

Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer

The Official Journal of Leeds Law Society

 Leeds
Law Society

October 2023
Issue 184

Back to school (ish)

New appointments and new beginnings:
welcoming in the new academic year



Leeds JLD

Macy Wynn on alternative routes to legal qualification.

News

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Yorkshire Union

Natalie Cosgrove, president of the Yorkshire Union of Law Societies on access and opportunity.





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Back to school (ish)



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

It feels like there has been a real buzz in the air over the past few weeks. With the schools reopening many of us have taken time to reflect on the summer and look forward to the next few months including (dare I say it before Halloween... the festive period!

We have had a particularly busy time at the Leeds Law Society. We had the privilege of hosting the first ever Regional Admissions Ceremony for solicitors. It was a historic moment and extremely well attended. With my focus being on diversity and inclusion, it was particularly poignant to be involved in this momentous occasion. There were countless comments made by attendees that they/their family members wouldn't have been able to celebrate their admission as solicitors if the regional ceremony hadn't happened.

Whenever I write these articles, I remind myself of what my predecessors wrote during their terms. You may be aware that the current president of the Law Society of England and Wales,

Nick Emmerson, is a past president of the Leeds Law Society. In October 2020, four months into his term, Nick reflected on the diversity and inclusion conference we had just held for the first time. He considered his own journey into law and was hopeful that the profession would continue to grow and become more inclusive.

The law historically hasn't been a profession for everyone. It wasn't until 1919 that women were permitted to enter the legal profession. It took another three years for three women to become the first female solicitors. Females now make up 52% of the profession. But even today only 18% of the profession are from minority ethnic backgrounds. In attendance at the celebration we had myself, the first ever brown president of the LLS in 153 years; Lubna Shuja, the first Asian, first Muslim and only seventh female president of The Law Society of England and Wales in 198 years; and Zulfi Karim the first Asian and first Muslim to take office as the High Sherriff of West Yorkshire in 1000 years.

One of the reasons the law is such an exclusive profession is the lack of accessibility for many. It's not easy or cheap to become a lawyer. We know there is a direct link with socio-economic background and having a career in law. There is a significantly higher proportion of lawyers from what we would call a privileged background. Making the ceremony regional was part of the bigger picture to make the sector more accessible and, whilst there is still work for us to do, this is a step in the right direction.

It is of utmost importance that the legal sector is reflective of society at every level and the only way to do that is to ensure that the law is a path everyone has the option to take should they wish to do so.

I also had the honour to attend the opening of the legal year at Westminster Abbey, an event steeped in history and tradition. It is quite easy to forget the role we play in society as we focus on our daily tasks, but I was reminded of what an honourable and important profession we are part of this month. Law underpins everything. We should never underestimate the importance of what we do. We have the unique opportunity to help others and make a difference in their lives. This coming weekend brings the same celebration but at the York Minster. I would highly recommend attending, regardless of what your particular faith may be, if nothing else to reflect of what an important role we play in society.

I am sure many of you will know that October is Black History Month, and I am keen to see how our membership are marking this important month. Please do share your events with the Leeds Law Society so we can highlight the amazing work being done in the region by you all. The theme for the month is 'saluting our sisters'. Allyship is key and we all play a role in creating a more diverse profession by continuing to educate ourselves on the lived experience of others and the barriers they may experience and supporting initiatives to break those barriers down.

Leeds Law Society Annual Legal Dinner on Thursday 2 May 2024 at The Queen's Hotel, Leeds

Book before the 31 December 2023 and receive a 10% discount

Bring colleagues, clients and friends to join us at Leeds Law Society's flagship black-tie event, hosted by the President of Leeds Law Society, Shanika Haynes.

This will be a spectacular evening with speeches from highly acclaimed guests and some light entertainment.

A welcome drink will be served on arrival followed by a scrumptious 3 course meal. Each table will be provided with a 1/2 bottle of wine per person.

Tables of 10 - If you require a table then please contact events@leedslawsociety.org.uk

Members: £1000 + VAT

Non-Members: £1300 + VAT

Individual tickets - Please book online

Members: £100 + VAT

Non-Members: £130 + VAT



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jmg lending Professional Risks

How did the recent professional indemnity insurance renewal look for most firms?



Gareth Milner, managing director at JMG Professional Risks, gives a synopsis of the October 2023 PII renewal season

We are again in October, meaning many firms will just have renewed their professional indemnity insurance. Ahead of JMG's complete analysis of the PII market being released, below are the pertinent points of this year's autumn PII marketplace:

Rate stabilisation and reduction

Most practices will have seen rates (premiums as a portion of overall fee income) stabilise or perhaps even reduce compared to the last few years. This may not mean an actual reduction in monetary premium as most firms continued to see revenues increase over the last few years.

As many firms continue to see revenues increase this may not mean a reduction in monetary premium, but competition

amongst insurers for law firms' business was significantly higher too.

Increased competition and appetite

Nearly all insurers giving SRA Minimum Terms & Conditions primary layer cover broadened their appetite somewhat, either by increasing limits for work types such as conveyancing or providing quotations for firms with problematic claims histories who previously experienced very limited or no alternative options.

The excess layer market benefitted from both new entrants and increased appetite from insurers already writing cover, although conversely to primary layer insurers, excess layer providers did generally attempt to maintain rates (or at least premiums) from the last renewal for most clients.

New insurers and increased capacity

There were at least two new entrants into the primary layer space for legal practices, as well as more insurers writing excess layer cover with wide appetites that increased as the renewal season progressed.

Existing insurers of law firms also increased the amount of business they were willing to write, meaning many were actively looking to take on new clients rather than just quoting renewal business.

Longer-term policies

18-month policies made a return amongst a few insurers, with many clients opting to take an extended period due to the improving rates also on offer.

Risk management

Insurers continue to keep a focus on behaviour driving claims, the financial rigour of clients and their cyber risk controls. Wrongful funds transfer via phishing attacks arguably remains the most immediate threat law firms face. For medium and large practices, insurers also now seek to understand a firm's culture by exploring their approach to ESG matters and staff wellbeing.

In summary, the above signs all point to the PII market entering a 'softer' cycle. Whilst the wider economic climate is largely beyond everybody's control, should this trend continue then more capacity is likely to follow with further rate reductions and other new entrants, giving firms even more choice at their next renewal.

JM Glendinning Professional Risks provides PII for around 200 law firms in England & Wales, from sole practitioners to firms with 30+ partners.

Wake Smith facilitate Sheffmed's £850,000 relocation to Rotherham

Sheffield-based solicitors, Wake Smith, have played a pivotal role in aiding global healthcare equipment manufacturer and distributor, Sheffmed, to secure a new £850,000 headquarters in Rotherham.

The ISO-registered company, renowned for its distribution of ENT suction and instruments worldwide, is transitioning to a more spacious setting within the Centurion Business Park, Rotherham.

Wake Smith provided legal guidance, steering Sheffmed through the commercial property intricacies of this significant move. Ben Spencer, director of Wake Smith's commercial property division, lent his expertise to the transaction, having previously assisted Sheffmed in acquiring their former base a decade ago.

The new 8,395 sq ft headquarters at Salisbury House offers the room Sheffmed needs to accommodate their growing team and resources. The relocation, slated for completion by November, involves warehouse modifications such as a mezzanine floor and clean room, crucial for their medical instrument operations.

Sonia Hobson, managing director of Sheffmed, said: "Ben



Spencer at Wake Smith really looks after us and that is why we go back for our commercial property work. He provides information quickly and is always friendly and helpful when we need any advice."

