

# Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer

The Official Journal of Leeds Law Society

 **Leeds**  
Law Society

September 2025

Issue 196



## Justice in our communities

**Pro bono, access to justice  
& public interest law**

**Business  
Development**  
Crombie Wilkinson  
achieves Investors  
in People Gold  
Accreditation

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Macy Wynn speaks  
on justice beyond the  
courtroom

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gives an update on  
regulatory matters and  
compliance

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new Partner to lead  
competition law  
growth in Leeds

**Last word**  
We catch up with  
Emily Sherratt,  
Project Director at the  
National Pro Bono  
Centre





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# President's column



**Luke Corcoran** is a Senior Lawyer at Government Legal Department and current President of Leeds Law Society Society.

Welcome to the 196<sup>th</sup> edition of the Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer, official journal of Leeds Law Society. This month's edition has a particular focus on Justice in our communities: pro bono, access to justice & public interest law. This is always a crucial topic, and I know it is a cause close to the hearts of many in the legal profession across our region. The turnout we saw for our Leeds Legal Walk in June, with a record number of walkers, reflects this commitment to access to justice in Leeds.

I also know that people from across our region put their time and their money into volunteering their time pro bono, to their immense credit. These efforts support some of the most vulnerable people in society at their time of greatest need. It is no exaggeration to say these efforts change

lives and could never be overstated.

On a related note, we are hosting Leeds Law Society's first ever Social Mobility Conference next month, on the morning of 15th October. It is a free event. We are kindly being hosted by Leeds Trinity University in their new city campus at Trevelyan Square. The conference will focus on social mobility in entering the profession and progressing within the profession. We have a wide range of panellists from solicitor apprentices to managing partners, as well as members of the Bar and the Judiciary. I hope that this conference will be a catalyst for many conversations and initiatives focused on social mobility in our profession. Sign up details are available on the Leeds Law Society website.

This time of year always has a "return to school" focus, as children head back to school or University, many for the first time. Our profession is similar, with many trainees and pupil barristers starting their professional training around this time. I send my best wishes to them, for many it will be a crucial step that has many years of hard work behind it.

We also have the opening of the legal year upcoming. Amongst the grandeur and ceremony of these occasions, it is important to put focus to the importance of the work we do, looking proudly on the traditions that we seek to uphold of integrity and honesty as well as looking to the future, meeting the challenges of today's world.

Get involved if you are interested in getting involved with Leeds Law Society – with a practice-area committee or otherwise – please do get in contact with us; we would be delighted to hear from you. Contact in the first instance should be to our head of operations, Rachel Windle, on [rachel.windle@leedslawsociety.org.uk](mailto:rachel.windle@leedslawsociety.org.uk) or by calling our office on 0113 245 4997

# Social Mobility Conference



**Join Leeds Law Society and Fletchers Solicitors  
for a morning's conference on Social Mobility  
within the Legal Profession**

The legal profession values justice and fairness, yet barriers remain for aspiring professionals from underrepresented backgrounds. How can we create real inclusivity? Join Leeds Law Society's first conference on social mobility in law.

## Agenda

**08:15 – 08:45** | Registration & Breakfast

**08:45 – 09:00** | Welcome & Introductions

**09:00 – 11:00** | Entry into the Legal Profession  
– Panel Discussion

**11:00 – 11:30** | Refreshments / Networking

**11:30 – 12:15** | Breaking through the mould:  
Getting Ahead in Law – Panel Discussion

**12:15 – 13:00** | Sharing Best Practice and the Future of  
Social Mobility in the Legal Profession

**13:00 – 13:15** | Closing Remarks

**BOOK NOW**



**eventbrite.co.uk/e/  
social-mobility-  
conference-tickets-  
1638828322629**

Free Entry

**October 15<sup>th</sup>**  
8:00am – 1pm

Leeds Trinity University City Campus,  
1 Trevelyan Square, Leeds, LS1 6AE

This event will bring together legal professionals, recruiters, and educators committed to fostering diversity and equal opportunity across the sector. Our speakers will discuss their experiences and share best practice on social mobility.

Whether you are a legal professional, student, or recruiter, this conference is your opportunity to engage with other people committed to improving access to the profession for those from less privileged socio-economic backgrounds.

Be part of the conversation. Network with industry leaders, gain fresh insights, and help drive positive change in Leeds, a thriving hub for legal and social innovation, which provides the perfect setting for this crucial discussion. Build connections to ensure that talent—not background—determines success in the legal profession in this city.



# Business and Networking Lunch

**Members:** £44.40 +VAT

**Standard Rate:** £54.00 +VAT

SCAN TO BOOK



**When**

Tuesday  
11/11/2025  
12:00-14:00

**Where**

Restaurant Bar & Grill,  
The Old Post Office,  
3 City Square,

Leeds,  
West Yorkshire,  
LS1 2AN

## Taylor Emmet expands with premium Peak District office relocation



Leading law firm Taylor Emmet is moving its Peak District operations from central Bakewell to a modern office at Riverside Business Park, joining high-profile neighbours including

Thornbridge Brewery and Chatsworth.

