

Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer

The Official Journal of Leeds Law Society

 Leeds
Law Society

June 2023

Issue 182



Shining a light on diverse role models

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Law Society's new president

Leeds JLD

Danielle Hutchison on navigating the notoriously competitive legal sector jobs market

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Yorkshire Union

Natalie Cosgrove on uniting the region's law societies and making their voices heard





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www.barkerbrooks.co.uk
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Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer at £70
for one calendar year (10 issues).
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Shining a light on diverse role models



Shanika Haynes is a partner at Stowe Family Law and president of Leeds Law Society

I am now a few weeks into my presidency and wish to take the opportunity to thank all those who have reached out to me with well wishes and kind comments since the announcement of my appointment.

I am encouraged by the supportive nature of the legal community and in particular those practicing in Yorkshire. While I have lived in Yorkshire for 10 years now, my southern roots still haven't quite left me, and I continue to be humbled by the warmth shown by those I am yet to meet on a daily basis.

I will be the first brown president in the 153-year history of the society. This is a huge honour for me and an appointment I do not take lightly. However, I have to admit, I don't tend to enjoy being the first of anything as it often highlights how much work we still have to do.

I first realised I wanted a career in law when I was in my teens. I did my year 10 work experience at a high street firm and from that point on gave no consideration to any other career. I had a few blips along the way, starting at a university that didn't suit me and doing a course that wasn't the right fit, which led to me dropping out in the first term. But even then, I knew I wanted to be a solicitor. I would quite often get a raised eyebrow when I would reveal my aspirations to people so I feel extremely fortunate to hold this prestigious position and wouldn't have believed the direction my career was going to take if I'd have been told 18 years ago.

Leeds has always been a leader in change and development and my appointment reinforces that. My intention is to build on what we have already achieved and position the city as a centre of legal excellence and inclusion.

Growing up, I didn't see many people who looked like me in the media, on TV or in prominent positions in business and law. While that didn't have a negative impact on my aspirations, it did make it harder to believe it could happen for me and I have many moments of self-doubt.

My focus for the next 12 months and beyond will be to improve visibility of diverse role models in the profession. We have a duty to ensure that those coming into the law as professionals and those who find themselves in the judicial system see themselves reflected at all levels in our firms, in the court staff and the judiciary. Leeds is such a diverse and vibrant city, I am confident we can lead the way in ensuring this is achieved.

In the interests of starting as we mean to go on, the Leeds Law Society will spotlight a diverse role model each month by sharing their journey in life and into the law including the highs and the lows. If this is something you are interested in personally or know someone who would inspire the next generation, please do get in touch.

In addition to our diversity and inclusion initiatives, our legal tech committee will progress its pioneering work and the court committees will continue to build and develop practitioners and court user relationships with the Business, Property and Family Courts.

With a view to ensuring we continue to meet the needs of our membership and represent your interests as fully as possible, we have a number of additional sub-committees that we will introduce over the next year, so please look out for further details.

Finally, I am excited to announce that we will be celebrating South Asian Heritage Month for the first time. Being Sri Lankan and not having a huge connection to my heritage growing up, this is extremely important to me. Keep an eye on the Leeds Law Society website and our social media profiles for details of the various events we will hold between July and August (spoiler alert, there will be lots of tasty food and one event is guaranteed to get your heart pumping!).

I hope to meet as many of our members as possible over the next 12 months and look forward to the exciting year ahead.

Matthew Jones,
President of Leeds
Law Society, and
Lubna Shuja,
President of the
Law Society for
England and
Wales

An annual moment of joy for Leeds Law Society



Directors of Leeds Law Society



Her Honour Judge Claire Jackson
His Honour Judge Mark Gosnell
His Honour Judge Jonathan Klein
District Judge Charles Prest KC
District Judge Patrick Troy
Mr Justice Poole

The Leeds Law Society Annual Dinner celebrated the fantastic legal community in Yorkshire

The Leeds Law Society Annual Dinner took place on 18 May, bringing together a huge swathe of the membership in celebration of the city's legal community and its efforts on behalf of clients.

Attendees of the annual dinner, held at The Queens Hotel in Leeds, were treated to speeches from a range of special guests, including Lubna Shuja, president of the Law Society of England & Wales. She spoke at length about the work being undertaken at the national law society.

Two other great speakers were Tim Gittins and Matt Jameson from Out Together, immediate past president Matthew Jones's charity for his term in office. Out Together champions social inclusion for older LGBT+ people in Yorkshire, delivering vital activities and services such as telefriending and coffee, cake and chat sessions.

Altogether, Leeds Law Society and its members raised more than £3,000 for

Out Together—a brilliant effort. It was also revealed that a team from Walker Morris won the Chancellor's Cup for their performance during last year's golf day.

Follow this link to see more photos

from the Annual Dinner, as well as a video featuring interviews with attendees: <https://www.leedslawsociety.org.uk/news-resources/news/annual-dinner-18th-may-2023/>.



Councillor Robert Gettings MBE JP, Lord Mayor of Leeds
Councillor Lesley Gettings, Lady Mayoress of Leeds
Matthew Jones, Immediate Past President of Leeds Law Society
Paul Lawrence, Deputy Lieutenant of West Yorkshire
Dr Zulfi Karim, High Sheriff of West Yorkshire
Jason Pitter KC, New Park Court Chambers
Nick Emmerson, Vice President of the Law Society of England & Wales
Mr Justice Poole, HM Royal Courts of Justice
Shanika Haynes, President of Leeds Law Society
Lubna Shuja, President of the Law Society of England & Wales
Matt Jameson, Operations Manager at Out Together

Blacks Solicitors marking another successful financial year



The corporate team at Leeds-based Blacks Solicitors has completed more than 50 deals worth over £220 million.

Across the last financial year, the team saw a 13%, or £200,000, increase in turnover, was instructed on 216 matters, and won 100 new clients.

The corporate team worked closely with the commercial,

music and banking departments at Blacks to provide a cross-service offering to multiple clients.