Ben said: "We're pleased to have worked again with Sonia to bring the purchase to fruition. This is a growing firm and we wish Sonia and her team the best of luck in their new base."

Leeds firm Hill Dickinson facilitates an expansion with dragon's backing



Leading law firm Hill Dickinson's Leeds-based corporate team has aided London's wellness disruptor, Until, in a recent

US expansion.

Hill Dickinson guided Until in the investment round, led by corporate partner Sandip Khroud, with legal director Rebecca Bennett and paralegal Zuzanna Gasiorowska.

Sandip Khroud said: "We have advised the management team at Until since inception and watched the business thrive. This investment round is a gamechanger for Until, enabling significant expansion opportunities both here in the UK and, in time, across the Atlantic in America, with the added bonus of having Steven Bartlett on board to help drive that activity."

Vishal Amin added: "This is very exciting next step for Until. Growing a business from scratch can be fraught with complexity and legal technicalities. Hill Dickinson's timely, practical and commercial advice and their ability to think outside the box has made the process immeasurably smoother, and we are very grateful for that."

investment round for expansion.

The investment introduces Steven Bartlett, famed Dragon's Den entrepreneur, who not only invested but also joined Until's board as marketing co-founder. This move is aimed at steering the brand's

Mills & Reeve celebrates record turnover and staff bonuses



Mills & Reeve, the renowned Yorkshire-based law firm, has achieved remarkable financial success in the year 2022/23, with a striking 12% growth in turnover. This accomplishment surpassed their ambitious 11.4% target, pushing turnover to an unprecedented £147 million.

This financial victory has yielded an all-time high staff bonus pool of £2.6 million, distributing bonuses ranging from £2,327 to £2,676 based on tenure.

The announcement comes in the wake of Mills & Reeve being named as a top 10 Yorkshire legal adviser in Experian's H1 report.

Mills & Reeve plans to recruit across disciplines including corporate, commercial, real estate, and regulatory to address escalating demand, ensuring continued success.

Paul Johnson, head of the Leeds office, shared his enthusiasm, stating, "It has been an excellent year that has witnessed outstanding performances from all our teams."

In light of this financial success, Claire Clarke, the managing partner of Mills & Reeve, expressed her satisfaction, stating, "Achieving 12% growth in the current economic climate is an accomplishment we're incredibly proud of. Our overarching strategy centered around client experience, innovation, and targeted sectors has been instrumental in achieving this success."

Clarke emphasized the firm's commitment to fostering a collaborative culture, noting, "We believe in sharing our financial achievements with our dedicated team. Our staff bonus initiative underscores the value we place on every individual's contribution to our growth. This remarkable year underscores our gratitude to our team for surpassing our growth targets."

Schofield Sweeney welcomes new cohort of solicitor apprentices



Schofield Sweeney is embarking on an exciting journey with the arrival of its first group of solicitor apprentices. The new cohort, comprising five determined individuals

fresh out of A-levels, has embarked on a unique six-year apprenticeship programme.

The aspiring lawyers who have embarked on this promising journey are Eesa Ubaid Rizwan, Paige Hunt, Katie Cage, Priya Kaur

Sunner, and Rebecca Foster.

The programme's unique structure involves two years in specific teams, followed by department rotations in years three and four, allowing apprentices to explore various legal areas. In years five and six, they select specializations. Successful completion grants them an LLB (Hons) Law and Legal Practice degree via BPP and qualifies them as solicitors through the solicitor qualifying exams (SQEs).

Neil Towse, HR director, commented: "We were keen to establish a programme for apprentices which meant they joined as a group and would then spend the next 6 years together, much in the same way as our trainees progress through their training contract, supporting and helping one another."

Simon Glazebrook, partner at Schofield Sweeney, expressed excitement about the potential of this new cohort, stating, "Each of the individuals who have started this program thoroughly deserves their place. We are excited about what they will bring to the firm and how they will develop and grow both during their apprenticeship and once they have qualified."

Taylor Emmet advises on acquisition of historic Midlands airport



Sheffield-based firm Taylor Emmet has advised Pegasus Grab Hire Holdings Limited subsidiary and Halfpenny Estates Limited based in Droitwich, Worcestershire. The

firm assisted with its £4.5 million acquisition of 100% of the share capital in Stockstame Limited and its four subsidiary companies.

Acquiring the Stockstame Group of companies means that the Pegasus Group becomes the new owner of Wolverhampton Halfpenny Green Airport in South Staffordshire.

The buyer was advised and assisted with the acquisition by Taylor Emmet's head of corporate, Philip Jordan, and corporate partner, Charlotte Higgins. They received help from legal assistant, Sophie

Taft, and commercial property associate, Bryony Shaw. The seller received advice from Mills & Reeve LLP's Manchester office led by corporate partner, Vicky Protano.

Philip Jordan said: "This transaction was challenging because, in addition to buying five businesses, one also had to adhere to the stringent regulations of the UK Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy regarding airport security and investment issues. There were also strict regulatory requirements of the Civil Aviation Authority for the airport licence. The 400-acre airfield site also had 43 commercial leases that needed to be reviewed and reported upon to the client and the transaction finance provider. Because of this, the acquisition process was intensive. The Taylor Emmet team and buyer had to work assiduously to bring the Pegasus Group's acquisition to its successful outcome. I wish to express my gratitude to Tony Hall and the Pegasus Group for their instructions ... in this unusual transaction to buy an active and thriving UK airport."

Get hired, get bonuses at Lupton Fawcett



Yorkshire-based law firm Lupton Fawcett has introduced an onboarding bonus initiative. This is to encourage growth within their corporate, intellectual property, dispute management, and property teams. The firm is looking to onboard talented legal professionals with a commercial mindset.

James Richardson, managing partner at Lupton Fawcett, stated, "Legal firms across the region have faced a talent squeeze for some years, and the current economic uncertainty has intensified this." As a result, the bonus initiative has been developed to encourage innovative talent to join the firm despite ongoing economic difficulty.

Candidates must register their interest with the firm to

be eligible for the bonus to ensure genuine candidate interest. This is to discourage an influx of applications from recruitment agencies. Lupton Fawcett's onboarding bonus value will reach up to 20% of the candidate's annual salary.

Jen Salt, head of people and performance at Lupton Fawcett, emphasised the firm's commitment to innovative recruitment, stating, "We're looking for talented team players who are motivated by delivering outstanding client care and who want to work in a supportive environment."

Lupton Fawcett provides a comprehensive range of legal services throughout the UK. The firm has offices located in Leeds, Sheffield, and York. The firm has already received recognition for its work; In 2022, it was named one of The Times Best Law Firms and featured in the Chambers UK 2022 guide. The firm's regulatory and corporate defence team was a finalist at the Yorkshire Legal Awards 2023.

Prosperity Law's acquisition of Carrick Read



Manchester and Liverpool-based commercial law firm, Prosperity Law, has announced its acquisition of Carrick Read, a Leeds-based legal practice led by Andrew Laycock. Carrick Read has specialised in insolvency law, corporate and commercial legal services, commercial litigation, and debt recovery for over 23 years.

This strategic move follows Prosperity Law's recent appointment of CEO Mark Lockett and the addition of five

new partners. The firm has already gained recognition in The Legal 500 for its work in commercial litigation and insolvency in the Northwest region.

