

Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer

The Official Journal of Leeds Law Society

 Leeds
Law Society

December 2023
Issue 185

Winding down, looking forward

Unwrapping legal insights as
we enter the festive season



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Winding down, looking forward



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

This will be my last article for the calendar year and marks the halfway point of my presidency. December has been a month for winding down in terms of presidential duties after a very busy few months. In my last article, I reflected on the buzz that we feel in September, that “back-to-school” feeling. But as I write this article, I find myself looking forward to the new year- excited to get back out and meet more of our membership, but also very ready for a break!

In October we saw a former president of the Leeds Law Society, Nick Emmerson, inaugurated as president of The Law Society of England and Wales. I was privileged enough to be invited to introduce him during his special celebration. Nick has pledged to focus his attention on regionality and local law societies. He will visit various regions and really get to the bottom of what impacts practitioners daily. We are in the process of arranging for Nick to visit Leeds next year- I know he is keen to meet as many of you as possible. I am sure you will all join me in showing your support for Nick and looking forward to seeing what he achieves over the next 12 months.

Speaking from personal experience, having the ongoing support from those you serve really does make a huge difference. On that note, I would like to thank all our members who have attended our events and participated in our various initiatives. The success of the LLS is directly linked to membership engagement, so I am thankful to you all.

I had the pleasure of judging and attending the Yorkshire Legal Awards in October. It goes without saying that the winners and those shortlisted should be incredibly proud of themselves. The standard of entries was particularly high, we really do have a first-class sector here. But I would go further than that and say that everyone who works within the legal sector in Yorkshire should give themselves a massive pat on the back and be proud of the community we have built. It was particularly heart-warming to see how supportive those who attended on the night were. I have attended several awards ceremonies during my presidency in other parts of the country and some may say I am biased, but the talent, warmth and kindness in our region is unrivalled.

Naturally, we will all be focused on winding down for the festive period. My thoughts are with all of you during this time, it is natural for us all to try and get as much as possible done before we have time off, but that is often to the detriment of our mental and physical health. I have no doubt that in every area of law there are stressors at this time of the year. For conveyancers that might be completing a house purchase in good time for Christmas. For litigators it will be meeting important deadlines (sometimes in the face of the court setting them at less than convenient times). For family lawyers it will be frantically agreeing Christmas arrangements and the influx of domestic abuse cases that always come at this time of the year. It is easier said than done, but I hope that the lead up to your time off is a stress-free as possible(!), that you are all able to get some well-deserved rest and really enjoy the time you have with your loved ones. As always, I am committed to improving wellbeing in the sector and hope to bring several events to you all next year to help with this.

I have just returned from some much-needed annual leave in warmer climates. It was quite the shock to go from 30-degree heat to minus temperatures within 24 hours. This was not helped by my lack of planning, resulting in me landing at Manchester airport at six in the morning with flip flops on. But as I walked through Leeds city centre last week (appropriately dressed this time), I was reminded of what a beautiful city many of us work and live in. It was quite the picture with the christmas lights, market stalls and people socialising with friends or colleagues at the end of the day. It reminded me to pause for a moment and enjoy the little things, something we often forget to do when we are busy (which for lot of us is most of the time).

Whilst for many this is a happy time of the year; it is also particularly difficult for some. Whether that be juggling the stress of work life, money worries, personal difficulties or missing those who are no longer here. With that in mind, I urge you all to check in on colleagues and friends, perhaps those you may have lost touch with this year, but most importantly go easy on yourselves. A small act of kindness, be it a text message or smile to a stranger, can go a long way.

Finally, seasons greetings to you all. I hope that 2024 brings you everything you wish for, both professionally and personally. I cannot wait to see you all in the new year.

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 three course meal. Each table will be provided with a half 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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Yorkshire solicitor among first to qualify through SQE exam

A Yorkshire solicitor has become one of the first in the country to qualify through the SQE exam. In 2021, this new route was introduced, designed to assist candidates from non-traditional legal backgrounds in entering the field of law.

Brittany Clark, a solicitor at law firm, Holden Smith, has qualified after two years studying the solicitors qualifying exam (SQE).

During her studies at The University of Law (ULaw), Brittany also worked at Holden Smith. This allowed her to prepare for the two-stage SQE assessment while bolstering and developing her skills working in legal practice.

Ms Clark said: "I'm delighted to be one of the first in the UK to qualify as a solicitor via this new route.

"The SQE has revolutionised the way in which solicitors can train, promoting social mobility and diversity in the legal

profession, and opening the doors of a career in law to people who may not have considered it, or thought it was out of reach.

"Qualifying via this route meant I was able to gain valuable, on-the-job experience and learn from my colleagues at Holden Smith, while also earning a salary from day one."

James Smith, co-founder and director at Holden Smith, said: "Until recently, the route into a career in law has been very prescriptive, but things have moved on. At Holden Smith, we welcomed the introduction of the SQE, because being able to recruit solicitors from a diverse talent pool is key to the future of our practice."



IDR Law debuts charity claim checker for legacy gifts

IDR Law has recently launched IDR Claim Checker for charities. The online tool aims to assist legacy officers and junior legacy officers in promptly evaluating claims related to legacy gifts. In 2020, legacy gifts amounted to £3 billion annually. Charitable organisations may face challenges as this figure is expected to increase.

The IDR Charity Claim Checker delivers an immediate assessment of 1975 act claims. Additionally, it provides insights into the merit of a claim and is designed specifically to guide legacy officers through intricate situations.

Upon receiving a claim letter, legacy officers often face a period of concern, dealing with various considerations. Positioned as a resource, the IDR Charity Claim Checker guides officers in comprehending the relevant facts of the claim. This enables them to make informed decisions that align with the interests of all parties involved. The tool provides information and guidance within the form, assisting

officers in evaluating claims and outlining appropriate steps for response.

Following the completion of the claim checker, legacy officers receive a personalised report featuring advice tailored to the specific claim. This, in turn, empowers officers to confidently communicate the situation to trustees and senior management.

Martin Holdsworth, CEO & founder of IDR Law, stated: "As the only law firm in the UK that specialises in handling inheritance disputes and nothing else, we have been able to focus on a myriad of different ways that we can help our clients. We are well known for creating and harnessing legaltech to support our clients and referrers and it was inevitable that we would turn our attention to the charity legacy dispute sector."

Harper James achieves milestone revenue

Harper James has concluded its financial year with a 42% increase in revenue, totalling £9.8 million. The firm, which has exhibited consistent growth since its inception, aims to double its legal team by 2025. They are also aiming to achieve a turnover of £20 million by the fiscal year 2026, relying solely on organic growth.

Established with a unique model involving senior remote-working lawyers and subscription plans, Harper James has grown to a team of 113 professionals, providing support to over 4,400 businesses. The firm's success is often attributed to its distinctive culture, marked by a commitment to work-life balance and a vision of a world where all viable businesses thrive.

To preserve its unique culture during rapid expansion, the firm embarked on a collaborative project, resulting in the creation of a 'guidebook to working at Harper James.' A firm-wide survey revealed unanimous agreement among respondents that the identified values strongly resonated with them.

The seven core values shaping the firm's culture include

practicing flexibility without judgment, fostering trust and support, maintaining a relaxed yet organised atmosphere, eschewing office politics, promoting humility, encouraging open communication, and making decisions with compassion, integrity, and responsibility.

Commenting on the firm's growth and values, founder & CEO Toby Harper emphasised the importance of achieving financial strength, especially in uncertain times. Harper expressed his commitment to maintaining a flexible and politics-free working environment, highlighting the positive impact on the firm's interactions with both employees and clients.