Commenting on the success of the team, Nigel Hoyle, head of corporate law at Blacks Solicitors, said: "I am proud of the team for their hard work which is reflected in the significant number of transactions and growth of turnover that we have generated over the last financial year.

"As we continue to secure high-value work from clients across the Yorkshire region and beyond, I am hopeful that our growth trajectory will continue, and we will be able to reflect on another prosperous year in 2024".

Thanks to its successes, the team has experienced several new hires and promotions.

Pete Bott returned to the firm in October 2022 to head up the new music law arm, bringing with him a wealth of experience in acting for artists and producers.

Alex Hall and Hayley Blackburn, who are integral members of the corporate team, were promoted to senior associate and associate, respectively.

Tyr secures £250k of NPIF funding to continue expansion

Leeds law firm Tyr has raised £250,000 to support its next phase of expansion.

The funding, from NPIF – Mercia Debt Finance, which is managed by Mercia and is part of the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund, will provide additional working capital to enable the commercial law firm to recruit new lawyers, expand its range of services, and strengthen its operations and financial team.

The firm expects to create at least 10 new jobs in the next two years. Tyr has built a 45-strong team, including 14 partners, since launching in 2019.

Tyr senior partner Alistair Kennedy said the firm aims to provide a bespoke service working in partnership with its clients: "As legal services have become increasingly commoditised, there is a risk that clients feel like numbers rather than valued customers.

"Our lawyers have experience working in leading practices and dealing with complex cases and focus on providing a bespoke service with a personal touch.

"We also ensure that we give our lawyers the time and space to

deliver the best possible service to clients. We are delighted with our growth so far. The funding will help us take business to the next level!"

David Wright from Mercia added: "Tyr has quickly established itself in the marketplace and the partners' vision has been well received by clients. Having achieved ten-fold growth over the past four years, the partners now have a clear strategy to take the business forward. The funding will enable them to put their plans into practice."

Keira Shepperson, director at British Business Bank, said: "Starting your own business is always a challenge, especially in a concentrated sector like the law.

"The Tyr team has shown others that it is possible to break into a competitive environment and also how important it is to have access to finance to continue growing and meeting clients' demands.

"Keeping talent in the North and creating jobs are key goals for the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund, this round of funding will help contribute to achieve them."

Head office move marks £7m turnover push for Holden Smith



Holden Smith has relocated to a new head office in Huddersfield as it continues its rapid growth trajectory.

The Yorkshire law firm, co-founded in 2019 by James Smith, David Bancroft and Jamie Megson, has moved into a 3,200

square foot office at the newly built Ashlar House in Denby Dale.

Commenting on the move, Smith said: "We've experienced rapid growth in the last 12 months and now is the right time for us to take up a new, bigger office that gives our current team the facilities they need, and the room we require as we continue to recruit for new staff.

The firm, which employs more than 100 people, is aiming to reach turnover of £7million by the end of its 2023/24 financial year.

It recently opened a fifth office in Horsforth to establish a family law team, led by family solicitor Leanne Pollard, and in March announced the appointment of Rob Kelly as head of its growing corporate and commercial team.

Speaking at the time, Kelly said: "Holden Smith is a driven and dynamic firm that is going places and I'm delighted to have joined the team to be part of the journey."

Wilkin Chapman senior solicitor assists with growing demand for Hull student accommodation



A new senior solicitor at Wilkin Chapman is working with clients to increase the number of student rooms available around the University of Hull.

Tom Herd from Wilkin Chapman works with a wide range of commercial property clients across East Yorkshire and beyond, although a large percentage of his time is spent

assisting with the purchasing and refinancing of student accommodation in Hull.

Herd is a commercial property specialist and has been promoted to the role of senior solicitor at Wilkin Chapman after five years with the firm. He mentioned he was “really pleased to be promoted to senior solicitor”.

Herd has been working with clients to increase the number of student rooms available for students in the former UK City of Culture.

Speaking on the subject, Herd said: “I have a real mix

of different clients but recently I’ve seen an increase in demand from my buy-to-let clients who are purchasing rental properties, often referred to as houses of multiple occupancy (HMO), to help meet the growing need for student accommodation around the University of Hull.

“Despite house prices rising, I’m still seeing lots of buy-to-let purchases and the market is not showing any signs of slowing down. The university is growing, so with that comes more students and higher demand for student accommodation.

“HMOs seem to get a bad reputation, and there are some unscrupulous landlords out there, so we facilitate our clients to do it by the book, follow the law and meet every responsibility to tenants and the local community.”

Herd added: “Done right, student accommodation is a big opportunity for property investors, and some of my client’s companies that are responsible for hundreds of student rooms in the city. That, in turn, generates a lot of work as they can scale their businesses relatively quickly.”

“They appreciate the work I do for them and the fixed prices I can offer, so they know exactly what everything is going to cost.”

Lewis Silkin opens new office in Leeds



Lewis Silkin has opened a new office in Leeds and appointed James Keogh as a partner in the firm’s employment law group.

Keogh will lead what will initially be a new three-strong team based in Leeds.

Having studied, trained, and worked in Leeds throughout his career, Keogh is well known in the region as a trusted

employment and HR law adviser to some of the largest corporations in Yorkshire.

A specialist in complex change/restructuring projects, industrial relations and trade union issues, sensitive investigations, and TUPE matters, Keogh’s clients include household name brands in retail, luxury, hospitality, and manufacturing, including FTSE 250 and AIM businesses.

Keogh will be joined in early summer by managing associate Gemma Woodhead. Previously an in-house employment counsel at Warner Brothers, Woodhead spent eight years supporting various businesses across the entertainment group and helping to manage their workforces across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Keogh and Woodhead will be supported by associate Breesha Loughran, who brings expertise in workplace investigations and employment tribunal litigation.

The new office marks the latest step in the growth of Lewis Silkin’s national presence, following the firm’s launch and rapid growth in Manchester last year, and adding to its offices and regional hubs in London, Oxford, Cardiff, Belfast, Dublin and Hong Kong.