Ed Smethurst, managing partner at Prosperity Law, said, "Acquiring Carrick Read was a perfect opportunity for us. Both companies have a strong reputation in the Northwest, and this acquisition ensures we can continue to grow and offer great service and advice."

Andrew Laycock, principal at Carrick Read, stated, "The acquisition will enable us to provide a wider range of services and increase our geographical reach. We've chosen to join forces with Prosperity Law because of their similar approach to client service and a collegiate approach to legal services."

All Carrick Read clients will now have access to a broader pool of expertise.

Prosperity Law's expansion strengthens its capacity in various legal service areas, including family law, private client services, dispute resolution, and corporate healthcare litigation. The firm, with offices in Manchester, Liverpool, and London, prides itself on delivering high-quality results through skilled solicitors who understand clients' needs and objectives.

In this latest chapter of growth, Prosperity Law and Carrick Read are solidifying their reputations as dynamic, client-focused firms with a bright collaborative future ahead.

Minster Law's strategic move into the Scottish personal injury market

Minster Law, a prominent legal firm originating in Wakefield, is expanding its reach with the launch of Minster Law Scotland, a strategic move aimed at strengthening its presence in the wider UK market. Leading the office is Marina Harper, appointed as executive director of the new Scottish branch. With over 17 years of experience in Scottish personal injury law, Harper is poised to steer the company towards success.

Harper expressed her enthusiasm for the role, "It's great to be joining Minster Law Scotland and heading up this new Scottish business. Minster is recognised as one of the most contemporary, forward-thinking PI law firms in the UK market."

The company will establish its Scottish operations in Glasgow, a city renowned for its thriving legal services sector, with Harper adding, "Our decision to have a presence here was driven by our desire to build a team made up of the very best talent in the Scottish personal injury market."

Through our partnerships with major UK motor insurance providers, we will be serving clients the length and breadth of Scotland, so we're keen to speak to experienced personal injury solicitors/paralegals looking for a fresh challenge, with the opportunity to join one of the most respected personal injury law firms in the UK."

Shirley Woolham, CEO of Minster Law, expressed her delight at the company's expansion into Scotland, stating, "We're a business that prides itself on listening to the needs of our customer and business partners. The decision to create a Scottish operation has been made in direct response to those needs and I'm delighted the business has chosen Glasgow as its base and that we have been able to attract someone of the calibre of Marina."

With its values-driven approach and focus on client needs, Minster Law Scotland is set to make a significant impact on the Scottish legal landscape.





Work life balance whilst studying an alternative route to qualification

Macy Wynn, a trainee CILEX advanced paralegal at Irwin Mitchell and events officer at Leeds JLD discusses the development of alternative routes to qualification in the legal industry



The legal industry is now, more than ever, open to recruiting lawyers from various backgrounds of qualification. We are saying goodbye to the traditional route as more and more individuals opt for an alternative route to qualification. It is no longer essential to have a law degree and LPC to qualify

as a solicitor, as apprenticeships and sponsorships are now widely acknowledged across the legal industry.

It is positive to see that the stigma surrounding an alternative route to qualification has gradually diminished and that many major firms recognise this route to qualification. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education reported that there are currently more than 1300 solicitor apprentices in England whilst the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives confirmed the total membership of the institute is 19,230 members.

Studying via an alternative route to qualification often means balancing study alongside your full-time or part-time job role. This can come with intense pressures and can be in addition to the everyday pressures life as a lawyer brings. These feelings may be for a variety of reasons, whether that is meeting the recommended study hours, completing work in compliance with strict time schedules or even as a result of your own perfectionism and can often worsen during 'exam season'.

Work life balance is a critical factor in successfully completing your career pathway. It plays a huge part of elevating some of the pressures discussed above and being a part of the Leeds JLD allows our members to take a break by attending events and speaking with like-minded individuals. Who knows, you may even find a 'study buddy'.

Top tips for work life balance whilst studying

With the above in mind, the Leeds JLD Committee put together these tips for promoting successful study whilst maintaining your work life balance:

Time management. Managing your time by planning and exercising conscious control of time spent on study activity. It is recommended to study for 1-2 hours at a time as this allows your brain to work at its full capacity and you'll likely be able to focus better and remember a greater proportion of what you learned.

Organisation. Creating a study planner or timetable is an effective way to organise work and study by assigning particular tasks to be completed within a specific time. It also helps you manage deadlines to avoid last minute cramming and allows for steady progress towards your goals or exams.

Take a break. It can often be overwhelming finishing a day at work and then using your evening to study sometimes the best thing to do is take a break. Maybe you exercise or have a hobby that you can factor into your routine to clear your mind and reset.

Sleep. Do not underestimate the power of a good night's sleep. You are more likely to burn out if you do not take time to rest.

As an individual studying whilst working full-time and as one of the events officers for Leeds Junior Lawyers Division (JLD), I think it is key to acknowledge the difficulty of this route to qualification and applaud those managing study alongside their everyday responsibilities as a trainee lawyer.

To get involved with Leeds JLD, read more about our committee and our aims, or keep posted with our upcoming events visit our website.

Experian report unveils Yorkshire's busiest legal advisers: the top 10 power players



This month, Experian released its highly anticipated report on Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) for the first half of 2023. The report unveiled notable shifts in the legal advisory sector.

Leading the pack with an impressive volume of 18 deals, Clarion Solicitors secured the top spot in the rankings. Following closely, Schofield Sweeney clinched second place with an impressive tally of 16 deals. However, a significant development was the rise of Squire

Patton Boggs, which leaped from fifth place in 2022 to third with a commendable 11 deals in H1 2023. Ward Hadaway also notched up 11 deals, demonstrating their prowess in the M&A arena.

Of particular interest were the biggest M&A developments in Yorkshire & the Humber, with two standout deals occurring in Leeds. The £170m acquisition bid by 49ers Enterprises Leeds SPV LP from the USA for Leeds United Football Club made waves, alongside Pandox AB's £53m deal for the iconic Queens Hotel in Leeds city centre.

However, amidst the ongoing challenging economic conditions, the total number of recorded transactions witnessed a decline. Experian's report indicated a decrease from 319 announced deals in 2022 to 263 transactions in H1 2023.

Huddersfield law firm nurtures local talent



A Huddersfield-based law firm, First4InjuryClaims, announced that it has employed 10 local graduates and apprentices in less than two years since its inception.

Focusing solely on road traffic accident (RTA) cases, First4InjuryClaims has secured over £3 million in compensation for claimants.

Among the recent additions to the team are nine graduates hailing either from Huddersfield or the town's university. Additionally, three team members have advanced their careers through internal promotions, taking on greater responsibilities.

Andrew Wild, the head of legal operations at First4InjuryClaims, recounts, "I started a business degree but soon realised it wasn't for me and quit after two weeks. Instead, I sent my CV off to a load of law firms, one of which decided to take a chance on me and gave me a job for a year. I went back to university to do law but ended up working there in the summer, training and qualifying and progressing right through to being an associate. I was given that opportunity and so I've always been very passionate about doing the same, giving someone those first steps in their legal career."

First4InjuryClaims was set up in 2021 to deal with the RTA enquiries that continued to come through the First4Lawyers group. The firm specialises exclusively in RTA work and, for cases with lower claim values, boasts settlement times approximately 100 days faster on average compared to the 250-day duration faced by claimants using the government's Official Injury Claim portal (OIC).

Former managing partner of Axiom Ince admits misappropriation of £64m in shocking affidavit



In a startling development that has sent shockwaves through the legal community, Pragnesh Modhwadia, the former managing partner of national law firm Axiom Ince, has made a shocking admission in an affidavit.