Harper James recently earned recognition in the inaugural Midlands & East of England Fast Growth 50 Index, standing out as the only national commercial law firm listed across all regions.



Jones Myers moves to new headquarters in Leeds

Niche family law firm, Jones Myers, has moved to a new headquarters in the heart of Leeds.

Richard Peaker, Jones Myers' managing partner, said: "As one of the first family law practices of our kind to be founded in Leeds over thirty years ago, we are proud to retain our headquarters in this vibrant city.

"Our reputation sees us receiving referrals from valued clients on a regional, national, and international level due to the extensive expertise of our specialist family lawyers who include our own in-house barrister.

"There is a great buzz in our new base, and we are delighted to receive positive feedback from our valued team, clients, and partners."

Jones Myers has also retained its number one ranking in both the Chambers and Legal 500 guide. Their position has been maintained for three decades.

The Chambers 2024 guide highlights the firm's expertise in financial remedy proceedings. It also recognises cases

involving shareholder issues, property portfolios and complex pension schemes.

It also includes client testimonials who applaud the practice's knowledge and support as 'exceptional'.

The latest Legal 500 guide describes how the practice 'goes from strength to strength'. It also highlights how its expansion to offices in Harrogate and York: 'ensures that their dedicated brand of family legal advice is available to more of the general public.'

Jones Myers also supports the achievements of law graduates at Leeds Beckett University.

Since 2020 the firm has awarded the Jones Myers prize for the best overall performance on master of laws of England and Wales to a Leeds law school student.



Sheffield corporate team celebrates £100m in cumulative deals



Sheffield-based MD Law's corporate team has completed deals worth a cumulative value of more than £100m in the last year.

Examples of their successes include acting for the owners on the sale of a 78-bed, purpose-built Middlesex care home. The firm also assisted with the disposal of a Sheffield based commercial

laundry business to a nationwide provider.

The complex legal work was completed by MD Law's James Burdekin, who specialises in commercial and corporate law and solicitor Natalie Gibson who joined earlier this year. James became the fifth partner at the expanding Broomhall-based boutique firm in October 2021.

James said: "The team has had a great start, picking up a number of significant instructions – many recommended by our local contacts in accountancy and finance. Despite economic uncertainty and a harder market, the outlook is still looking positive, with many deals in the pipeline as there is funding available."

James' skills include advising a wide variety of businesses across all sectors. His particular specialisms lie in share and assets acquisitions and disposals; company restructures and sales; terms and conditions of trade; shareholders' agreements and partnerships, and advising on corporate governance.

Founder and partner of MD Law Matthew Dixon said: "The last 12 months have been our busiest ever on the corporate side, and the new team has worked incredibly hard to ensure all projects were finished to our usual high quality."

Schofield Sweeney assists in major wedding venue sale

Wharfedale Grange, a luxury wedding and events company, operates a venue between Leeds and Harrogate. Their offering includes a purpose-built wedding barn, farmhouse accommodation and floristry shop. They have recently acquired Solberge Hall in Northallerton for an undisclosed sum.

The Classic Lodges hotel group has owned the 24-bedroom Georgian country house hotel since 2015 when they purchased it for £1.8 million. The hotel is set in 9 acres of woodland and is situated near the North Yorkshire Moors and Yorkshire Dales.

The deal included the purchase of all assets, including the hotel, restaurant, facilities and grounds. New ownership will directly transfer all 40 members of staff.

A multi-disciplinary team from Schofield Sweeney advised Wharfedale Grange on the purchase. This included Manjit Virdee and Sadia Ali from the real estate team, Jessica Fielden and Kate Fox from the corporate team and Craig Burman from the environmental and regulatory department.

Claire Thomas, chief executive of Wharfedale Grange, said

"We were delighted to continue our working relationship with Schofield Sweeney. The team gave invaluable legal advice and assisted in making the purchase a seamless process".

The company are renaming Solberge Hall as Wharfedale Country House following a refurbishment.

Thomas added, "We are excited to announce the successful acquisition of Solberge Hall Hotel and our intention is to substantially enhance and upgrade the 200 year-old manor house hotel over the course of the next year and put it back on the map as Wharfedale Country House, an opulent hospitality destination specialising in luxury weddings and events.

"Solberge Hall fits perfectly into our growing hospitality portfolio."



Fletchers Group partners with the University of Liverpool for legal AI project

Fletchers Group has partnered with the University of Liverpool for the second time, undertaking a new legal AI development project.

This partnership will build on the group's work on SIDSS (structured information decision support systems). Fletchers states that this system has saved "tens of thousands of hours" in staff time. The firm uses the system to decide whether to investigate and take on clinical negligence cases.

Professor Katie Atkinson heads up the University of Liverpool's computer science team. Fletchers is sponsoring two PhD students to complete their doctorates by undertaking research for the new project.

Furthermore, Fletchers has appointed Noah Milton into a new role of AI project director. As a result, he will head up the development programme. A new head of data science, Quentin Debard, has also been hired to complete the team.

Dan Taylor is Fletchers' director of integration who led the creation of SIDSS. He stated that the partnership with the University and the two new specialist appointments underscores the firm's appetite to become a "pathfinder and innovator for the use of AI in the law."

Speaking about the vision for the upcoming project, Noah Milton said "We want to build and deploy tools which make use of the latest AI technologies, including large

language models (LLMs), to support our colleagues, improve automation of simple tasks, and bring our collective business expertise to our lawyers and make it work for every one of our clients."

With the key players appointed, the partnership kicked off in November 2023.

Funding for the four year multi-million-pound project will be through Fletchers as part of its long-term commitment to AI research in the law.

On behalf of the University of Liverpool, professor Katie Atkinson said: "We are delighted to be continuing our partnership with Fletchers to build on our past successful project and keep pushing forward industrially relevant, cutting-edge research in AI. Fletchers' forward-thinking approach in embracing innovation makes this an exciting project to be involved in."

Fletchers Group CEO Peter Haden said: "This is a crucial project for Fletchers, our clients, and our sector in general.

"We have already shown that AI can be a force for good. We now intend to broaden the scope of AI to give many thousands more injured people the opportunity to benefit from the justice system, even for lower value cases where justice has been harder to access following government reforms and budget cuts."

Ridley and Hall partners with PracticeEvolve

Yorkshire-based law firm Ridley and Hall have selected PracticeEvolve as their strategic partner. PracticeEvolve will support their transition into a technology driven firm.

Ridley & Hall employ over 120 staff across four offices in Yorkshire. The firm is about to celebrate 100 years of operation.

Adam Fletcher, business development and IT director at Ridley and Hall comments, "We recognised some time ago that technology is the backbone of any ambitious law firm. Therefore, we set ourselves targets around virtualisation, productivity, efficiencies and improved user experience to be achieved within the next 18 months. To achieve our ambitions, we realised we must adopt a PMS that secures our future. It was only at the second attempt at going to market that we discovered PracticeEvolve, through our specialist advisers at The CS Partnership."

"PracticeEvolve have been great from the outset. They demonstrated a deep understanding of the firm's operations and presented a clear vision of how their software could drive progress. Importantly, they offered a user-friendly solution that doesn't require coding expertise, a vital factor as we don't have access to unlimited IT resources. Claire Worrall and her team at PracticeEvolve also proved all the essential functions, including legal aid, which is fundamental to Ridley and Hall's business.

Clair Payne from The CS Partnership, the firm that introduced Ridley and Hall to PracticeEvolve, highlighted their role in facilitating this transformative journey. "Through a collaborative spirit and a genuine dedication to meeting client needs without making unrealistic promises, this partnership has been both enjoyable and successful."