Together, the new hires further enhance Lewis Silkin’s

specialist employment law team, which is now led by 34 partners.

James Keogh, partner at Lewis Silkin, commented: “I’m over the moon to be joining Lewis Silkin and helping to build our new presence in Leeds.

“We’ll be a part of the UK’s leading specialist employment team, providing the firm with a strategically important base in Yorkshire and adding to the strength of its offering across the North of England.

“It’s an exciting period of growth for Lewis Silkin and our new footprint means we are perfectly placed to support the ever-changing needs of our clients. I look forward to our Leeds team making a valuable contribution to the continued success of this fantastic firm.”

Richard Miskella, joint managing partner at Lewis Silkin, added: “I’m delighted to welcome James, Gemma and Breesha to Lewis Silkin.

“James is a real rising star with a well-earned reputation in the region and beyond for advising on complex employment issues at the highest level, for a range of both national and Yorkshire-based clients. The combined team bring both depth of local market knowledge and breadth of expertise in our core and high growth sectors.”

Miskella continued: “Their appointment, and the opening of our new office in Leeds—hot on the heels of Manchester—is an important step forward to establish a strong and joined up presence in the North that will work alongside Lewis Silkin’s other offices.

“We are constantly adapting to meet the evolving needs of our clients. We are now able to deliver local access to the highest-quality teams and advice through our regional hubs—including in the North of England, one of the most dynamic and innovative economic regions in the UK.”

jmg l e n d i n n i n g

Professional Risks



Commercial crime insurance: Who is protecting your money?

Gareth Milner, managing director of professional risks at J.M Glendinning Insurance Brokers, on the benefits of commercial crime insurance

It's no secret that there are many unfortunate cases where a law firm has inadvertently transferred funds to a fraudster, or where an employee has nefariously taken sums of the firm's money over a period of time.

While your professional indemnity (PI) policy will step in to cover losses that involve theft of a client's funds, your PI insurers are not obliged to pick money belonging to the business.

If company funds are misappropriated, many firms find themselves without cover, or having to rely on much smaller inner limits of cover from an office policy or a cyber policy. These policies are unlikely to be sufficient for companies that hold significant amounts of money in their business accounts; for those it may be worth considering a commercial crime policy.

Commercial crime insurance protects against financial losses stemming from business-related crime, including employee theft, forgery, robbery, and electronic crime. While strong risk management protocols can help a business avoid fraud, dishonest employees and external fraudsters can circumvent the security of even the most well-run companies, leading to potentially substantial financial losses.

Although employees remain the greatest area of concern for organisations, a commercial crime policy can also cover losses caused by specific acts of non-employees, including:

- Fraudulent manipulation of the company's computer system, including a hacker transferring funds to an outside account.
- Fraudulent electronic funds transfer instructions sent to the company's bank purporting to be from the company.
- Theft, damage, or destruction of money, securities, and/or other property both on the insured's premises or elsewhere (for example, while in transit).
- Forgery or alteration of negotiable instruments, including forging of the insured's signature on business checks.

Social engineering fraud

The consequences of any of the above crimes can be financially devastating for companies and lead to severe reputational harm. For the right size and profile of business, commercial crime insurance is an essential part of mitigating financial risk.

Holding a separate commercial crime policy can also ensure that the claims experiences of other, arguably more price-sensitive policies as part of your programme, such as PI, cyber and directors' and officers insurance, are protected.

If you would like discuss this topic, or any other element of your practice's insurance and risk management programme in more detail, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me via 01943 883634 or gareth.milner@jmginsurance.co.uk.

Shanika Haynes begins term as president of Leeds Law Society



Stowe Family Law partner Shanika Haynes has been appointed president of Leeds Law Society following successful years as deputy and vice president.

Haynes is the first Asian president in Leeds Law Society's 153-year history. She took over from Matthew Jones on 1 June.

During her presidency, Haynes will focus on diversity and inclusion within the Leeds legal

community, building on the position of the city as a centre for legal excellence, and progressing the pioneering work in legal tech undertaken by the society.

Haynes will be supported by vice president Nigel Brook from Tyr Law and Luke Corcoran from the Government Legal Department to run various initiatives throughout the year, representing more than 1,000 members both within Leeds and on a national platform.

At Stowe Family Law, Haynes is a family law specialist with a particular expertise in complex children work and high-net-worth financial matters, along with a niche specialism in private adoptions.

She also leads a team of four solicitors and supports clients across Yorkshire from the firm's offices in Leeds and Harrogate.

Commenting on her appointment, Haynes said: "I am honoured to step into the role of president of Leeds Law Society.

"I will be the first brown person to hold this position since

the inception of the society 153 years ago. I am excited to build on the work carried out by my predecessor, Matthew Jones, and the groundwork I have laid over the past two years in my role as deputy vice and vice president.

"Leeds is such a diverse city, brimming with culture and energy. We have one of the largest legal communities outside of London, and I am focused on ensuring that those working within the sector reflect the rich makeup of the people who live here.

"We have a duty to ensure that those coming into the law as professionals and those who find themselves in the judicial system see themselves reflected at all levels in our firms, in the court staff and the judiciary.

"Leeds Law Society has already made strides in making the profession more inclusive and diverse, and I am excited to build on those strong foundations.

"In addition to the important work on diversity, I and Leeds Law Society will continue to position Leeds as a centre for legal excellence, the first choice for those embarking on their legal careers and home for those who have been practising for longer.

"Our tech committee will progress its pioneering work in legal technology, and our court committees will continue to build and develop practitioners' relationships with the business, property and family courts.

"I am excited to see the hard work and planning come to fruition over the next 12 months and get to know our wonderful members better."

You can keep up to date with Haynes's year as president of Leeds Law Society on Instagram as the_unprecedented_president.

Ridley & Hall marks five years in Leeds

Ridley & Hall is celebrating five years of its Leeds office and supporting more than 650 clients from the city since 2018.