As recently reported in the Law Society Gazette, Modhwadia admitted that an eye-watering £64 million removed from the client account has, for the most part, vanished.

Perhaps the most astonishing aspect of Modhwadia's affidavit is his admission that "not a single penny" of the £64 million can be accounted for. This revelation prompted Mr. Justice Michael Green to extend a freezing order to cover the full £64 million sum.

Axiom Ince had recently suspended Modhwadia, along with two other directors, following an intervention by the Solicitors Regulation Authority, citing suspicions of dishonesty and a

failure to comply with Solicitors Act rules. The law firm itself remains operational.

The revelation came during a high court hearing where Axiom Ince sought to extend a freezing order against Modhwadia in anticipation of filing a claim against him for alleged breach of fiduciary duty. Simon Passfield, representing Axiom Ince, revealed that as of 30 June, at least £57 million was missing from the client account, and since then, an additional £7 million had been transferred.

Modhwadia's defence is expected to contend against the forthcoming claim from Axiom Ince.

The court also learned that properties purchased or upgraded using these funds were registered under the names of four companies, with Modhwadia being the sole director and shareholder of some, while others were controlled by his brother. To prevent the potential sale of these properties, the court has issued injunctions. Axiom Ince is now under police investigation.

Book by Leeds employment law experts gains momentum



Chelsea Brooke-Ward, head of the employment team at Park Square Barristers, and Jodie Hill, founder of Thrive Law, have co-authored a new book titled 'A Practical Guide to Valuing Employment Discrimination Claims'.

The official launch was on 3 October at Leeds Beckett University, sponsored by Leeds Law School.

The book stands out for its user-friendly valuation precedents. This includes summarising over 160 cases related to prohibited conduct claims, from age discrimination to racial harassment.

Nick Denys, a Law Society policy advisor, hailed 'A Practical Guide to Valuing Employment Discrimination Claims' as "invaluable" for its clarity in approaching equality-based claims:

"People will often know that something wrong has happened but will not have the first idea as to how that wrong looks when you put it against the law," Denys said, "This book helps people understand how the law relates to their circumstances. It breaks down the intimidating process of making a claim and offers valuable tips as to how to approach lawyerly matters."

Leeds family law firm, Lake Legal, celebrates fifteen years of success

Lake Legal, a specialised family law firm headquartered in Leeds, is celebrating 15 years in business whilst recording its highest-ever turnover. The firm's success is largely attributed to its success in handling divorce cases, particularly those involving high-net-worth individuals.

Claire Glaister, managing partner of Lake Legal, commented on the results, stating, "Lake Legal continues to

surge ahead, consistently demonstrating excellence within the industry. Our sterling reputation serves as a catalyst for our continued expansion, and we eagerly anticipate the year ahead as we endeavor to grow our exceptional team."

Lake Legal's founder, Lyn Ayrton, is further enhancing the firm's position in the legal landscape by expanding its arbitration practice. Lyn and Claire have garnered acclaim for their expertise in family law, with Lyn standing out as one of the region's few solicitors qualified to arbitrate cases.

This approach provides divorcing spouses with a swifter, more confidential, and cost-effective alternative to the traditional courtroom environment, resulting in a smoother client experience.

Furthermore, the firm's commitment to excellence has also been recognised by industry authorities such as Chambers & Partners and Legal 500, where they maintain a top-tier ranking.

Operating nationally from its Leeds office, Lake Legal also extends its support to a variety of charitable organisations across the region. From the Leeds Community Foundation to Moor Allerton Bowls Club and Pannal Cricket Club, Lake Legal continues to give back to the community it serves.



Unsung heroes in the legal industry



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LAW SOCIETIES

Natalie Cosgrove, president of the Yorkshire Union of Law Societies and a partner at Ashtons Legal in Leeds, on access and opportunity in the legal world

Members of the Yorkshire Union have known for some time that all corners of the Yorkshire legal landscape have been thriving and succeeding for some time now and it comes as no surprise that the spread of winners and shortlisted entrants of the Yorkshire Legal Awards are from across the Yorkshire Union.

Many local law societies, such as Sheffield, also hold their own awards to recognise their pocket of Yorkshire too. What is paramount is that we see ourselves as a thriving county with an abundance of talented, hardworking lawyers and building law firms. One can hardly go a week without reading the Gazette, and seeing that another firm closes its doors. This climate is challenging, the workloads grow, many sectors find themselves slowed down post-Covid and then we add the new dawn of fixed recoverable costs.

It may seem a cliché to say that all those who are shortlisted are worthy of our attention and praise, but it is true that we should celebrate all because when judging, there was often very little in the marking, and there were many discussions about who should be awarded. It made for a long afternoon, but rightly so. It should be that we have discussions about who should win that really debate the qualities of what take an exceptional entry, to a winner.

With that said, there remains many law firms who are struggling, really struggling. Some are working in many departments at a loss, in order to ensure that there is proper provision of services in a geographical area. This creates a pressure on that department who feel that they are not contributing to a firm and those other departments who have to bridge the financial gap. It is highly unlikely that those firms and indeed those departments will ever be thinking about entering an awards for excellence, but they are no less worthy of our attention and praise than anyone else.

It is a tale as old as time that legal aid is being squeezed and now in personal injury, the same has started to happen with the furthering of fixed recoverable costs. Even within the industry, I see comments of, 'Well it happened to us, why did they think they would be immune.' This is the legal industry, not Covid or cholera.

Therein lies the issue, whilst we can praise huge profits and major successes; deals and achievements that only others



could dream of, there is the rest of the industry, worried. As long as I have been President of the Yorkshire Union, I have seen the shrinkage of the legal landscape, amalgamation of firms and whilst some have soared, others have scraped by.

Your local law societies have struggled to stay afloat as they are often run by stressed lawyers trying to balance work pressures, with family life, and keep traditional law societies afloat.

I recall being told as President of Sheffield & District Law Society by someone who was exceptionally senior in the legal landscape, 'Oh that's still going, what a tin pot organisation.' If that's what we think of our local law societies, they do not stand a chance. When you are looking at your bottom line, your overheads and whether cutting memberships, I urge you not to let it be your local law society membership. They do incredible things. They create a lifeline for the smaller legal communities, for your staff, for campaigning for many of the things that are keeping you awake at night. They have campaigned for many years and continue to do so. If you bring an issue, they will bring it to the attention of the relevant people, and use the Yorkshire Union to have bargaining power. That is something brilliant in itself.

We should not take away from those who have shone a light on the amazing work and very worthy winners of the recent Legal Awards. But as the dust settles and the last cork was popped, as we settled back into work with sore heads and wonderful memories, please check in on those who are doing really great things every single day, with little to no recognition. We are more than our individual practice areas.

The Society's commitment to support and interest its members

Philip Lewis-Ogden is president of the Yorkshire Law Society in York

It is a matter of some pride that we here at the Yorkshire Law Society can say that our Society was established at a meeting convened in 1786, during the reign of George III and the days of William Pitt 'the Younger', making it, the second oldest of the now numerous local law societies in England and Wales, when the below public statement was made:

"Many Gentlemen being of the Opinion that General Meetings, to be occasionally held, will be of public utility and productive of useful Regulations; and a Bill in Parliament is intended which may materially affect the Profession, a General Meeting of ATTORNIES and SOLICITORS resident in the County and City of York and of such others as attend the Assizes, is requested to be held at the house of MR. RINGROSE in York on TUESDAY EVENING next, the 21st March, instant, precisely at SEVEN o'clock to consider of the Heads of the proposed Bill, and fix upon a proper Plan for establishing General Meetings in the future."

