresh hills of crumbly soil, apparently in a hurry to empty the spoil from their tunnels before the surface became too hard for their soft snouts to penetrate.

It felt easy to ignore the gloomy forecasts from October's COP26 conference, and remembering that I planted a few trees yesterday (well two to be precise), I felt a little self-satisfied that I was doing my bit.

But as I returned to the house I heard the

unmistakable woosh of the oil-fired central heating boiler firing up, and saw its exhaust offending the clear cold air. Our house is old and not particularly energy efficient despite a bank of solar panels and enough loft insulation to excite a waddle of featherless penguins in the midst of an Antarctic winter. And yes, I didn't know what the collective noun for a group of penguins was, but I do now. It's a raft of penguins on the water, apparently.

Anyway, I guess the all-too-obvious point is that if I want to go on enjoying the wonders of nature that presented themselves this morning, I am going to have to do a great deal more. I could make more use of my log burners, because it seems that provided I use only fallen boughs and trees, the process is carbon neutral, and if I replant, there is a positive effect. However, this ignores both the health risk of woodburning particulate and my other half's frustration at removing layers of dust from every surface.

So I have looked at other ways to help. Flying first class imposes a much higher carbon foot print, so I won't do that, but do you know a Yorkshireman who does?! I will use my car less and my bicycle more, at least while I am fit enough to do so. I can and do travel less generally, and have reduced my use of hard-copy so much I won't need a waste paper bin soon. I eat less meat and more of it is local, and I eat lots of beans and pulses and just hope that I don't then break the COP26 methane pledge!

Of course, it's all too little, but a lot of too littles might just be enough. A morning like today's is both a reminder that we should keep trying and that we should make the most of every single day we do have. Last week, I met a friend and fellow mediator who has undergone serious and life-changing surgery and whose life-expectancy has been seriously challenged. But I found him smiling and energetic.

He is even developing a specialism in climate change-related disputes. We discussed his future, and that of our wonderful planet. I suggested that he was fighting his illness so well that it might be the planet that expires before him. Always looking for and finding the positive, he replied quietly: "It may be a close-run thing: if I time it right, I can save on cremation fees."







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# Athlete, champion, lawyer

**Trish Barton** is a director of Barton Legal

Trish Barton, co-founder of Leeds-based Barton Legal, became the Duathlon World Champion in her age group last month.

The 2021 Duathlon World Championships, which saw thousands of athletes from all over the world compete, took place in Aviles, Spain, and featured a gruelling 5km run, followed by a 20km bike ride, finishing with a 2.5km run.

Barton posted a time of one hour and 16 minutes, putting her two minutes ahead of her nearest competitor.

With Covid-19 having delayed the Championships by two years, making training that bit more difficult, this is an incredible achievement for Barton, who was already the European Champion.

Barton is a true role model who successfully balances the demands of world-level competition with a busy legal practice focused on commercial property. Here, the lawyer and World Duathlon Champion has the last word.

## ***Congratulations on becoming World Duathlon Champion in your age group. What does this achievement mean to you?***

**Barton:** Thank you. Obviously, I am delighted, especially as I haven't been taking part in duathlons for long, but this was the result of a period of sustained training for the event and is even more satisfying because it was achieved through hard work and perseverance. I see my success as a reinforcement of the premise that age is not a barrier to success and I have been really touched by the number of people that have said how inspiring it's been for them.

## ***How did you find training amid the pandemic?***

**Barton:** Thankfully, the training for this event took place after restrictions had been lifted. There were interruptions and it was, of course, difficult at times, but I use the training as a release from work and other stresses, and it's important for my physical and mental wellbeing. I had to make adaptations when my gym closed but I was inventive and made it work.

## ***Is this the pinnacle for you or are there other competitions you're looking forward to entering in the future?***

**Barton:** I certainly don't see this as the pinnacle for me because



this was only my sixth duathlon. Becoming European champion in 2020 (immediately before the first lockdown) encouraged me to work harder, but now I want to retain both titles. I am considering competing at the standard distance (10k run/40k cycle/5k run) as well!

## ***You're a fantastic role model, particularly for other lawyers. What advice do you have for any lawyer looking to achieve such heights in areas outside of the profession?***

**Barton:** My advice would be to find a law firm that will support and encourage you. I was very fortunate to have the support of colleagues as well as my friends and family. It's very important to have a work/life balance and the firm that you work for can help to achieve that. I would recommend starting younger than I did as well!

## ***On your legal practice, how is it faring going into 2022? And what do you see being the big talking points next year?***

**Barton:** Last year, we grew by 25% and that target will be hard to match this year, but we are ambitious, and we have great clients so are optimistic about the future.

I think the big talking point will continue to be whether people will return to the office full-time and the challenges that may arise with the new ways of working. We have a spacious office in Leeds that is currently housing our full team on a regular basis, so, for us, we are back to normal and excited for what the future holds.



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