In that time, the firm's turnover has grown by 92% to £4.6 million in 2023.

Ridley & Hall is a Legal 500-ranked law firm and employs more than 120 people across four offices in Huddersfield, Leeds, Pontefract, and Barnsley.

Claire Linden, partner at the firm's Leeds office, located at Park Place, spoke about the success Ridley & Hall have had in the last five years.

Linden said: "Over the last five years, the legal and business communities in Leeds have welcomed us and provided us with a fantastic base on which we've been able to grow our professional network and support hundreds of clients across the city and wider region at some of the most difficult times in their lives.

"We have exciting plans and have recruited several roles over the past few years, including a head of family law in Leeds, Emma Hopkins Jones family solicitor, Kate Hames, care solicitor Jennifer Keefe, and trainee solicitor Ernestas Motiejunas."

Emma Pearmaine, managing director at Ridley & Hall, added: "We have some incredibly talented and ambitious colleagues, and the work our Leeds team delivers across family, matrimonial and care services is first-class.

"Our last five years in Leeds have coincided with a significant



period of growth for the firm, and we look forward to what the next five hold."

Affordable Justice seeks family law specialists ahead of expansion



Hull-based Affordable Justice is looking to scale nationwide and support more women who suffer from abuse and control within their relationships but cannot afford legal representation.

The registered charity and non-profit alternative business structure law firm launched in response to legal aid cuts and the introduction of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act.

Family law solicitor Sue Sedgwick explained: "The normal cost of commercial solicitors can be prohibitive for many women, keeping them trapped in unhappy and abusive relationships.

"For women worrying about the cost of obtaining legal advice about such issues, we have stripped out the profit element of the fee structure, offering a service that is generally less than a third of typical high street rates.

"However, it was also important to maintain respect for the professional development of our staff and ensure that our salary structure still matched the expectations of comparable legal firms."

So far, Affordable Justice has helped more than 1,100 women achieve the legal outcome they were after, saving them over

£1.4 million in legal fees.

Lisa Hilder, who is a director at Affordable Justice, continued: "The overwhelming need for our services is driving us to scale our unique operational structure to a national level. While we are primarily based in Hull, our structure and working practices (including working from home) make us ideal for family law specialists looking to enjoy a more flexible work-life balance that fits better around family life, wherever they are based in the UK."

Affordable Justice is particularly vocal about the inherently misogynistic structure of the family law system, which is treated as an arena for ex-partners to continue exerting control, coercion and trauma.

Over the years, the firm has witnessed surveillance, false accusations, investigations and the devastating loss of child contact. The resulting trauma has pushed some women to the brink of suicide.

But the firm is doing fantastic work for the women whose cases it takes on, with 97% winning the outcome they desired.

According to Affordable Justice, in cases of childcare arrangements, domestic abuse, and coercive and economic control, the women reported feeling heard, supported, respected and believed in a system that is notoriously dismissive and can give men the opportunity to perpetuate abusive and damaging behaviour.

Hilder added: "We are keen to hear from women family law specialists who are looking for a more family-friendly working structure to join our team."

"We receive an unprecedented number of enquiries from all over the UK and are keen to seek representation throughout the country. Any women who are interested are welcome to contact us at admin@affordablejustice.co.uk."

Ayesha Smart, 34, becomes youngest ever minority ethnic Crown Court judge



A Harrogate-based barrister from Exchange Chambers has been appointed as a Crown Court judge.

Ayesha Smart, 34, of Sri Lankan origin, will now sit as a recorder in Crown Courts across Northeast England.

She is believed to be the youngest ever black and minority ethnic person to be appointed to this role.

Smart moved to Harrogate with her family when she was 14 and later

gained an undergraduate degree in medical sciences from the University of Leeds.

Smart worked as a pathologist at Harrogate District Hospital before converting to law. She secured pupillage, was called to the bar in 2014 and recently joined Exchange Chambers in Leeds, specialising in crime, regulatory and clinical negligence.

Her new position as recorder will see her sitting for at least 30 days a year.

Commenting on her appointment, Smart said: "I'm proud of the achievement. As are my family. I remember my mum commenting when I got the appointment that it made her family's move from Sri Lanka to the UK all worthwhile.

"As someone that has faced various prejudices in my life and career, it's positive to showcase that people of colour and women can be just as successful as their white or male counterparts and that youth doesn't necessarily mean ineptitude."

She added: "It is a positive step towards increasing diversity amongst the judiciary and inspiring people from all backgrounds to pursue a judicial career.

"We want the composition of the judiciary to reflect the community and modern society we live in, and currently it doesn't quite cut it – which is reflected in the most recent judicial diversity statistics."

"The appointment also helps in dispelling the myth that judges have to be more senior, come from a privileged background or have gone to Oxbridge," she continued.

"I hope people will be encouraged to apply when they feel ready to make that next step!"

Roche Legal founder appointed to international role



Rachel Roche, owner of Yorkshire-based Roche Legal, has been appointed vice chair of the London chapter of the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA), recognising her position as key figure in international cross-border legal work.

Roche has been the driving force behind Roche Legal's UK/US probate service, which has attracted funding from the

Department of Trade and Industry and the same service has been offered to clients living in France, Spain and worldwide.

This is central to Roche's ambition to be at the forefront of cross-border work and she has made regular visits to North America to meet with fellow lawyers involved with private international law.

In June 2022, Roche accepted an invitation to participate in a panel of lawyers from Brazil, the US, Canada and Spain to discuss cross-border estates at the NYSBA Summer Conference in New York.

As a result, in November, Roche chaired a panel for the NYSBA International Section in London and subsequently, she has been unanimously voted into the role of vice chair of the London chapter.

This role comes as Roche Legal opens its first London office in

the former London Patent Office in Holborn, close to Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Roche, who is based in York, said: "The NYSBA International Section is a global community of lawyers who share a common purpose—to advance the rule of law and create a strong network of international lawyers around the world.