Despite our title of 'the Yorkshire Law Society', we actually only cover York and the immediate surrounding area.

The Society's president changes annually at the annual general meeting, which is usually held in April. I was honoured to take over the presidency from Johanne Spittle, in April this year. I have been in practice since qualifying in 1987 and been a member of the Yorkshire Law Society since 1994 when I moved to work for a York-based firm. Johanne has managed to steer the Society successfully out of a pandemic, and we can now once again connect and do those things that we have had to "put on hold". I am happy to have the opportunity to un-press the pause button!

Our presidents choose a charity to support for their year—I chose the Abbeyfield York Society, which provides social housing for older people and operates locally. Fundraising events will take place in my year of office and I hope that a significant sum can be raised for this good cause.

The York Legal Walk in June was a massive success. There was an excellent turnout again. It was a great opportunity to meet up with friends and colleagues. The route took us through parts of the City that I and quite a few fellow walkers had never seen before. Details of the 2024 York Legal Walk will be released in due course.

Our annual dinner will take place in November as usual (the 2022 dinner actually only took place in January this year owing to the pandemic). Once again we meet at the Merchant Adventurers Hall which is a fantastic venue in the heart of the city. We are very fortunate to have such a wonderful venue in York. The Company of Merchant Adventurers of the City of York is a Guild founded in the 14th century, and its Royal Charter was granted by Queen



Elizabeth I. Its Hall, now approaching 700 years old, was built in the 1360s.

The Society's Council is planning other events and details will be published as soon as possible.

I am grateful for the able assistance of our Honorary Treasurer, Laura Schofield, and Honorary Secretary, Simon Crack. The Yorkshire Law Society Council is lucky to have our administrator, Roni Robbins, who does a sterling job at keeping us all organised. The Council meets regularly, and we have excellent support from many local firms. York also has an active young lawyers division, and its representative joins our Council meetings. As a society we continually strive to increase our members and find ways to support and interest them.

Your winners of the Yorkshire Legal Awards 2023!

The Yorkshire Legal Awards 2023 were a record-breaking sell-out. Over 1000 guests attended to celebrate Yorkshire's legal community.

Yorkshire Legal News are incredibly proud to announce the 26 winners of the Yorkshire Legal Awards 2023! This year the awards boasted a record-breaking number of submissions and attendees, which culminated into an incredible night to remember in the heart of Leeds.



Sponsors of the Yorkshire Legal Awards 2023

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the **apprenticeship** guide

Appleyard Lees
Intellectual property law

BPP
UNIVERSITY
LAW SCHOOL

Groundsure
LOCATION INTELLIGENCE

HICE
HIGH COURT
ENFORCEMENT
GROUP*

InfoTrack

jmglendingning
Professional Risks

KROLL

Leigh Day

LexisNexis ENTERPRISE
SOLUTIONS

Miller

**PERFECT
PORTAL**

PracticeEvolve

**PARK
SQUARE**
BARRISTERS

**RG
Law**

scala
The Professional Marketers

SEARCHFLOW

Spire Barristers
FAMILY & PUBLIC LAW SPECIALISTS

St Phillips
BARRISTERS

strikes.
ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

Find out
what the
judges had
to say:



Law Firm of the Year: Large
Sponsored by LexisNexis Enterprise Solutions
Winner: Switalskis

The winner of the Law Firm of the Year: Large stood out to the judges for not only their approach to the sensitive fields they work across, but also for the diverse range of community engagements they're involved in.



Residential Property
Sponsored by InfoTrack
Winner: Devonshires Solicitors

The Residential Property winner, as a whole, covers a lot of areas. The complexity of their work was clear in the listed cases and the work they do both internally and in the local community, including forums, training and employability days.



Litigation and Dispute Resolution
Sponsored by Strikes
Winner: Shared Affairs

The winner of Litigation and Dispute Resolution demonstrated the work they do and their client care excellently. This firm really taps into a niche market, making the law accessible for a community who may otherwise not have any access to legal advice.



In-House Team of the Year
Sponsored by The Apprenticeship Guide
Winner: Bupa UK

This year's winner of the In-House Team of the Year stood out for the range of work they do, including their volunteer work. Their ability to remain accessible whilst achieving commercial exposure is an outstanding accomplishment.



Commercial Property
Sponsored by Groundsure
Winner: Adleshaw Goddard

The winners of this award have shown their dedication to maintaining excellent client service levels. Their investment in IT not only contributes to this but also allows their staff to work more efficiently. They are also recognised for their varied and significant work in the local community.



Niche Law Firm of the Year
Sponsored by Miller Insurance
Winner: Frederick Solicitors

The winner of Niche Law Firm of the Year continuously demonstrates their dedication to achieving justice for clients from all backgrounds. Their clear commitment to client care is admirable.



Chambers of the Year
Sponsored by Leigh Day
Winner: Parklane Plowden

The winner of Chambers of the Year stood out to the judges for the range of charity work they do across multiple areas. These chambers are making a tangible difference both within the legal sector and the local community.



Debt Recovery
Sponsored by High Court Enforcement Group
Winner: Weightmans

The winner of Debt Recovery is client focused, purposefully exercising care in the work that they do. They recognise the importance of suicide prevention in their field and work hard to ensure their efforts are focused in this area. Their support for their junior staff and their proactive approach to their field makes them worthy winners of this award.



Intellectual Property
Sponsored by Kroll
Winner: Walker Morris

The winner of Intellectual Property demonstrates excellent use of technology within their teams, which has benefitted the firm massively. They have outstanding client retention rates and support their community tirelessly through their pro-bono work.



Law Firm of the Year: Medium
Sponsored by PracticeEvolve
Winner: Schofield Sweeney

The winner of this award offers innovative staff benefits such as free financial advice for their colleagues. They are heavily involved in charity efforts and their outstanding client feedback demonstrates exactly why they deserve this award.



Criminal Law
Winner: Favell Smith & Lawson

The winner of Criminal Law understands the value and importance of their pro-bono work for those who do not have access to legal advice. They also spend dedicated time within their local community, encouraging the next generation to get involved in the legal sector.



In-House Lawyer of the Year
Winner: Emma Levin from Mina Digital

This year's winner of In-House Lawyer of the year has made a huge impact on their workplace in a very short space of time. They have committed to making their place of work a supportive and inclusive space by implementing new beneficial policies.



Private Client
Sponsored by Perfect Portal
Winner: Weightmans

The winner of Private Client stood out to our judges for their level of expertise and knowledge within this sector. They are heavily involved in their community and are frequently invited to speak at events about the private client sector.



Regulatory & Compliance
Winner: DWF Law

The winner of Regulatory & Compliance has ticked all the boxes for this award, from clients through to representation. Their innovative ideas have resulted in improved document management, providing their clients with the best possible service. In addition, their various contributions to the community made them a stand-out to the judges.



Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence
Sponsored by Scala
Winner: Stewarts

The winner of the Personal Injury and Clinical Negligence category offers additional legal services to their clients free of charge as well as offering pro-bono work. They purposefully do not overload their staff with cases to allow them to give clients the attention they need, resulting in happier staff and efficient client solutions.