The move, planned for later this summer, positions Taylor Emmet in the largest development of its kind within the Peak District, reflecting the firm's growing identity as "Peak District lawyers" rather than being Bakewell-based. The relocation complements the firm's Sheffield operations and strengthens its visibility and accessibility across the region.

Martin Sissons, Partner and head of the Peak District office, said: "I've enjoyed being part of the success in expanding our agricultural and rural property services, particularly through our Peak District office. This relocation is a significant milestone that will enable us to better serve our growing

client base. We are excited to move to a more efficient workspace that supports our collaborative approach to legal practice and look forward to showcasing the new office at our opening event on 11th September."

The Peak District office provides specialised services for rural communities, including agricultural law, rural conveyancing, wills, probate, tax planning, and trust management, alongside broader services such as residential conveyancing, commercial property, and family law.

Steve Hinshelwood, CEO of Taylor Emmet, added:

"Our move to Riverside Business Park represents an exciting new chapter for Taylor Emmet. The new open-plan space accommodates up to 25 colleagues, with collaborative breakout areas and flexible meeting rooms. This strategic relocation strengthens our position as the leading law firm across the Peak District, enhancing our visibility, accessibility, and ability to deliver personalised legal solutions to clients throughout the region."

The firm will celebrate the new office with a launch event on 11th September, inviting local businesses across the Peak District to attend.

For details regarding the launch event, contact the Taylor Emmet events team at [events@tayloremmet.co.uk](mailto:events@tayloremmet.co.uk).

## Law firm Gordons advises Ocado Retail on new 66,000 sq ft distribution hub letting

Law firm Gordons has advised online supermarket Ocado Retail on the letting of a new 66,000 sq ft distribution hub at Fairham Business Park, near Nottingham.

Ocado has agreed to take a 15-year lease of the facility which is scheduled to open this autumn. A team led by Gordons commercial property partner, Sarah Ratcliffe, advised Ocado on securing the lease. The distribution hub will operate 24/7 and employ in excess of 400 people including van drivers, marshallers, office staff and maintenance workers.

The site will serve the wider Nottingham area, addressing growing demand for online grocery deliveries. Ocado plans to install fuel pumps, docking areas, CCTV and other infrastructure upgrades.

Founded in 2000, Ocado Retail reaches over 80 per cent of the UK population, and more than one million active customers benefit from a range of around 50,000 products.

Gordons' Sarah Ratcliffe commented: "The new distribution

centre will be an outstanding facility. We are very pleased to have helped with the distribution hub's acquisition and look forward to seeing it become fully operational later this year."



Headquartered in Leeds, Gordons employs 170 people.

The law firm's other commercial property clients include retailers AO, Iceland and Wren Kitchens along with utility provider Northern Gas Networks and Yorkshire Building Society.

## Leading law firm Ward Hadaway merges with Teesside's The Endeavour Partnership



UK Top 100 law firm Ward Hadaway has merged with Teesside-based commercial firm The Endeavour Partnership LLP. The combined firm will operate under the

Ward Hadaway name, with The Endeavour team remaining at Teesdale Business Park, continuing to provide trusted legal services.

The merger broadens Ward Hadaway's expertise to include succession planning, matrimonial advice, construction, and tax, while boosting resources and networks, bringing total staff to nearly 600. Lee Bramley, Managing Partner of

The Endeavour Partnership, becomes Executive Partner of the Teesside office, leading the team and strengthening its role in the local business community.

This expansion follows Ward Hadaway's recent Birmingham office opening and its established offices in Leeds, Manchester, and Newcastle. Steven Petrie, Managing Partner of Ward Hadaway, said the merger aligns both firms' values and enhances client services locally and beyond. Bramley added it builds on 25 years of trusted service, enabling greater scale and expertise while retaining a Teesside focus.

Ward Hadaway has grown steadily, recruiting over 100 staff in 2024, including eight new partners, with £53.5m revenue for the year to April 2025. The merger supports its strategic goal to double revenue in ten years while strengthening regional presence.



## Crombie Wilkinson achieves Investors in People Gold Accreditation

Crombie Wilkinson, one of North Yorkshire's leading law firms, has been awarded the prestigious Investors in People (IIP) Gold Accreditation, recognising its exceptional commitment to employee development, engagement and wellbeing. Following a rigorous independent assessment, IIP praised the firm's strong leadership, values-driven culture and sustained investment in people.

Only 31% of IIP-accredited organisations achieve Gold, with just 3% in the legal sector—placing Crombie Wilkinson among the UK's top employers. The accreditation highlights the firm's focus on transparency, inclusivity and continuous improvement. Initiatives such as the Crombie Wilkinson Management & Leadership Charter, active staff networks and clear career progression pathways were cited as particular strengths. Managing Director Duncan Morter said: "We are thrilled to receive IIP Gold. This reflects the dedication of our team and our belief that investing in people is central to our

success. We'll continue to build a workplace where everyone can thrive."