Claire Worrall from PracticeEvolve adds "in choosing to consolidate software and moving to PracticeEvolve, Ridley and Hall are embracing technology as a catalyst for growth, efficiency, and enhanced client service."



Highlights of the Huddersfield & Dewsbury Incorporated Law Society's 141st Year

Ellie Hirst is the president of the Huddersfield & Dewsbury Incorporated Law Society. She is also a practicing solicitor at Chadwick Lawrence, specialising in wills, powers of attorney and probate.

I will shortly end my annual stint as the president of the Huddersfield & Dewsbury Incorporated Law Society this month, and I am pleased to be able to write this article to reflect over the past 12 months of the society's events as my spell comes to an end.

The Huddersfield & Dewsbury Incorporated Law Society are currently in their 141st year. We are a local law society who represent the legal profession within the Huddersfield and Dewsbury area.

We organise yearly events. One of them is the Great Legal Quiz, which supports the Access to Justice Foundation. Another event is 'Round the Res', a running event where member firms have 3 runners who run or walk around a local reservoir (Scammonden Reservoir) as a relay. We also have an annual softball competition, a judges' talk, and the annual dinner, which we held on 13 October 2023.

The annual dinner was a great success, operating out of a new venue, Bagden Hall Hotel in Denby Dale. We were joined by 12 firms from the local area, with entertainment provided by compere and after dinner speaker, Peter Emmett. We also hosted a raffle in aid of Kirkwood Hospice, raising £1,005 for the charity. Kirkwood Hospice is the society's charity of the year, and we are over the moon to support the charity with

excellent fundraising.

From an academic perspective, the society have made a return to delivering training sessions, mainly focusing on conveyancing by way of a 'building safety act 2023' seminar, and compliance training.

As president, I have been delighted to support the society and community in a number of ways, including by attending the 'annual legal service' at York Minster in October, judging the Yorkshire Legal Awards 2023, and attending the Accountant's Society earlier in the year.

All of these events are great for networking to meet more legal professionals in the area and advertise the society/firm.

Natalie Prowse, the society's honorary secretary, is a senior lecturer in law at the University of Huddersfield. Her connection allows committee members to support the university through attending their mentoring events and prize giving service.

This year, we have also seen the reignition of the 'Kirklees & Calderdale Junior Lawyers Division', which has succeeded in its first few events that have taken place over the last 6 months, including the launch event, personal branding session, advocacy workshop and murder mystery event. The Huddersfield & Dewsbury Incorporated Law Society are pleased to see their efforts succeed.

We have celebrated success within the legal profession in Huddersfield & Dewsbury. Local firm Switalskis picked up the award for 'Large Firm of the Year' at the Yorkshire Legal Awards 2023, with Schofield Sweeney picking up the award for 'Medium Firm of the Year'. Daniel Hirst, partner of Chadwick Lawrence Solicitors picked up the award for Partner of the Year. We are extremely proud to have such excellent practitioners in our area.

Over the next twelve months, the society hopes to continue providing excellent events to the community, and to also introduce new training events in different practice areas.



Reflecting on Leeds JLD's Support for Andy's Man Club

Sophie Hudson, a commercial litigation associate at Weightmans LLP and charity & education officer for Leeds JLD, reflects on a year of supporting Andy's Man Club.



What is Andy's Man Club?

This year Leeds JLD voted for Andy's Man Club to be its charity of the year. Andy's Man Club is a men's suicide prevention charity that offers free-to-attend peer-to-peer support groups across the UK and online. The charity started in Halifax in mid-2016 with 9 men and has since grown to open over 150 in person clubs. Over 3000 men use the service on a weekly basis with over 900 having become facilitators of the club, to continue to grow and support every man that walks through their doors.

Suicide is the biggest cause of death in men under the age of 50 and around three quarters of the deaths from suicide each year are men. Andy's Man Club is there to prevent those deaths where they can, being there to listen and remind men everywhere, that #itsokaytotalk.

How has Leeds JLD supported Andy's Man Club this year?

All of Leeds JLD's fundraising efforts in 2023 have gone directly towards raising money for Andy's Man Club. Any event that was free for members, had a £4 charity donation charge for non-members to attend, which quickly built up the fundraising with sell-out events being common throughout the year.

At our summer party in July we held a raffle that raised over £400 for Andy's Man Club, followed quickly by our charity netball tournament in August, raising £600. This got the year of fundraising off to an excellent start, but Leeds JLD really kicked it up a notch at the winter ball with great generosity from all the members that attended. In one night, we raised a massive £2,209.12 (nearly as much as the whole fundraising year for 2022). We cannot thank our members enough for their support towards Andy's Man Club and all the amazing companies that donated to make the raffle possible.

The Leeds JLD fundraising total for 2023 has reached the highest figure ever raised, with a whopping £3,418.12 raised.

Andy's Man Club isn't just all about raising money though, but also awareness too. Spreading the word is just as important and we were delighted to welcome Andy's Man Club to present at this year's mental health talk event on 27 April 2023. We were joined by wonderful facilitators of Andy's Man Club, who were supported by their local clubs



and went on to be those supporting others. They shared their very personal stories of what a difference Andy's Man Club made to their lives and how they

would not be here today without those clubs. In addition to this, another three amazing facilitators joined Leeds JLD for the winter ball and spoke about the impact of Andy's Man Club in front of 225 members. We are incredibly grateful for the facilitators who continue to share their stories and the importance of Andy's Man Club.

Our biggest recommendation now is get involved – organise a talk at your law firm, we can assure you Andy's Man Club welcome all interest in their charity and want to talk to you, about how you can help them and how they can help you.

Why do we support a charity each year?

Leeds JLD is passionate about its charity work. Picking a new charity each year allows us to support so many local charities that are deserving and spread the generosity of our members. We are able to shine a light on so many issues and often charities go on to have greater connections with multiple law firms, being asked to talk at them or even picked as an office charity!

Supporting charity also supports us – studies show that giving back to your community or a charity you are passionate about really does help your own mental health, by combating stress, depression and anxiety. Being lucky enough to be in a position to give that support, we see no reason why we shouldn't.

Leeds JLD is looking forward to going on to support even more charities in the future and we continue to be grateful to our members for their contributions and to all those who support us in donating to the raffles and taking part in our fundraising efforts. We can't wait to get start on all our ideas for next year and choosing another charity to support – watch this space!



Raworths receives recognition in Chambers UK guide

The latest Chambers UK legal guide has included the Harrogate-based firm Raworths, just days after the business received recognition in the 2024 Legal 500 UK.

Raworths provides integrated commercial and private client services and employs more than 70 people at its Harrogate office.

Raworths has received multiple inclusions in the Chambers UK guide, including band one rankings for both the family and employment teams.

The partners of Raworths, including Simon Morris (managing partner), Carmelita Ardren (head of family), and Deborah Boylan (employment), have all received band one positions, recognising their individual expertise.

Raworths has included other specialist teams in this year's Chambers UK guide, covering corporate and commercial, dispute resolution, and commercial property.

This year's guide includes 14 lawyers from Raworths in total. It also features an additional six lawyers in Chambers' high net worth guide, which is a sister publication aimed at the international private wealth market, published earlier this year.

Simon Morris, managing partner at Raworths, said: "We are delighted by the continued recognition in respected guides such as Chambers UK, not just for our teams but individuals who lead them and set the highest standards of client services.

"It is always pleasing to know our rankings in these guides are based on genuine client feedback as these longstanding and trusted relationships are the backbone of our business and something we work hard to maintain and are very proud of."



Hudgell Solicitors recognised in The Times for civil liberties



The Times 'Best 250 Law Firms' in England and Wales has included Hudgell Solicitors, based in Hull, in their list.