Employment Law
Sponsored by St Philips Chambers
Winner: Thrive Law

The winner of Employment Law has been outstandingly proactive with their approach to mental health and well-being in the workplace. The firm also provides knowledge and resources on the same topics externally through boards and associations.



Family Law
Sponsored by Spire Barristers
Winner: Makin Dixon

The winner of Family Law's client feedback speaks for itself, with their client care being second to none. This firm has successfully provided legal aid for thousands of victims across the nation, ensuring they are provided with the help and protection they need.



Corporate & Commercial
Sponsored by AMT Auto
Winner: Brabners

The winner of Corporate and Commercial is focused on showing their clients that they can deliver on their promises and build trusted relationships that last. Their investments into central systems have also helped their teams operate more efficiently and improve their clients' experience.



Best ESG Campaign
Sponsored by LexisNexis Enterprise Solutions
Winner: DWF Law

The Best ESG Campaign has been awarded to a firm who are focused not only on encouraging and maintaining diversity internally but are also having a positive impact on their community. With groundbreaking future aims already being set in place, this firm is not slowing down any time soon.



Law Firm of the Year: Small
Winner: Frederick Solicitors

The winner of Law Firm of the Year: Small has had an impressive journey to reach where they are in the present day. Their innovative policies and practices have brought their continuing successes, all of which deserve to be recognised here tonight.



LawTech Initiative of the Year
Winner: Schafeld Sweeney

The winner of LawTech Initiative of the Year has created a system which ensures the smooth running of extensive processes. The initiative has ensured ease of processing for companies whilst maintaining user simplicity and is now being recognised further afield for its benefits.



Rising Star of the Year
Sponsored by RG Law

Winner: Philip Copley from Hagen Wolf
The winner of Rising Star of the Year has been and continues to be a positive contributor to their firm. Their pro-bono work hasn't gone unrecognised on top of taking the time and effort to train and mentor their junior colleagues. They are a real asset to their team.



Partner of the Year
Sponsored by SearchFlow

Winner: Dan Hirst from Chadwick Lawrence
The winner of Partner of the Year has demonstrated their high level of dedication to their clients, going above and beyond in the work they do. They also take the time to create a positive environment for other colleagues at the firm, ensuring those around them are supported at work.



Trainee Solicitor of the Year
Sponsored by BPP University

Winner: Ravi Rathore from GT Stewart Solicitors & Advocates
The winner of this highly competitive category stood out to the judges for their commitment to their role both at and away from their desk. They have travelled to help those in need, putting themselves at the forefront of communities, and have shown exceptional dedication to the legal sector at the very earliest stages of their career.



Managing Partner of the Year
Winner: Matt Pugh from Hagen Wolf

The winner of Managing Partner of the Year has blown the judges away with the exponential growth of their firm. Their dedication to their practice from the conception of their firm has meant that their personal development as a legal professional has been subject to equal levels of improvement.



Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year
Sponsored by Park Square Barristers
Winner: Sarah Khan-Bashir from SKB Law

This year's Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year has tirelessly dedicated themselves to their communities, looking to bolster the next generation of legal professionals. They focus themselves and their practice on inclusivity as they understand the impact of the work they do for their clients.

Moving on up

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



Wilkin Chapman has announced the promotion of four new senior solicitors across its Lincoln, Grimsby, and Beverley offices, bolstering its commercial property and debt recovery divisions.

Gillian Smith, a seasoned commercial property lawyer, has secured her promotion within Wilkin Chapman's Lincoln office. The Grimsby office has welcomed the elevation of two experts – Amber Aisthorpe in debt recovery and Tom Furneaux in commercial property. Additionally, Hannah Loft, an adept commercial property litigator, will divide her time between the Grimsby and Beverley offices.

Smith, who joined Wilkin Chapman's Commercial Property team in Lincoln in 2020, has exhibited proficiency in handling matters such as freehold and leasehold transactions, commercial landlord-tenant affairs, as well as secured lending and refinancing. She expressed her enthusiasm for this new role, emphasising the ongoing challenges brought about by the current cost of living and mortgage rate concerns.

Amber Aisthorpe, with an extensive decade-long association with Wilkin Chapman, specialises in debt recovery and collaborates with local authorities to resolve unpaid taxes, insolvency, and adult social care disputes. Aisthorpe underscored the significance of recouping owed funds for stretched council budgets, ensuring their allocation towards public services.

Hannah Loft, a specialist in commercial disputes and property litigation, has transitioned from a paralegal to a senior solicitor. Loft, who has been instrumental in establishing the disputes team in East Yorkshire, is now enhancing the firm's offering on both banks of the Humber.

Tom Furneaux, who has spent over 10 years with Wilkin Chapman, has been recognised for his expertise in new build housing site setups, infrastructure, and utility agreements. Despite recent reports of a downturn in the property market, Furneaux revealed that the slowdown hasn't been as drastic as initially anticipated, particularly in the new build sector.



Dr Ruby Bhatti, a highly accomplished solicitor with a distinguished career spanning over three decades, has been selected as one of the deputy lieutenants for West Yorkshire.

The announcement was met with gratitude and enthusiasm from Dr Bhatti, she said, "Having worked within communities for over 30 years, I feel

privileged to be given a further opportunity to continue my sincere commitment to working with diverse communities and carry on making a difference to society as a whole."

Dr Bhatti's portfolio does also extend beyond her legal expertise. She occupies significant roles on various national, regional, and local panels related to health and research. Her dedication to the community is further evident through her roles as a trustee on numerous Multi-Academy Trust Boards within Yorkshire, as well as her position as a Non-Executive Director of Independent Governance Support (IGS), a charity committed to promoting effective governance. Dr Bhatti's substantial engagement extends to local community centres and social enterprise organisations, illustrating her commitment to philanthropic endeavours. Her recent appointment to the Active Bradford Board exemplifies her ongoing efforts to foster positive change.

Dr Bhatti's accomplishments have garnered significant recognition. In 2019, she was awarded an OBE by Her Majesty the Queen for her contributions in the fields of housing and young people. Her dedication to community welfare was further honoured in 2020 when she received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Bradford.

Dr Bhatti said, "I am humbled and at the same time honoured to be appointed as a deputy lieutenant for West Yorkshire and I look forward to serving the community, the King, and the Lord-Lieutenant in his work to champion and support the county and people of West Yorkshire."



Appleyard Lees, a prominent intellectual property law firm in the UK, has announced the appointment of Adam Nabozny as their new chief executive officer (CEO). This decision comes after a rigorous selection process and signifies a significant step for the firm.

Adam Nabozny brings a wealth of experience in professional services to his new role. Nabozny is a qualified solicitor and chartered manager.

Expressing his enthusiasm, Adam stated, "I am delighted to join the fantastic team at Appleyard Lees as we continue to build and drive the firm's strategy. To join such a prestigious and leading firm of professionals is an absolute privilege. I am very much looking forward to working with my new colleagues, across all our locations, as we continue to offer the very best service to our clients and deliver on our exciting plans."

The firm has offices in UK innovation hubs, including Cambridge, Leeds, Halifax, Manchester, and the BioHub at Alderley. Appleyard Lees offers strategic IP advice to clients both in the UK and globally. The firm boasts around 70 patent and trademark attorneys and litigators.

As CEO, Adam will assume responsibility for all operational aspects of the business, working closely with the partners to advance a firm strategy that fosters further growth, aligned with the evolving needs of clients both now and in the future.

David Clark, managing partner at Appleyard Lees, expressed

his excitement about this appointment, saying, "We are excited to welcome Adam on board as chief executive officer to lead our next chapter of growth and success."