"I did my master's in French and European law at the Sorbonne in Paris, having spent time in France learning the language at an early age. The NYSBA gives Roche Legal a gateway into America and a network of legal people who will be able to help our clients.

"The NYSBA has links with lawyers all over the world in countries such as Brazil, Panama and Canada and I am delighted to have been asked to be vice chair of the London chapter."

Her role with NYSBA, which was founded in 1876 and has members in 100 countries, is a natural extension of Roche's international impact while ensuring Roche Legal is at the forefront of developments in an increasingly mobile world.

Roche said: "It makes sense to broaden Roche Legal's horizons and acknowledge that people live in different countries and it is important to cater for this mobility. It is important to be ahead of the curve.

"Multiple jurisdictions require a grasp of the legal concepts around the world to signpost these to clients and ensure their needs are met. It is about getting equipped to deal with legal work that is going to become more frequent. Our London office is another important development as we grow as a business."

Local trainees reinstate Kirklees and Calderdale JLD



Trainee solicitors at Switalskis have joined forces with contemporaries at other law firms with offices in Kirklees and Calderdale to re-establish the local junior lawyers division (JLD).

Switalskis trainee Jessica Nugent-Herrett from Huddersfield initiated the revival of the local JLD, which had lapsed due to existing committee members passing the five-year post-qualified cut-off requirement. Nugent-Herrett's nearest JLD was previously 20 miles away and she was keen to have a local network for local people.

Nugent-Herrett has been appointed as chair, with Emily

Kennett becoming vice chair and Rebecca Wardle becoming the equality and diversity director.

The trio have formed a 14-strong committee with trainees and paralegals from Brearleys Solicitors, Eaton Smith, Ramsdens Solicitors and Ridley & Hall Solicitors.

Jessica Nugent-Herrett commented: "We are very excited to re-establish this group in the area and are keen to get as many local people involved as possible. Joining a local JLD is a fantastic way to access networking and training events and a chance to have first-hand experience and support from people at various stages of their legal careers.

"We'll work closely with the Huddersfield and Dewsbury Law Society, Halifax Law Society and the University of Huddersfield so there will be a wide breadth of opportunities available for members.

"The JLD will hold its launch event on 29 June 2023 at Revolution, Huddersfield. The launch event will be a social event providing great networking opportunities for its attendees. The event starts at 6pm and we encourage as many local aspiring and newly qualified solicitors as possible to attend to find out how this network can support their development in the industry."

Membership is open to local paralegals, legal assistants, law students, trainee solicitors, newly qualified (NQ) solicitors, licensed conveyancers and legal executives with up to five years of NQ experience.

Moving on up

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



Harrogate-based **Raworths** has appointed a new partner to its trusts, wills and estates team.

Rachel Mainwaring-Taylor joins from Farrer & Co in London with experience in advising individuals, families and trustees on issues including succession, wealth structuring and governance.

She advises on all aspects of succession planning, including agricultural, business and

heritage assets, domicile and tax residence, philanthropy and mental capacity.

Mainwaring-Taylor has extensive experience in dealing with complex estates and international probate as well as the creation, administration and governance of trusts.

Rachel Tunnicliffe, senior partner and head of private client services at Raworths, spoke about the appointment.

Tunnicliffe said: "We are delighted to have attracted someone of Rachel's calibre, contributing further to the strategic growth of our specialist teams across the firm.

"As families become more international, Rachel's cross-border experience will be a valuable addition to the support which we already offer to our clients."

Mainwaring-Taylor mentioned her excitement for her new role.

She said: "I am thrilled to be returning to my Yorkshire roots and joining a firm with such a strong private client offering and impressive reputation where I can continue to deliver high-quality bespoke solutions to clients."

North Leeds law firm **Avery Walters Solicitors** recently expanded its private client team with the appointment of Sarah Burrow.

Burrow graduated from Huddersfield University with a degree in law and accountancy, a master of laws and a commendation for her legal practice course.

She has worked in the legal profession since 2013 and qualified as a solicitor in 2020.

The team at Avery Walters is led by private client solicitor Laura Stafford, who has been with the firm for nearly 10 years, having been a trainee and rising to become the private client department's head in 2021.

On why Burrow is a good addition to Avery Walters, Stafford said: "Sarah will be a great addition to the team, bringing over ten years of experience in the legal industry and has a passion for working in the private client area of law."

Managing director Andrew Parascandolo spoke about the expertise Burrow will bring to the team, saying: "We are delighted with this latest addition to our private client team and very much welcome Sarah's experience and customer service skills.

"Sarah's appointment represents another important step in



the continuing growth of our private client department."

Burrow added: "It's great to have joined such a professional and well-established team and to be part of a growing and ambitious firm.

"I look forward to assisting the department and firm to continue its ambitious expansion plans."

Secerna has appointed Chris Claxton as its new marketing and business development manager ahead of its next phase of growth.

The role will see Claxton work with partners and attorneys across the York-based intellectual property firm's three offices to coordinate and strengthen the marketing and business development function.

Claxton's 13-year marketing career takes in roles with national brands and covers a range of sectors, including professional services and non-profit.

Commenting on his appointment, Claxton revealed why he decided to join Secerna as its marketing and business development manager.

He said: "When I first came into the office, I immediately got a good feeling about the place. The vision and plans Jason and Charlotte have for the business are exciting and something I want to be part of.

"I know that the skills and knowledge I have built up will benefit Secerna as the business moves forward, and I am looking forward to the challenge of learning more about intellectual property and how it is part of our everyday lives."

Secerna partner Charlotte Watkins discussed what the appointment means for the firm.