The Times highlights the firm's human rights work as they secure their fourth

successive inclusion in the list.

The Times has recognised Hudgell's civil liberties department's human rights work for its achievements. This marks the first commendation by The Times for the department's work. The team represents clients in high-profile inquests and at public inquiries.

70 former postmasters had their names cleared in court with the help of Hudgells, as highlighted by The Times. These individuals were wrongfully prosecuted when

accused of theft and false accounting. This was due to a glitch in the Post Office's central computer system.

The Times states that Hudgells have been at 'the forefront' of the case. It also cites Hudgell's work representing more than 170 people injured in the Manchester arena bombing. The report highlights the 'packages of support, including dedicated rehabilitation services and financial assistance' which were provided.

Chief executive Rachel Di Clemente said: "The Times Best 250 Law Firms list is produced on the back of feedback from lawyers at other legal firms who see our work, understand the complexities and sensitivities of the cases we are involved in, and see how we support our clients to get them the best results.

"To be recognised by our peers in this way is an impressive reflection of all we do and our teams should be rightfully proud of what they have achieved."

Taylor Emmett shortlisted for prestigious business award

The unLTD Business Awards shortlisted Sheffield-based law firm Taylor Emmet for Legal Company of the Year.

The inaugural unLTD Business Awards is a celebration of South Yorkshire's SMEs, startups, and entrepreneurs. The event took place at Peddler Warehouse on Kelham Island, Sheffield on 30 November 2023. Taylor Emmet took home the win on the night!

The latest edition of The Legal 500 rankings, known for its comprehensive assessment of law firms, has previously recognised the firm across five departments.

Taylor Emmet was also shortlisted for the "Brand Campaign of the Year" at the 2023 Sheffield Business Awards, celebrating the firm's efforts in establishing a strong brand identity and raising brand awareness across the city of Sheffield.

The wills and probate team at Taylor Emmet also celebrated success as they won 'Solicitor Firm of the Year – North' for the fourth consecutive year at the 2023 British Wills and Probate Awards.

Steve Hinshelwood, CEO of Taylor Emmet stated, "We are incredibly proud to be shortlisted in the Legal Company of

the Year category at the unLTD Awards.

"Not only does this stand as a testament to the incredible achievements Taylor Emmet has made in recent years, but this particular recognition

also holds significant meaning for us, given the ceremony's emphasis on celebrating the small and medium businesses that fuel South Yorkshire's economy.

"Our excitement is amplified by the prospect of continuing to contribute to the region's thriving business scene and we eagerly look forward to the opportunities this recognition may bring."

Taylor Emmet has been in operation for more than 150 years and is the largest independent firm in the Sheffield city region. It provides legal services for both businesses and individuals and boasts more than 140 legal professionals.



Rollits secures rankings in Chambers and Partners guide



Chambers and Partners 2024 guide has featured Rollits LLP, recognising the firm's work in agricultural and rural affairs and employment law.

Chambers highlights 'notable practitioners' Caroline Neadley, an expert in employment law, and Neil Franklin, a specialist in agriculture and rural affairs, for their experience in their respective sectors.

The recent edition of The UK Legal 500 also recognised both Caroline and Neil as 'leading individuals.'

Chambers notes the firm's breadth of experience within its Hull and York offices. Their expertise spans multiple industry sectors including food services, education and manufacturing.

Chambers and Partners have listed Rollits as a band two specialist for employment law in North and East Yorkshire.

Client testimonials reported "outstanding" levels of care and attention. Reviewers noted Caroline Neadley for her "deep understanding" and for her responsiveness to client needs.

Chambers and Partners ranks Rollits' agricultural and rural affairs team in band two.

They single out Neil Franklin for his specialist work in commercial property and agricultural property. Neil works with rural clients, as well as having extensive experience in farm purchases, sales, and tenancies. Clients have praised him for his promptness, reliability and attention to detail which is "second to none".

Chambers and Partners ranks Rollits' corporate team in band two and recognises their particular strengths in the education and food sectors.

The team advises a range of clients, including SMEs, owner-managed businesses, large public and private companies, and financial institutions, with John Flanagan named as a key contact in the corporate team.

They list Douglas Oliver as a notable practitioner for his work with housing associations. He works on matters including planning agreements, shared ownership leases, acquisitions, and disposals.

Ralph Gilbert, managing partner of Rollits, said: "Chambers & Partners UK is one of the most prestigious legal directories globally and is known for its rigorous research and independent rankings.

"We are delighted to have achieved such a notable ranking in the latest edition of the publication. This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team, and to the high quality of legal services that we provide to our clients

Intellectual property expert weighs in on the Beatles' use of AI in new release

On 2 November 2023, The Beatles released what has been deemed their final record with the use of AI. John Lennon's vocals as well as shelved pieces of George Harrison's work have been combined with new work from Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr to create 'Now and Then'.

Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr and George Harrison have previously collaborated to release 'Free as a Bird' and 'Real Love'. These tracks used John Lennon's vocals after his passing. The band never released 'Now and Then' due to technological issues with the track. Therefore it has laid dormant until now.

Director Peter Jackson and his team have developed cutting-edge technology using machine learning and AI. This technology allows the user to split tracks into separate components. This development has allowed the remaining two Beatles band members to revisit this track and produce it as potentially the final Beatles release.

Considering that two members of the band have passed, the track has called into question many legal points surrounding ownership and consent. Technically, all four band members have been a part of the creation of 'Now and Then'. However, nobody can say for certain that Lennon and Harrison would have provided their consent to produce their work in this manner.

Alan Harper, partner at Walker Morris and intellectual property expert, has weighed in on the ongoing discussion surrounding the Beatles' new release.

"It is fair to say that the AI revolution has captured the public's imagination this year through the wider availability of AI tools such as ChatGPT and Midjourney.

"A further example of AI being used in a way that is of interest to the public is the recent release of "Now and Then" by the Beatles. To create the song, AI tools were used on a demo recording from John Lennon back in the 1970s.

"The output of this process was a vocal recording which could be mixed in the usual way. Not only does this showcase what AI is capable of, highlighting another potential use case, it also raises a number of interesting legal points, in particular the question of ownership. These are questions which will need to be tackled and will no doubt create much legal discussion.

"I am dealing with AI related queries more frequently and providing legal advice based upon the law as it stands. However, some questions cannot yet be answered, and businesses need to be mindful of the issues and risks."



New high sheriff of West Yorkshire selected for 2024-25

The nominating committee has selected professor Adeeba Malik CBE DL as the new high sheriff of West Yorkshire for 2024-25.

The lords of the council in the King's bench division of the high court of justice make the annual nominations. It is presided over by the lord chief justice and was held this year on the 13 November. The new high sheriff will take office at the declarations ceremony in March 2024.

Adeeba is the deputy chief executive of the QED Foundation. She has worked with the Bradford ethnic minority-led charity for over 32 years.

Adeeba started out as a teacher in Bradford and Hull. She has dedicated her career to creating social and economic opportunity for minority ethnic groups in the UK.

She has won many accolades and awards over the years. These include the Yorkshire Post Top 20 Influential Women of Yorkshire and Top 50 Northern Power List for Women. In 2023, she was the recipient of Woman and Home magazine's, Amazing Woman Award.

Adeeba received her MBE in 2004, and a CBE in 2015 for her contribution to mainstream public bodies.

The office of high sheriff is carried out on a wholly voluntary basis. It is a non-political one-year role appointed by the crown



that represents the King in West Yorkshire in upholding all matters related to the judiciary and law and order.