Switalskis – with offices in Barnsley, Bradford, Doncaster, Honley, and Huddersfield – has announced the addition of solicitor Emma Hudson.

Hudson's appointment is set to strengthen the firm's clinical negligence team, which already boasts 83 members of staff across Yorkshire and London.

Hudson will primarily work on birth injury cases alongside Kay Barnes, who is head of the Leeds office of Switalskis' clinical negligence department.

Hudson explains that her experience of caring for her own child, who has specific complex health needs, gives her a high level of empathy. She says: "My own experience has given me a greater understanding of what our clients go through when they experience a significant life-changing event and its deep impact on the whole family.

"It's a privilege to work so closely with clients and to be invited to look at the details of their cases, especially at a time when they are often facing unimaginable personal challenges. My role is to leave no stone unturned, to gather the facts of the case, to support families in their search for answers and achieve the justice they deserve to help them move forward with their lives."

Says Kay Barnes: "Emma's appointment reflects our commitment to attracting, supporting and retaining the best professionals in the industry. She is a compassionate and skilled solicitor and I have no doubt that Emma will be an asset to our clinical negligence team and firm, guiding clients with empathy and expert advice. We are delighted she is joining us."

BRM Solicitors, a prominent regional law firm, has appointed Lewis Hastie as a director for its dispute team in Sheffield.

Hastie brings with him over 14 years of post-qualified experience, specialising primarily in contentious probate cases and representing clients in contentious Court of Protection proceedings.

This significant addition to the firm is aimed at bolstering both the dispute and private client teams, coming at a time when these departments are experiencing expansion and growth.

BRM Solicitors is a law firm with offices in Sheffield and Chesterfield. The firm has been in operation since 1982 and represents a diverse range of clients locally, nationally, and internationally, including private individuals, commercial organisations, trusts, and charities.



Lewis Hastie expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "I am very excited to be joining BRM, a firm that is expanding quickly and is fully committed to providing the best possible service for its clients, really going above and beyond for them. I look forward to bringing my strong experience in contentious probate and contentious Court of Protection cases to the firm and positively contributing to the firm's vision for the future. I look forward to working with the team and helping to expand its growing client base, building on the excellent progress it has made."

BRM's Director and head of the dispute team, Rob Cooke, lauded Hastie's appointment, saying, "Lewis brings a wealth of experience to the team, having worked in contentious probate for a number of years. It is immediately evident that Lewis really cares about getting to know each of his clients and prides himself in building long-lasting relationships – a value that BRM holds at the heart of the firm."



Leeds-based commercial law firm

Tyr has strengthened its roster of legal talent with the appointment of Samantha Astell to its commercial property team. Samantha, previously a legal director at Gateley Legal, brings her expertise in commercial and residential development projects, asset management, and landlord and tenant work to Tyr.

Tyr operates from a single office in the heart of Leeds. Their commitment to providing a personal touch to clients, coupled with an unwavering dedication to excellence, has solidified their reputation as an innovative and progressive firm in both culture and approach.

Dean Jowett, managing partner and head of commercial property at Tyr, expressed his enthusiasm about Samantha's arrival, stating, "We are delighted to welcome Sam to our growing team. Sam is an extremely talented lawyer who brings a wealth of experience from across the sector and is a great fit with our key values."

Samantha Astell reciprocated the sentiment, saying, "I am thrilled to have joined the firm. Tyr has a fantastic commercial property team with an impressive array of expertise. I am looking forward to working as part of such a dynamic team; we strive to provide an elite service, and I'm excited to contribute to the firm's continued growth."

Samantha's addition to Tyr's ranks underscores the firm's commitment to delivering top-notch legal services to its clients. With her specialised skills and extensive experience, she is poised to play a vital role in further enhancing Tyr's position as a leader in the UK's legal industry.



Leeds based law firm **Ward Hadaway** has introduced Ed Davison as a paralegal in their family and matrimonial team, marking a significant move in the firm's expansion across Yorkshire.

Davison was named Rising Star of the Year at the 2022 Yorkshire Law Society Awards, and his addition signifies a crucial step in the firm's strategy to grow its national family and matrimonial department. It follows the recent addition of renowned partner David Lister in January 2023. The firm has experienced substantial growth in recent times, especially in Yorkshire, with a revenue increase of over 400% compared to the previous year.

David Lister, partner at Ward Hadaway, stated, "Ed's appointment underscores our commitment to growth, both regionally and nationally. We are witnessing increasing demand from clients across Yorkshire and in the city, and Ed will play a key role in our client-focused approach."

Ward Hadaway is expanding across the north of England, with their family and matrimonial teams in Manchester and Newcastle also experiencing substantial growth, evidencing the firm's dedication to providing high-quality family legal services.

Ed commented: "Joining Ward Hadaway is an incredible opportunity for me. The firm's commitment to talent development and its dynamic culture was a key factor in my decision. I'm looking forward to qualifying as a chartered legal executive at a firm with such ambitious growth plans and I'm excited to be contributing already, to its continued success."



Sheffield based law firm **Shakespeare Martineau** has announced the addition of corporate partner Ryan Fitzpatrick to its team. With over a decade of corporate legal experience under his belt, Fitzpatrick's introduction brings a wealth of expertise to the firm.

Fitzpatrick's legal career has encompassed a wide spectrum of corporate matters. His portfolio

includes mergers and acquisitions, private equity transactions, corporate finance, management buyouts, business startups, joint ventures, partnership agreements, corporate restructuring, and shareholder agreement drafting.

Fitzpatrick stated, "I am proud to have joined Shakespeare Martineau. The firm has an outstanding reputation for investing in its people and clients, resulting in a high level of service, which is clearly evidenced by its numerous awards and accolades, including its prestigious B Corporation status. Sheffield is a vibrant city and is celebrated for its innovative technology companies and strong commercial market, which makes it

an inspiring place to work as a corporate lawyer. I am looking forward to being part of a team responsible for expanding the Shakespeare Martineau brand and footprint in Sheffield, South Yorkshire and beyond by offering first-class corporate and healthcare legal services."

Within the healthcare domain, Fitzpatrick assists both NHS and private healthcare providers in business sales and acquisitions, expense sharing agreements, partnership arrangements, incorporations, and navigating the complex regulatory landscape.

Michael Stace, partner and head of corporate at Shakespeare Martineau, explained, "We are continuing our investment in the Yorkshire market – a region in which we see a lot of potential – and we are thrilled to welcome Ryan to the Sheffield team, a move that will help to boost this commitment. Ryan has a strong reputation in Sheffield, and his technical knowledge and broad experience will be a real asset to our team as we look to enhance our transactional offering and cement our reputation in South Yorkshire."



Legal practice **Gordons** has announced the appointment of four new trainee solicitors and two apprentice solicitors.

Among the four trainees, Jonathan Wu and Tosif Bashir have transitioned from their previous roles as legal assistants within the firm. Abbie Little and Daniel Callaghan are embarking on the first leg of their legal career with Gordons.

These four trainees will experience four six-month placements, offering them diverse exposure to various specialised service areas within Gordons.

Amelia Horne and Jacob Eaton, two further additions to the Gordons team, have joined the Gordons law apprenticeship programme. This initiative has garnered multiple awards and has been operating for twelve years.