She said: "Chris joins Secerna at an exciting time as we continue to grow and attract new clients and team



members. Even with the challenges Brexit and COVID present, the firm has continued to grow. "We are always looking at ways of innovating and providing the best service for clients, which is why we must invest in our marketing and business development resources. Chris has the skills, knowledge, and desire we are looking for. He has proven to be a natural fit within the team already, and I am excited to see what we can achieve together."



brings to the team sits perfectly alongside the already strong property litigation team and enables us to provide an even higher level of service to new clients and current client base." Knibbs, who has joined the law firm as a senior solicitor, said: "I am thrilled to be joining BRM at such an exciting time. Working alongside Rob and the team was a big part of my decision to move and I am looking forward to working with the current and new clients."



Wake Smith Solicitors has added experienced associate Sherelle O'Brien to its team of legal experts and support staff. O'Brien joins the Sheffield law firm's eight-strong private client team, which is led by Suzanne Porter.

Wake Smith's new recruit has worked in the region's legal sector since 2013.

She previously worked at a Sheffield practice where she

spent the last year and a half advising clients with estate administration, inheritance tax planning, wills and powers of attorney matters.

O'Brien commented: "I am delighted to join Wake Smith's private client team with its exceptional reputation and its client focused approach. I am excited to be part of such a dynamic team and look forward to helping them maintain their amazing reputation."

Porter, head of private client at Wake Smith, said: "We welcome Sherelle to the Wake Smith team. We are excited to be welcoming such great new talent to our team, as well as continuing to invest in the ongoing development and training of our people at every level."

Property management specialist Jennifer Knibbs has joined **BRM Solicitors**.

She joins the well-established commercial and private client law firm's dispute resolution team, led by Rob Cooke, based in Sheffield.

Knibbs specialises in resolving complex property disputes, recovering service charges arrears, enfranchisement, tribunal proceedings, and all other landlord and tenant disputes.

Cooke, a solicitor and executive director at BRM Solicitors, said: "The recruitment of Jennifer to the team is a continuation of continued growth, the expertise that she

Experienced litigator Keith Hague and solicitor Natalie Gibson have joined Sheffield's **MD Law** as the firm continues its further expansion.

The niche firm, which acts for and advises insolvency professionals, businesses and individuals across the country, has recruited Hague into its commercial litigation team to work with dispute resolution partners Matt Dixon, Neil Kelly, and Kelly Wharin.

Also joining the 16-strong team is Gibson, who previously gained work experience as a legal assistant in a union law firm, in addition to completing her training contract at a professional services firm in Sheffield.

Former MD Law trainee Josh Stilgoe has also now qualified as a solicitor and joined the firm's insolvency team, working on all aspects of insolvency and litigation, while University of Sheffield international relations and politics graduate Cristina Martinez has started a training contract at the Broomhall-based firm.

Hague, whose 20 years of legal expertise in litigation includes shareholder/director disputes, partnerships disputes



and professional negligence claims, said: "MD Law brings a practical and commercial approach to the resolution of disputes for businesses and individuals. I am looking forward to helping an increasing number of clients navigate a path to a successful outcome.

He continued: "I chose MD Law because of its excellent reputation and links with regional and national businesses, and I look forward to contributing towards the further growth of the firm."

Dixon said: "Our expanding firm needed strong, mid-tier, commercial litigation experience as we see an upward move towards decent value, interesting and involved cases in this area.

"We are now a team of 16 and our commercial clients often have other legal needs, so to strengthen the team means we can continue to provide our reputable legal services at a high professional level."



Lupton Fawcett has promoted partner Claire Moss to lead the dispute management team at its Leeds office.

Moss has extensive experience in all aspects of dispute management but has particular expertise in property disputes.

She regularly acts for both commercial and residential landlords and tenants and

deals with a variety of claims such as lease renewals, dilapidations, forfeiture and possession, enfranchisement, trespass, and breaches of covenant.

Moss joined Lupton Fawcett as a trainee solicitor at its Leeds office in 2004, becoming a partner in 2021.

In her new role as head of dispute management, she will be responsible for managing a team of nine and collaborating with other departments in the firm to provide litigation support when required.

Moss said: "No-one wants to be involved in a dispute but when issues do arise legal support is often vital to resolve things in a way that satisfies both parties.

"We already provide a bespoke dispute management service to clients of all sizes and I'm looking forward to helping to grow this area of the firm and supporting more clients to achieve the best possible outcome, regardless of the value of the dispute."

Lupton Fawcett managing partner James Richardson said: "Claire has a wealth of experience in her field and a well-deserved reputation for resolving clients' disputes quickly and efficiently in what can often be complex claims.

"She also exemplifies Lupton Fawcett's values, delivering outstanding client care and continually seeking better ways to achieve clients' goals. Her appointment to this role further strengthens our team and I am delighted to announce it."

Brabners has expanded its regulatory and professional conduct team in Leeds with the appointment of new partner Claire Burrows and legal director Deepika Raino.

Burrows joins the law firm's 80+ strong partnership as a specialist regulatory lawyer based at its new 1 City Square office in Leeds.

She brings 14 years of experience in law and regulatory

compliance to Brabners, having previously worked for Walker Morris and DLA Piper.

Burrows advises both UK-based and international clients on complex regulatory investigations, with experience helping to defend regulatory enforcement action for clients in a range of sectors, including manufacturing, construction and healthcare.

Her focus areas include health and safety, medical device regulation, product safety, environmental, food safety, coronial law and anti-bribery legislation.

Raino has more than 22 years of experience in professional regulation. She has worked previously for Adkirk Law and Slater and Gordon Lawyers.

She acts for a range of professional clients, including healthcare professionals, medical experts, sports players, solicitors, barristers and university students.

Raino has advised individuals and businesses in the public and private sector including, NHS trusts, NHS England, primary care practices and national governing bodies.

The appointments follow several senior hires at Brabners over recent months as it further develops a full-service team in Leeds after launching in the city last year.

The firm expects to continue recruiting in Yorkshire throughout 2023 as it strengthens its presence in the region to complement its 460+ strong team based across offices in Liverpool, Manchester and Lancashire.

Nik White, managing partner at Brabners, said: "Claire and Deepika's intricate understanding of the regulatory landscape will give us an additional edge in helping clients to remain compliant with fast-developing legislation through trusted strategic counsel.