Dr Mohammed Ali OBE, CEO of the QED Foundation, said: "I'm immensely proud of Adeeba and all her achievements over the years. This nomination is testament to her passion, integrity and dedication; qualities that have played a vital role over the years helping to make QED the force of good it is today."

Adeeba said: "I'm deeply honoured to be nominated for this prestigious role."

Switalskis expert raises concerns over Operation Stovewood transition



Amy Clowrey, director and solicitor within the child abuse department in Wakefield-based Switalskis, has commented on the recently announced transition for Operation Stovewood.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) is transitioning

Operation Stovewood, the most extensive investigation into child abuse in the United Kingdom. Launched in 2014, the operation focuses on non-familial child sexual exploitation in Rotherham spanning from 1997 to 2013.

Over the past nine years, NCA officers have made significant strides, resulting in over 200 arrests and 26 convictions. With more than 50 active investigations ongoing, the agency has identified over 1,100 victims and engaged with as many as possible. Despite the NCA's commitment to seeing ongoing cases through the criminal justice process, a new phase is set to begin on 1 January 2024.

From that date forward, the NCA will no longer initiate new investigations under Operation Stovewood. Instead, South Yorkshire Police will handle any new allegations.

Philip Marshall, head of investigations for NCA Stovewood, emphasised that while the agency will cease opening new cases, they will continue to prioritise existing investigations and treat victims with the same dedication.

Marshall stated, "We remain determined to seek justice for as many victims as possible". The transition aims to be seamless, ensuring that individuals coming forward after 1 January 2024, will receive consistent support.

Amy Clowrey commented on the change of hands. She stated that she believes the transition to be premature whilst so many criminal investigations are still ongoing. Amy also highlighted that many women repeatedly went to South Yorkshire Police to tell them what was happening to them at the time and were not provided with support. Therefore, there is a lack of trust with South Yorkshire Police due to historical failings. She stated; "I think I think it's a hard one for them, for the women to digest. And I worry that it will mean that less women are willing to come forward."

"I do hope that they've learned their lesson from the past and that they've got a good team set up in light of the fact that everything's going to pass back over to them."

Operation Stovewood stands as the largest law enforcement operation of its kind in the UK, unprecedented in scale. The convictions secured thus far have resulted in cumulative jail sentences exceeding 260 years. Neil Cawton's recent conviction, the 26th since Stovewood's initiation, highlights the operation's continued success in bringing offenders to justice.

Rothacs continues to provide support to survivors of abuse in Rotherham.

Engaging with your local law society

Natalie Cosgrove, president of the Yorkshire Union of Law Societies and a partner at Ashtons Legal in Leeds, on the benefit of local law societies during the busy festive season

"I simply don't have time to reflect", I say to myself as I consider what to write in this space. There is an ever-increasing demand for space in my brain, which would simply not function without my five to-do lists.

I don't have the time or headspace to reflect, and I'm guessing you don't either. I'm looking towards 2024, questioning how it is still 2023?! The requirement to be all things to all people with little thought for ourselves can often be beneficial when we don't want to reflect and hinder us when we don't 'take a beat'.

I do not have a stressful workplace, an overbearing time target or a fees target. I have a supportive team, management board and family. I do, however, have a very young family, with two children under 25 months. Perhaps that's why I need five to do lists. Life. Is. Busy. I am going to hazard a guess that yours is too.

This time of year is a period for reflection. Perhaps one of the reasons we choose not to is because, as the new year begins, our hopes and aspirations from the year prior have not played out. What I do know is that life got busier recently. Really busy. And not just for me!

Life is busy, hectic and stressful- increasingly more so post-Covid. Every lawyer I speak to says the same, irrespective of practice area or life commitments. This is my advice to you: check in on the colleagues who seem to have everything 'together'. This togetherness is often a perception that they have worked hard to show to the world, rather than their reality. You may just find, if you reach out to them, they will do the same for you.

'What on earth has this got to do with local law societies, Natalie', I hear you ask. An awful lot, actually. You may not want to go to your colleagues or managers with the concerns I have addressed, especially if you are in management yourself. But what if you had a supportive sounding board full of people who can genuinely empathise with you? I'm sure your colleagues and managers are living this reality too.

Law firms often don't see the benefits of staff welfare beyond an ambiguous flexible working policy, access to Perkbox and your birthday off. There is more to staff retention and happiness than these 'tick box' welfare initiatives. In a swirling world of to-do lists, things like social events with your peers often fall by the wayside, but they are the things that you and your team should be trying to add in.



Sharing with people in a collective way is not sharing the burden, it is lightening the load. Being able to mix with people with shared interests, in a safe environment, outside of the narrow confines of colleagues you may not want to open up to, is vital.

Your local law society offers these opportunities, and more! Look, you may not want to attend every event, training course and round table- or you might! Either way, what I can see upon reflection is that life is busy for everyone, and I know you probably feel like you are the busiest, maybe you are. But if you can carve out some time for a local law society event or meeting, do it! You might just feel the benefit.



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Unlock the door to a
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***Your gateway to professional
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The Yorkshire Legal Awards celebrates its 25th anniversary at Leeds First Direct Arena!

LexisNexis Enterprise Solutions partners with Yorkshire Legal Awards for its landmark 25th anniversary celebration in a new venue.

The Yorkshire Legal Awards, the cornerstone event of the region's legal community, is thrilled to announce LexisNexis Enterprise Solutions as its headline sponsor for the 25th anniversary celebration in 2024. LexisNexis Enterprise Solutions, a leading technology platform provider to the legal sector, will take centre stage at this landmark event.

For almost a quarter of a century, the Yorkshire Legal Awards has been bringing together legal professionals to honour and celebrate their remarkable achievements. The 2023 edition, held at the iconic New Dock Hall in Leeds on 5 October, was a resounding success: over 1,000 attendees were immersed in an evening of recognition and networking in the heart of Leeds' waterfront development.

As we prepare to mark this significant milestone, the Yorkshire Legal Awards 2024 promises to be even more extraordinary. This celebration will unfold at the First Direct Arena, located in the Arena Quarter of Leeds, West Yorkshire.

The awards span a wide range of categories, honouring corporate firms, leading barristers, senior partners, and rising stars alike.

LexisNexis Enterprise Solutions has been a loyal supporter of the Yorkshire Legal Awards, dedicated to recognising outstanding achievements in the legal sector. In 2023, the company sponsored the Law Firm of the Year: Large and Best ESG Campaign categories, underscoring its commitment to advancing the industry.

The awards are judged by an esteemed independent panel comprising experts from across the Yorkshire legal community. The evening promises a glittering black-tie affair, featuring a welcome reception, a three-course meal, the awards ceremony, and an unforgettable after-party.

The Yorkshire Legal Awards team is excited to host an exceptional evening of celebration, innovation, and recognition at the Yorkshire Legal Awards 2024, as they continue to nurture and promote excellence within the legal community.



Moving on up

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



Mark Appleyard has joined **Andrew Jackson Solicitors'** real estate and property team as a consultant.

Andrew Jackson Solicitors has offices in Hull, York, Scarborough and Grimsby. The firm provides a range of legal services to businesses and individuals throughout Yorkshire.

Mark has over 35 years of experience in his field. He advises commercial and residential property developers and landlords of commercial properties across a wide range of matters. This includes advising upon site assembly and land options, conditional purchase agreements, development agreements as well as freehold sales.

Mark also advises clients on funding agreements, joint venture agreements and bank financing of developments. As well as construction contracts, professional appointments and collateral warranties. He also helps landlords with property management issues

Mark Appleyard stated; "Andrew Jackson's real estate and property practice has a strong reputation for providing trusted legal advice and building long-term relationships with its clients. These values mirror my own and I'm delighted to join such a respected team and to play my part in ensuring that we continue to deliver an outstanding service, built around clients' specific needs."