As apprentices in this programme, their journey to qualified solicitor status will involve a combination of hands-on learning and academic study. Gordons shoulders the financial burden of the salary and course fees of their apprentices, allowing them to focus on their learning. Corporate partner Amy Pierechod as well as Megan Stocks, previous graduate of the Gordons law apprenticeship programme, will oversee their development.

Victoria Davey, managing partner of Gordons, stated, "We have high standards and a rigorous selection process for our training contracts and apprenticeships, which results in us only recruiting exceptional candidates. Alongside strong academic performance, all six of our new trainees and apprentices demonstrated a positive attitude and enthusiasm throughout the recruitment process. These skills will play an important role in them becoming trusted advisors, and something we will continue to focus on as part of their development. All of us at the firm are looking forward to helping them realise their potential so they can become solicitors who will contribute to Gordons' future success."

Rollits brews up support for Macmillan coffee morning



In September, Rollits LLP hosted a charitable coffee morning in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support, the chosen charity of

the year for the firm. This event marks the latest in a series of initiatives highlighting the firm's deep-rooted commitment to supporting the crucial work carried out by Macmillan.

Macmillan Cancer Support provide services for people living with cancer. The charity also raises money to provide cancer services, research and campaign for better cancer care.

The charity played a pivotal role in providing support to

Andrew Digwood, a former partner at Rollits' York office, who sadly passed away in November of last year.

Rollits has been a steadfast supporter of Macmillan for the past decade, actively participating in the charity's annual Macmillan Race Day fundraiser. This year, the event achieved a remarkable milestone, generating an impressive total of £360,000.

Each year, Rollits assembles a team of approximately 30 partners and staff members who enthusiastically engage in selling raffle tickets, collecting donations, and even donning costumes. Notably, Chris Drinkall, a partner in the firm, assumes the role of the event's mascot, Hero the Horse.

Suzgo Kaluluma, a partner at the York office, expressed their pride in the firm's volunteers and their dedication to the cause. Kaluluma stated, "Our volunteers have always had a great time at the event, and many of them return year after year. This year, their efforts contributed to raising around £32,500 towards that astonishing final total."

LCF Law plants 500 trees in two years



Yorkshire-based full-service firm LCF Law is marking its second year of dedicated support for the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust.

The Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust is a charitable organisation committed to the preservation and enhancement of the Yorkshire Dales' natural and cultural heritage.

To date, LCF Law has donated £7,500 to the cause,

contributing to the planting of 500 trees. These trees are expected to offset 80 tonnes of carbon emissions over the next five decades, a substantial environmental impact.

LCF Law's managing partner, Simon Stell, emphasised the significance of their collaboration with the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, stating, "Through this partnership with the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, we are helping to address the climate and biodiversity crises, whilst supporting the creation of beautiful new woodlands for everyone to enjoy."

Richard Hore from the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust said: "It's been great getting to know some of the LCF Law team. We know they have enjoyed engaging with our partnership and connecting with nature to improve their wellbeing and that of our planet."

LCF Law boasts a staff of over 135 people, including 24 partners, spread across its offices in Leeds, Bradford, Harrogate, and Ilkley.

A thrilling descent: Crockett & Co's abseil adventure for local charities



Family law firm Crockett & Co, based in Harehills, Leeds, celebrated a milestone anniversary this weekend by taking part in a

70ft charity abseil.

Celebrating its thirtieth year in Harehills, the 19-strong team from Crockett & Co Solicitors abseiled 70ft from the Cow & Calf rocks in Ilkley on Saturday, to raise money for three local charities: Leeds Women's Aid, a charity providing domestic violence and abuse support; Zarach, which delivers beds and basics to children in poverty; and LIP (Leeds Involving People), which exists to support the improvement of health, social care

and community services in Leeds.

Founder Helen Crockett explains: "We've raised £1,485 so far for these very worthwhile causes. I'm so proud of the team for taking part and demonstrating our long-standing commitment to the community we serve and the causes that matter to them most."

Helen adds: "As part of the year-long acts of kindness campaign, we have already purchased a fridge freezer for a local gentleman whose appliance broke, bought new bedding for a client, and arranged for a young mother to travel and stay in London for a week so that she can spend time with her child in hospital there. It's what we love doing."

Crockett & Co was shortlisted for Small Firm of the Year at the Yorkshire Legal Awards, reflecting the company's work within the Leeds community and its care of clients and staff. Helen Crockett was also shortlisted for the Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year Award for the fifth year running.

David Greenwood, Switalskis Solicitors

David is a partner and head of the child abuse compensation department at Switalskis Solicitors. He was named Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year at the 2022 Yorkshire Legal Awards.

You won Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year at the Yorkshire Legal Awards in 2022, a significant achievement. Has this impacted your practise, and what advice would you give to this year's Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year award?

I've felt a certain pressure to be on top form when talking to colleagues and judges around the country! Advice? Be yourself! That's the advice I give everyone. Authenticity is highly valued.

Can you share some of your thoughts on the importance of celebrating and promoting excellence in the legal profession within the region?

Our job is to metaphorically hold the hands of individuals and to oil the wheels of industry. In Yorkshire we do that with a no-nonsense attitude, and I've always been impressed by how Yorkshire lawyers co-operate to get things done. This is something we should celebrate every day.

Given your role in the judging panel, are there any emerging trends or notable shifts in the legal landscape in Yorkshire that you've observed through the awards process?

From a judging perspective I was surprised and impressed with the number of smaller firms finding a specialist niche.

Inspiring young people to enter the legal profession is a passion of yours. What advice would you offer to young people who don't know where to start?

Wow! To potential junior lawyers I'd say if you want to get rich find another line of work but if you really want to get into the law, commit to it, study and work hard and above all be nice to people on the way up. You never know when you might need a favour on the way down!

Working in Yorkshire, have you noticed any unique challenges or opportunities that lawyers in the region face, particularly in your area of expertise?

I'd say at Switalskis we have an embarrassment of riches when it comes to trainee applicants and so Yorkshire's future looks bright.

Let's talk about your area of practice. Can you tell us about your journey into specialising in child abuse compensation claims, and what motivated you to focus on this area of law back in 1998?

Like many young lawyers in towns across Yorkshire (mine was Dewsbury) I had to spend a lot of time in the magistrates and police stations. There I met young men who complained of child sex abuse in their council children's home in



Huddersfield. I was appalled and decided to do something about it. Here I am today still doing it and I'm still appalled at these crimes.

How has the legal landscape surrounding child abuse compensation claims changed since you began your career, and what trends do you foresee in the coming years?

Back in the 1990s I was very much adapting the law of personal injury to child abuse cases. It didn't really fit so me and others around the country came together into the Association of Child Abuse Lawyers to improve the rights of victims. We share ideas, pursue strategic cases and campaign for new legislation. There is pushback from insurers and large institutions, but we've made some progress and we're hoping for more schemes of compensation to emerge to replace the harsh environment of litigation.

As someone deeply committed to social justice, how do you balance the emotional toll that often comes with handling cases of child abuse while maintaining your dedication to your clients?

My old senior partner used to say, "Don't take on clients' problems!" but I work for the socially disadvantaged and I reckon I have to put myself in the client's shoes. I think it makes for a sharper lawyer and a better result. Don't ask me how I detach my work life from home. I'm not sure I do.

Beyond your legal career, is there a personal philosophy or principle that you've carried with you throughout your work in child abuse compensation claims that you'd like to share with our readers?

The way I see the world is that we're all just people and deserve a basic level of respect. "Treat others the way you'd like to be treated" is what my dear old Mum taught me and I try to stay true to that advice.



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