"We're proud to welcome them both to our growing Leeds team, which is already making the difference for clients in Yorkshire and major brands across the UK."

Commenting on her appointment, Burrows said: "Brabners has the scale and cross-sector expertise to provide grounded support for clients navigating the ever-changing regulatory landscape.

"This spans everything from dealing with every day compliance issues, particularly in light of the UK's continued divergence from EU norms and tightening environmental controls in the pursuit of net-zero, to when things go wrong, and enforcement action is looming. I'm looking forward to playing a part in helping more businesses in the region and beyond."

Raino said: "The positive culture and strong sense of purpose at Brabners was an important draw for me. It's great to join the Leeds team that continues to attract a strong breadth of senior talent from across Yorkshire, working in partnership with our colleagues from across Brabners.





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Strategic Partner



The Law
Society

Overcoming competition culture in the legal sector

Danielle Hutchison, vice chair at Leeds JLD and a solicitor at Stowe Family Law, on navigating the notoriously competitive legal sector jobs market



From undergraduate through to partnership, the legal sector is notoriously competitive. We are compared against our peers when seeking a training contract and securing an NQ role, but it doesn't end there—we can then feel pitched against our colleagues when the promotion window opens for the same roles, regardless of how many positions are available.

Perhaps due to our perfectionist traits as lawyers, and our innate desire to stand out and be the best, we can often find ourselves pitching against others in our team without even realising it. Sound familiar? You're not alone!

We are selected for the job because we are driven and dedicated, yet it's those two skills that cause us to push ourselves which, unfortunately, results most often in stress and burnout. Common signs of burnout include the inability to concentrate and a lack of motivation—not really the key ingredients to being the best you can be.

With our typical (some may say frustrating!) personality traits in mind, it's important to remember ways to combat competition throughout your legal journey, right from the beginning.

Applying for a training contract

It may seem obvious, but always be yourself. If you aren't successful the first time you apply, but you know you were true to yourself, you can almost guarantee that firm just wasn't the right firm for you. But in time you will find the right place that will appreciate you for being you!

Try not to feel disheartened by others who have secured training contracts. Sometimes avoiding LinkedIn and other social media sites for a few days can help. Even though it may feel like it, you are not the only one feeling that way.

Learning to deal with rejection is tough but something we all likely have and will face in our legal careers, so learning how to cope with it at the outset is important. Building resilience

and tenacity from the outset will take you far!

Finally, try not to compare yourself to others throughout the application process (never judge a book by its cover!) and remind yourself why you want to be a lawyer and what will make you a good lawyer—anything else is irrelevant!

NQ and beyond

Now that you've spent time working at a firm, you should be even better equipped to know what you're looking for as a newly qualified solicitor. Make sure your competitive streak doesn't push you to apply for roles at the biggest/'best'/highest paid firm and instead, focus on what's right for you.

If you have done your research and have found a firm that suits you, it will be easier for you to explain in interview why they should choose you, whether that's because your values align or you're seeking flexible working.

As above, you have to believe in your ability and trust that if you don't land the NQ role you were seeking, the firm perhaps just wasn't the right firm for you. But that's not to say the right firm isn't out there!

To help deal with competitiveness within your firm, set yourself personal, achievable goals. If you find yourself over stretching to surpass those goals, consider whether you may have been slightly over ambitious and ask yourself if what you're doing is really necessary to reach your realistic goals, regardless of what anyone else is doing.

When setting goals, it's important to set boundaries and communicate them. Define them, write them out and stick to them. It may seem difficult at first, especially if those around you aren't abiding by boundaries and you have a natural competitive instinct, but you (and your career) will benefit in the long run from implementing good working habits and behaviours from the outset.

In pursuing your professional identity, it's important that you don't lose your self-identity in the process. Always ensure you take time to do what you enjoy out of work, spend time with friends and family and really switch off. Remember, your self-identity is how you have made it this far and why you will be or have been chosen for the job!



Flying the flag for Yorkshire



Natalie Cosgrove, president of the Yorkshire Union of law Societies and a partner at Ashtons Legal in Leeds, on uniting the region's law societies and making their voices heard

As I sat absorbing the wonderful talks of the immediate past president of Leeds Law Society, Matthew Jones, and his charity guests from Out Together at the annual dinner in May, it made me realise how far we have come as a profession— and yet, how much more work we still have to do.

As access to legal aid dwindles, vast representation gaps in Yorkshire are widening and barriers to access to the profession are emerging. On the same day that she attended the Leeds Law Society Annual Dinner as a guest, the Yorkshire Union of Law Societies also welcomed Lubna Shuja, president of the Law Society of England and Wales, to our quarterly meeting earlier that day. We were able to openly and candidly discuss legal aid, representation gaps and barriers to access, as well as other pressures that affect members of each local law society.

These include issues that affect us in daily practice, from delays in court hearings, to HMRC and HM Land Registry, to recruitment. Being able to discuss these and other issues on a county level really enabled us to have a voice that we will now build on. We reminded Lubna that the place she knows best is still just that. There is a wealth of brilliance across the whole of Yorkshire and the Yorkshire Union will always fly that flag.

However, in times of financial



uncertainty, delays and increasing pressure on law firms across the region, it is time now, more than ever, to report back to your local law societies on the issues that you face, because if you are facing them, you can guarantee your neighbour is too. As a voice, we will have the buying power to have a seat at the table with those who can make real change and bring improvements for us. That is vital.

To this end, the Yorkshire Union is hosting a number of roundtable events over the next 12 months, from SQE/ apprenticeships and the court service to neurodiversity in practice. All the details will be sent out to your local law society.

What struck me from Matthew's speech was how he felt alone at the beginning of his legal career, and that if he spoke up and out, that he would be discriminated against. We can't allow that thought process to go forward. We must embrace the positives ahead

of us, the opportunities for all and that also means looking at the challenges we may face to ensure they are a thing of the past.