Geoff Phillips, partner, and head of the real estate and property team at Andrew Jackson, added; "We are delighted to welcome Mark to Andrew Jackson. Our real estate and property team remains exceptionally busy and, with Mark's strong track record, experience and proactive approach, we can continue to provide the highest standards in service and value for our clients."



Switalskis has appointed solicitor Emma Davey to their growing family law team in Sheffield.

Switalskis' family team in Sheffield received a tier one ranking in this year's Legal 500 guide.

Emma represents clients in family law matters both in and out of court. Her appointment brings Switalskis' family law team to 12 professionals. Switalskis has offices across South and West Yorkshire.

Emma holds a law degree from the University of Manchester, a masters degree in legal practice from the University of Sheffield, and completed her training contract in Bristol.

"During my studies and subsequent training, it became clear that family law was the area I was most passionate about and would like to specialise in. Family law is an incredibly fulfilling area to work in. Being able to help people who are going through a difficult time in their lives is a pleasure," Emma stated.

Toby Netting, Switalskis director and head of family law in Sheffield noted; "We are committed to finding and developing the talented individuals who will lead the industry in the future. Emma's appointment is very much a reflection of this. She is confident, approachable and is passionate about achieving the most fair and best outcomes for our clients. I have no doubt she is an excellent addition to our team."



Specialist family law firm, **Consilia Legal**, have recruited senior associate Claire Chisnall to their team.

Chisnall joins Consilia Legal from a national law firm. There, she gained a wealth of experience dealing with complex divorce and children cases.

Discussing the hire, director and co-founder Laura Clapton said; "I am thrilled that Claire has joined our family law team at Consilia Legal. Claire absolutely epitomises our ethos of providing clients with straight talking, pragmatic and no-nonsense legal advice.

"Claire has the combination of legal expertise and personality, which our clients truly value and which builds on the strength of our talented and dynamic team of family law specialists."

Speaking on her appointment, Claire commented; "I am excited to have joined the brilliant team at Consilia, and I am looking forward to working with the team to continue to provide an excellent level of service to our clients and offer practical but robust and clear advice.

"As a team we have the experience to assist in every private family law matter, and whilst my specialism is more focused on the more complex financial cases, I have extensive experience in dealing with complex children cases, cohabitation disputes and the preparation of prenuptial agreements."

Consilia Legal now has five qualified family solicitors within the team and is recognised in both The Legal 500 and Chambers and Partners guides for their expertise in family law.



Yorkshire law firm **Lupton Fawcett** have promoted Richard Buckley to senior associate solicitor within their family law team.

Richard joined the firm's family team in January 2019 as senior solicitor. He has more than 12 years' experience in advising and representing clients in all areas of family law.

In his new senior role, Richard will continue to work on his specialist areas. These include divorce, financial issues, children matters, pre and post nuptial agreements and cohabitation.

Richard stated: "I am delighted with my promotion and I'm looking forward to continuing in my role in the family team at Lupton Fawcett, supporting our many clients throughout Yorkshire and the rest of the UK."

Richard is also an accredited mediator and collaborative lawyer. He commits to helping separating couples resolve their disputes outside of court.

Chambers & Partners 2024 rankings recently named him a 'spotlight lawyer'.

Lupton Fawcett's managing partner James Richardson said: "Richard is a highly valued member of our team and his promotion follows his continued, excellent results for our clients.

"At Lupton Fawcett we believe in rewarding colleagues' hard work and providing further opportunities for them to excel, which benefits both their professional development and the wider business."

Lupton Fawcett provides a full range of commercial and personal legal services to clients throughout the UK. The firm has offices in Leeds, Sheffield and York.



Simon Tingle has joined Yorkshire-based law firm **Gordons** as head of its regulatory practice. Simon is a highly experienced business regulatory, investigations and corporate defence lawyer.

He has wide ranging experience in advising businesses and individuals subject to investigations,

enforcement and prosecutions by numerous bodies. These include the police and Crown Prosecution Service; the Environment Agency; Trading Standards; and the Health & Safety Executive.

In addition to health and safety and environmental matters, Simon has a particular specialism in food, product and consumer law. This sees him regularly advising clients on compliance requirements and providing advice and training at board level. Simon is also a solicitor advocate with rights of audience in the Crown Court.

Commenting on his appointment, Simon said: "Gordons has a longstanding reputation for both delivering excellent

commercial advice and having an entrepreneurial environment.

"I am very pleased to be working with like-minded colleagues, and being able to lead a highly capable team which is committed to developing and growing our regulatory practice.

"We will do this by supporting clients to navigate the ever-changing regulatory landscape and assisting them with the increased threat of enforcement and the dramatically increasing consequences of that enforcement."

Gordons' retail clients include AO, B&M, Heron Foods, Iceland Foods, Morrisons, Ocado Retail, Home Bargains and Wren Kitchens.

Welcoming Simon to the firm, Gordons managing partner, Victoria Davey, said: "Simon is an excellent hire for Gordons. He has a long track record of building strong and lasting client relationships and is a proven operator."

"Simon's retail, logistics and food and drink experience is ideal for a significant number of our clients. He has the ambition and ability to significantly grow our regulatory practice and we look forward to supporting him and his team to do so."



Senior associate Deirdre Lindsay has joined **Clarion's** 52-strong real estate practice as it continues to expand.

Deirdre has spent the past six years at a national listed law firm, as a part of its residential development team. Her addition will substantially strengthen Clarion's offering.

She has experience advising house builders, landowners and developers of every size across Yorkshire and the UK.

Her expertise includes advising clients on strategic land acquisitions and conditional contracts. Deirdre also acts on sales to affordable housing providers.

Deirdre also has general commercial real estate experience and has advised clients on landlord and tenant matters.

Lindsay Texel, partner, who leads Clarion's residential development team, said: "We already have a strong reputation in residential development and have been looking for the right person to grow the team and enable us to support continuing client demand. With her excellent track record in this field, Deirdre is a great fit, giving us additional resource at a senior level."

Deirdre comments: "Having gained a solid grounding in residential development work, I was really looking for something a little different and wanted to move to a firm with a collaborative approach. Not only does Clarion have one of the largest and most respected real estate practices in Yorkshire, but it has a really positive culture where people are genuinely valued and go out of their way to support one another."

Rollits has taken on two trainees who have completed legal work experience within the firm.

Harry studied at Hull Collegiate School and then moved to St Mary's Sixth Form College. He progressed to the University of Leicester where he graduated in 2021 with a degree in law with politics.

Harry took advantage of some virtual work experience during the pandemic. This cemented his ambitions to pursue a career in law. Before taking up his new post at Rollits he worked for a year at a local sixth form college tutoring and mentoring law and politics students.

Aidan attended Cottingham High School and St Mary's College in Hull. He then moved to Northumbria University and studied on the MLaw (exempting) course. This is an integrated master's degree combining a qualifying law degree with a legal practice course exemption. In his final year, Northumbria University awarded him the Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor Award. Aidan graduated with a first class honours.

During the summer, Aidan participated in the firm's work experience scheme and seized the opportunity to join Rollits as a trainee when a training contract position became available.

Caroline Neadley, training principal at Rollits said: "Work experience is so important when it comes to helping young people make decisions about pursuing a career in law and we are delighted that once again our summer programme has identified and supported bright, local talent."

"We are committed to investing in the future of our lawyers and are confident that they will thrive in our supportive and collaborative environment. We look forward to seeing them grow and develop their careers at Rollits."



clear that Fletchers value and take pride in their lawyers. It's an exciting time to be joining the business and I'm really looking forward to making my mark here."

Amy Moylan is recognised in the Legal 500 2024 as a 'key lawyer'. She explained that she had been considering a transfer across from defendant to claimant work for some time. She chose Fletchers because "like Vicki, I've been impressed by the management's commitment to social purpose and its workforce."

"The opportunity to help and support the most vulnerable people who often have no-one else to turn to in their hour of need was a key factor in my choosing to change the direction of my career in this way."

Alison Flaherty added: "Clinical negligence is a significant practice area for the firm, and I am confident that Amy and Vicki will make substantive contributions to the future success of our team as we continue to grow our varied specialisms in serious injury clinical negligence work."

LCF Law's

personal law team is expanding following the appointment of three recently qualified solicitors, Anisha Kaur, Ennah Hussain and Jemma Hobson.



Ennah completed her training contract at a niche high-street law firm before she joined the personal law division of LCF Law. Both Anisha and Jemma have completed their training contracts with LCF Law.

Jemma commented: "Since joining LCF Law in 2021, I have gained a broad range of experience across the commercial property, disputes and private client departments. I received excellent support from the teams, who were approachable and friendly, whilst providing me with good feedback."

Anisha said: "Before starting my training contract in 2021, I spent six months working as a paralegal in the contentious property and probate department, which was a great introduction to LCF Law. I then spent time in three areas of the firm and had a fantastic private client mentor, who always offered one to one supervision."

Now qualified, both Jemma and Anisha help clients plan their affairs for their future, preparing wills and lasting powers of attorney (LPA).

Ennah advises clients on matrimonial matters, financial issues and disputes relating to children. She said: "Nowadays, thanks to the introduction of no-fault divorce laws, ending a marriage is legally more straightforward, but where people struggle is with the financial aspects of a split, and with disputes relating to their children."

Partner and head of personal Law at LCF Law, Neil Shaw, said: "We make things as straightforward as possible and achieve the best possible outcome for our clients. We also value our team and support them with their progression, so we are delighted that Anisha and Jemma have qualified as solicitors after completing their training with us. It's also a pleasure to welcome Ennah to our 21-strong personal law team and we look forward to advising even more clients across Yorkshire and beyond."



Fletchers Solicitors

has appointed two senior lawyers to its clinical negligence team.

Vicki Capper and Amy Moylan

come from the defendant firm, Hill Dickinson. Both recruits began their new roles at the beginning of November.

Alison Flaherty, partner and head of clinical negligence serious injury said: "We are determined to look across the whole sector to find the best talent for our clients. The more lawyers within the group, the more diverse service we can offer our clients, and it is great news that two such experienced lawyers are joining our clinical negligence team."

Vicki Capper specialises in brain and spinal cord clinical negligence injuries. She commented; "Fletchers has a strong reputation as a fast growing and progressive law firm which made it stand out as an attractive place to further develop my career. I was also very impressed by the team dynamic and it is

Switalskis has expanded its commercial property team with the addition of associate solicitor Saima Ul-Haq and trainee solicitor Cyman Kaur. They join director and head of team Claire Murphy at the firm's Bradford office.

With over a decade of legal experience, Saima Ul-Haq has a proven track record of working across a number of clients in real estate. Her expertise spans a range of commercial property



matters including land purchases and sales, development projects, landlord and tenant issues.

Saima gained her law degree at Nottingham Trent University and began her legal career as a paralegal in 2013. She has since gained ten years' experience in commercial property law, including five years post-qualification, before joining Switalskis this month.

She says: "This is an exciting opportunity for me to join Switalskis and to extend the geographical reach of its commercial property team. Switalskis has a great reputation in the sector and I'm looking forward to working with colleagues and clients in the area while supporting the growth of the business."

Cyman Kaur obtained her legal practice course (LPC) and master's degree (LLM) at Liverpool John Moore's University. She then began her legal career as a paralegal assisting with family law cases for high-net-worth clients. Cyman is joining Switalskis to complete her training contract.

Cyman states: "I am very excited to commence my training contract alongside such a versatile team."

Claire Murphy said: "Our business is going from strength to strength, not least due to our seven-strong talented team in West and North Yorkshire. There are exciting times ahead in Bradford, too, with its upcoming city of culture status. We are keen to maintain a strong presence in the city. Saima and Cyman's appointments are a step in this direction, and they both have much to offer."

Milners are celebrating growth across four sectors with an influx of new talent into the group.

Karl Pike has joined the family team in Harrogate. Karl is an experienced solicitor with over 25 years in the field. He has a particular strength in finance and has assisted clients across the financial spectrum.

Pike said "I am excited to have joined the team at Milners and am looking forward to providing a friendly, pragmatic, proactive and cost-efficient approach for our clients."

The residential conveyancing team has grown with the addition of Anthony Bailey. Anthony is based in Harrogate but provides services across the whole of the UK.

Bailey said "Milners is exactly the sort of firm I wish to continue my career with. Their client focused approach means I am encouraged to build a relationship with my clients and fully understand their needs in order to ensure the utmost satisfaction

with the service provided."

The head office in Leeds has welcomed solicitor Abigail Watson and paralegal Lily Scott into their commercial litigation team. The employment department has taken on paralegal Tara Pitt.

Watson stated, "As a new qualified solicitor it was important for me to find a role which provided interesting, challenging work within a supportive and collaborative team. My experience at Milners so far has been fantastic and I'm really looking forward to growing my career with the firm."

Simon Bass, managing partner, said "our new hires have a range of experience which serves to enrich our service offering and provide the very best service to our clients. We have been joined by some very knowledgeable, long-established lawyers as well as some new talent just starting out in the legal world, and we are very pleased to welcome them to the team."



Winston Solicitors supports local charities with bi-monthly meet-up



Winston Solicitors, an established Leeds law firm, has sponsored the LS8 meet-up group since its inception in early 2023. Their support has played a pivotal role in facilitating the events and ensuring accessibility for a diverse range of local businesses. Meet-ups take place at the Leeds Deli in Roundhay, which provides a welcoming atmosphere alongside their delicious breakfast.

The LS8's meet up's belief is that "people buy from people". The group's primary objective is to create a close-knit community where local businesses and professionals actively support, engage and collaborate with one another.

The bi-monthly breakfast 'meet-ups' offer a relaxed platform for members to develop lasting relationships, exchange ideas and contribute to the economic growth of north Leeds.

The group prides itself on its informal approach. They strive to create an atmosphere that encourages authentic connections

to flourish.

LS8 meet-up is increasing in popularity, there is now a growing waiting list to join its events.

Winston Solicitors prides itself on giving back and supporting the wider Leeds community by raising money at each event. To date, the group has raised £450 for five local Leeds charities, including Leeds Mind.

Teresa Davidson, a partner at Winston Solicitors, is the driving force behind the group. She shared her enthusiasm for the group's progress: "We're thrilled with the growth and success we've achieved in such a short time. It's testament to the incredible businesses and professionals in north Leeds and their dedication to strengthening our local community. We look forward to continuing to build valuable connections and making a positive impact."

Eversheds Sutherland's Paul Verrico continues fundraising efforts with second marathon

Paul Verrico, head of EHS at law firm Eversheds Sutherland in Leeds, is continuing his fundraising efforts for Team Verrico. Team Verrico is a cancer charity that Paul funded in memory of his late wife.

19 November will mark ten years since the passing of Anna Verrico. Anna's husband, Paul, has initiated his second marathon in his 10-in-10 challenge. Paul's JustGiving page describes the challenge as '10 marathons. 10 months. 10 countries.'