Lastly, I hope to bring you a more substantive update in the next column regarding the Yorkshire Union work experience scheme. We are now looking for firms to come forward to offer some time. If you would like to know more about the prospective scheme, which aims to provide work experience across the county to individuals who for many reasons are unable to access work experience or vacation placements, please do contact me to find out more. We do need experience from all practice areas and the time commitment is minimal.

The Yorkshire Union of Law Societies offers support and representation for our local law societies and their members who are lawyers and law firms across Yorkshire. They can be found on Twitter: @YorkUnionLawSoc.



Enter the Yorkshire Legal Awards 2023 by 30 June

The Yorkshire Legal Awards 2023 is open to submissions until 30 June.

There are 12 practice area categories, recognising the achievements of practitioners, teams, departments and firms in Yorkshire's major areas of expertise, including family law, corporate and commercial, and—new for 2023—personal injury and clinical negligence.

There are also eight organisation categories suitable for law firms, barristers' chambers and in-house legal departments, from Law Firm of the Year (small, medium and large) to the new Best ESG Campaign.

Finally, Yorkshire's best practitioners can compete for six talent categories, including the prestigious Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year.

We've revamped the criteria and rolled out a new format

this year, to enable the judges to quickly get to the heart of your achievements.

All that's required to enter is between 250 and 1,000 words in total, or a video up to three minutes in length. Both formats must follow the Q&A criteria where possible.

The entry deadline is 30 June 2023—make sure you make a note of it in your calendar!

Of course, there is also the ceremony at New Dock Hall in Leeds to look forward to.

The ceremony is taking place on 05 October and is sure to be biggest yet.

And don't forget to check out the sponsors supporting the Yorkshire Legal Awards this year—we have 19 confirmed!

To view the categories, access the entry form and keep up to date with everything happening at the Yorkshire Legal Awards, visit www.yorkshirelegalnews.co.uk.

Sponsors of the Yorkshire Legal Awards 2023



Caroline Moore, Medical Solicitors

The managing director and head of clinical negligence on the state of play in her practice area and the application of AI to the legal field

With your managing partner hat on, what's it like running a Yorkshire firm in 2023?

It is hectic, variable and exciting. My role has involved learning something about everything to do with the running of a legal practice since inception in 2009.

I have worn many 'hats' but as we have grown it has been fantastic to realise we had developed the resources to outsource. I have engaged third parties to assist with marketing and online optimisation, as well as case system development work, safe in the knowledge that I can capably assess the competence of such providers. I have also been able to pass on parts of my role in-house to a full time HR and compliance officer and we have expanded our accounts department.

I have seen so many technological changes over the last decade (I remember the days when we used to handwrite numbers onto court bundles!) and the law is now such a fast-paced environment, with most firms operating under dedicated case management systems, use of cloud-based telephone systems and virtual meetings. I think the pandemic gave a lot of law firms the push that was needed to review and improve their operating systems. I am very grateful to our outsourced IT company, which had already set us up with everything we needed to see us through the pandemic before it hit.

In 2023, financial and contingency planning, and of course, effective screening of new cases are the main tasks occupying much of my time.

Tell us about clinical negligence right now—are there any practice updates that our readers should be aware of?

In April this year, changes were introduced to costs recovery rules. In clinical negligence cases, claimants are generally protected by a rule down as 'one way qualified costs shifting'. That means that even if the case fails, the successful defendant will meet its own legal costs.

There were already limited circumstances in which this protection might be lost, such as where a claimant does not accept an offer of settlement made on a formal basis (by way of a court rule known as Part 36), in which case the defendant could offset costs against the claimant's compensation. However, this has now been widened to allow the offset to be applied to the claimant's costs and any interest audit as well. Those in the legal sector need to be most careful in advising claimants as to costs risks throughout claim.

Clinical negligence practitioners are waiting for judgment to be handed down by the Supreme Court that heard appeals over three days recently in cases involving claims for nervous shock by secondary victims. An example of this would be a husband claiming for psychiatric injury after witnessing the death of his wife or their baby. We may be waiting a few months now, or even until autumn, before the outcome is known. In the meantime, there are many personal injury and clinical negligence cases for secondary victims that are on hold as a result. These cases will succeed, or fail, depending on what this important judgement.

The government is introducing major costs changes for

personal injury work in October, fixing costs for lower value cases. Presently, I do not think this is going to apply to clinical negligence claims (although there does appear to have been a mistake in the press release implying it may!). I am keeping a close eye on this at the moment.

Are there any modernisations or improvements that you think firms in the region need to implement to better serve clients in clinical negligence?

I am embarking on developing my understanding of AI and its application to the legal field. One of the applications, I understand, is speedy analysis of the facts of a potential case, drawing comparisons to past caselaw on legal databases, and so assisting with assessing the likelihood of a successful outcome. There is likely to be a considerable time-saving in this respect. I am booked on a course about AI and its application to the law.

I think that all regional firms need to be proactive about AI as soon as possible in order not to be left behind. I am concerned about AI leading to many redundancies in future on the job market, generally. However, I can't envisage AI providing the kind of holistic and empathetic support that a legal qualified person can provide to vulnerable victims of clinical negligence. These clients need moral support as much as they need to be legally advised.

Finally, what's on the horizon for you and your firm?

At Medical Solicitors, we anticipate a business need such as recruitment, expanding branch offices, etc, and then fulfilling that need. Medical Solicitors has never bought in large volumes of work, or lent large sums, to feed growth, but will continue to grow generically, and thus safely.

We have recently appointed three non-shareholding directors to assist with the management of the firm, so this has been a major recent development. The new directors bring a wealth of experience to the board and over the next 12 months the plan is to increase their knowledge and understanding of the overall aspects of managing Medical Solicitors.

On the horizon is a new package of benefits for our staff. We plan to increase employers pension contributions and are looking at a group schemes for health, as well as death in service. Essentially, the work being done now, and in the immediate future, largely concerns contingency planning and staff wellbeing.





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