The second marathon will take place in Gran Canaria and is dedicated to Anna, as well as aiming to raise funds for the cancer charity Team Verrico.

Team Verrico, established by Paul after Anna's death, has raised £1.1 million to assist families facing cancer diagnoses by funding essentials such as food, second opinions, counseling, and white goods.

Paul provided an update during his marathon challenge. He outlined the origins of Team Verrico, rooted in Anna's aim to fund a study on the metastatic pathway of triple negative breast cancer (TNBC). The charity's core mission is to support

research into new cancer treatments and address challenges faced by long-term survivors.

On 9 November 2023, Paul shared news of a breakthrough in research funded by Team Verrico in the journal *Frontiers in Immunology*. The studies address ways to identify high-risk relapse cases and inform decisions about immunotherapy as a secondary treatment.

The ongoing research focuses on women with TNBC susceptible to metastases within three years of treatment. Professor Claire Lewis leads the study, aiming to bring findings closer to routine application in UK oncology clinics, with a cost of £52,000.

Paul has raised £11,000 from his first marathon, with an additional £10,000 pledged by clients. Planning to run 10 marathons in 10 months across 10 countries, he aims to raise awareness and secure funding for the second stage of the study. The charity's mantra, "never give up!" drives Paul's commitment.

Holden Smith to support Forget Me Not Children's Hospice



Yorkshire-based law firm Holden Smith has announced that they will be donating a percentage of fees from their wills and probate department to Forget Me Not Children's Hospice throughout the months of November and December.

Holden Smith has offices in Huddersfield, Elland,

Leeds, and Horsforth. The firm aims to assist Forget Me Not, a charity dedicated to aiding families navigating the challenges of child loss.

Before the close of the year, clients making a will, applying for probate, or utilising the firm for a lasting power of attorney (LPA) will generate Holden Smith's contribution through a percentage of the fees they pay.

Dominic Cronshaw, a specialist in wills and probate at Holden Smith (pictured), expressed his enthusiasm for the initiative, stating, "The work delivered by Forget Me Not to support children and families facing or living with the loss of their child is inspiring - and so vitally important. Holden Smith is delighted to be able to play a part in helping the charity to continue this work by partnering with them on this initiative, which will benefit children and families across the whole of West Yorkshire."

Michelle Heaney-Firth, corporate partnerships lead at Forget Me Not, expressed gratitude, noting, "We're so grateful to Holden Smith for supporting us in this way. As a charity, only a tiny proportion of the funds we need each year are guaranteed, meaning that we rely on donations and fundraising from organisations like Holden Smith to be able to continue to do our vital work. Thank you."

Hallmark Solicitors pedals to success

Hull-based commercial law firm Hallmark Solicitors has raised over £1,000 for Breast Cancer Now. This follows their participation in a national law firm challenge, the Tour de Law.

Describing the two-day virtual challenge as a 'David and Goliath' battle, the team at Hallmark cycled against top national and international law firms. They ranked within the top 20 for both distance cycled (646.3km) and money raised - against over 70 competitors.

Uche Akali, managing director at Hallmark Solicitors, said: "I am so proud of my team for the hard work they put into the Tour de Law challenge. As the only law firm taking part in the region, and with fewer cyclists compared to most of our competitors, we gave it our all and that showed in our place on the leaderboard. The team said they would have cycled for a third day if they could!"

The challenge took place outside of Hallmark's head office located at Chandler's Court on High Street, Hull city centre, and saw the solicitors close the office for two days to dedicate themselves to the event. They also handed out 100 breast

health leaflets to attendees and passers-by.

Mr Augustine Akali, a leading breast reconstruction surgeon at Castle Hill Hospital, also joined in with the effort along with a number of his colleagues, who were on-hand to provide support and advice to those who needed it.

Uche continued: "The challenge was a real team effort, and it was inspiring to see the support we received from clients and the local community. As well as aspiring law students from Hymers College volunteering to help us to clock up the miles, we also had support from members of Fitmums and friends, and even from individuals who stopped by to volunteer for a cycling slot.

"We're grateful to all that helped support us throughout the challenge, and we're so pleased to have raised over £1,000 for such a worthy cause."

The money raised for Breast Cancer Now will go towards life-changing breast cancer research and support, helping the charity to provide support for today, and hope for the future, for patients and families affected by cancer.



Sarah Khan-Bashir, SKB Law

Sarah Khan-Bashir. The founder of SKB Law, who was also named Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year 2023 at the Yorkshire Legal Awards, discusses her career in family law

What inspired you to focus on family law and the South Asian community's marriage law issues?

I realised family law was for me during one of my first divorce cases twenty-five years ago. My client was a South Asian woman who'd experienced domestic abuse. She came to us from another practice after feeling her previous solicitor didn't understand the nuances of getting divorced in South Asian culture. She told me: "I sat in front of you, and you just got it." It emphasised the importance of diversity in the law and I still get goose-pimples just thinking about it. I hope that my work, and that of my firm's, is helping to build a more inclusive and culturally responsive legal sector.

Could you share some of the major challenges you faced early in your career and how you overcame them?

My journey into law was unconventional — from a background in chemistry and agrochemicals to changing careers to law. The initial transition was challenging; I felt disoriented during my legal practice conversion course, and faced rejection letters, a lack of role models, and no clear route for career progression. I persevered and finally entered family law, almost by chance, through a temporary work experience position. My offer to work for free for three months landed me my first job in the legal sector, and I took a chance starting a law firm from scratch, and today's it's an award-winning firm!

Can you share some insights into your leadership style and how it has contributed to SKB Law's success?

I've had the privilege of supporting individuals at various stages of their legal careers, from trainees and work experience students to seasoned professionals. I've learned that effective leadership is about sharing knowledge, creating a welcoming environment, and nurturing a workplace where individuals feel safe to explore their potential, learn from mistakes, and truly be themselves. There is no top-down approach; if someone has an idea, we give it a chance. Family law can be demanding, so it's also important to maintain a supportive and fun work culture.

How do you ensure that SKB Law's services are accessible to a wide range of individuals, regardless of their background?

My firm's tag is 'family law, done differently'. It's our mission to improve access to the law. We do this in several ways. For our clients, we strive to make our legal services inclusive by offering multilingual support, culturally sensitive advice, and flexible consultation methods. For the public, I've created a number of free resources to improve awareness about legal rights, including my podcast Family Matters, sharing real stories and insights on divorce in the South Asian community. The firm's academy also offers work placements to local students seeking to gain legal insights.



What do you find most rewarding about being part of the workforce in Yorkshire, both in terms of your career and personal life?

Yorkshire has a strong sense of community - it's the place where I was born, educated and raised my family. For me, the most rewarding part is being able to give back - to make a difference in the lives of individuals and the wider community here.

What are some of the most rewarding aspects of your work in family law and community advocacy?

The most rewarding aspect is witnessing the positive impact on individuals and families when they receive the legal support they need. Knowing that every day, I help someone through a life-changing event, to protect their rights, see their family and resolve conflicts.

You won Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year 2023 at the Yorkshire Legal Awards, which is an incredible achievement. What advice do you have for individuals striving to make a significant impact in their respective fields and earn similar recognition?

Stay committed to your values and the reason you entered this field. Don't be afraid to reach out and collaborate with others, working with others can lead to greater achievements. I remember returning to my table at the awards and hugging my team, knowing that my award wouldn't be possible without our collective effort.

What motivates you to continue pushing for positive change and better representation in the legal field?

In family law, the impact of our work can last a lifetime for our clients. To better understand their needs, the legal field needs to reflect the society it serves at all levels.



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