Key feedback from the IIP assessment included improved sharing of strategic information, consistent use of the Management & Leadership Charter to guide leadership, strong integration of firm values into people management, and clear, well-regarded career progression pathways. Crombie Wilkinson provides high-quality legal services to individuals and businesses across Yorkshire and beyond and is known for its supportive, inclusive culture and commitment to developing its people at every level.



## Holden Smith advises Dotty Bridal on flagship Wakefield store



Holden Smith, the Yorkshire and Manchester-based law firm, has advised bridalwear retailer Dotty Bridal on lease negotiations for its new 16,600 sq ft flagship store at

Tileyard North in Wakefield. The store, which opened on 11 August, is thought to be the first of its size and scale in the UK, and features a coffee shop, bar, accessory lounge, footwear boutique, and private bridal changing suites spread over four floors.

Simon Shires, commercial property solicitor at Holden Smith, said, "It has been a pleasure to work closely with Dotty Bridal founder Shannon Martin over 18 months, providing

legal advice throughout the search for a new premises. There were a few bumps along the way, and when Shannon finally found what is now Dotty's new home at Tileyard North, a 16,600 sq ft former grain warehouse built in 1820, the transaction was complex, partly due to the building being listed and the need for certain tenant works before the store could begin trading. We are delighted to have supported Shannon and her team in negotiating the lease terms, helping accelerate their ambition to become the UK's leading bridalwear destination."

Ms Martin added, "Simon and the Holden Smith team guided us efficiently through the lease process, enabling me to understand all clauses and negotiate amendments swiftly, so we could move into our new premises quickly."

Dotty Bridal, founded in 2015 with a £10,000 business loan, recorded a turnover of £1.5m in its last financial year and employs a team of 21 people.

## Double success for Matthew and Josh strengthens BRM's legal services

Leading Chesterfield and Sheffield law firm BRM has celebrated significant achievements for two team members, strengthening its residential property and dispute resolution services. Matthew Elks, of the residential property team, has been awarded Fellowship status with the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEX). Matthew joined BRM as an apprentice in 2014 and began his Chartered Legal Executive journey in 2017, completing 12 exams and four practical skills units without a single fail. His new qualification allows him to deliver legal services requiring formal professional accreditation, enhancing BRM's property expertise.

Matthew said: "The exams were challenging alongside full-time work. BRM sponsored me throughout, which I'm extremely grateful for. The final Level 6 exams were particularly demanding but gave me a solid grounding in the area of law studied. I'm proud to offer a first-class service on behalf of BRM."

Adrian Sheehan, executive director and head of real estate, added: "Matthew's journey from apprentice to Chartered Legal Executive is a testament to his determination and talent. His achievement strengthens our residential property team."

Josh Proud, of BRM's dispute resolution team, has qualified as

a solicitor after retraining. Originally called to the Bar in 2015, he joined BRM in 2023 to specialise in contentious probate and successfully completed the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) while working full-time.

Josh said: "Qualifying feels great. Preparing for the SQEs alongside work took evenings and weekends, but I had tremendous support from colleagues, especially my manager and SQE supervisor."

Rob Cooke, executive director and head of dispute resolution, said: "Josh has shown consistent dedication while delivering day-to-day work. His expertise in contentious probate will further strengthen our specialist services."

BRM continues to prioritise professional development, offering recognised legal pathways and ensuring its services evolve with legal developments and industry best practice.





## Manchester law firm launches subscription-based legal service for startups

Blackmont Legal has launched a subscription model for legal advice, offering businesses unlimited access to support for a fixed monthly fee. The Legal-as-a-Service (LaaS) plan, aimed at startups and microbusinesses, is believed to be the first scheme of its kind in the UK, addressing the barriers of traditional hourly billing.

Zohaib Hashim, CEO of Blackmont Legal, said: "In the age of everything on demand, small businesses should be able to access quality legal advice as easily as streaming a film. Startups often need to make rapid legal decisions, particularly when scaling, but traditional options are slow and costly. Small businesses are key drivers of innovation and deserve legal services that work the same way."

The launch follows a report placing the UK as the world's second-largest startup ecosystem in 2025, behind China. Blackmont Legal, fully accredited by the Solicitors Regulation Authority, says it is the only UK firm to offer subscription legal services tailored specifically to startups and microbusinesses.

For a set monthly fee, clients receive a dedicated legal adviser covering contract review, due diligence, investor documentation, and early dispute resolution. Hashim added: "We already have a number of businesses signed up to LaaS. One client, an electronics startup, needed urgent contract scrutiny. Thanks to their LaaS subscription, they accessed our team immediately and signed their largest contract to date without the stress or expense of traditional legal processes."

Founded in 2024 as a fully virtual practice, Blackmont Legal works with clients in sectors including artificial intelligence, film, and digital technology.



## Summer of success for CMP Legal as firm notches up six award nominations



Chesterfield law firm CMP Legal is celebrating a landmark summer after being shortlisted for six major awards across the Yorkshire Legal Awards and the East Midlands Chamber Entering Women Awards.

Co-founder and solicitor Anna Cattee leads the nominations, including a place as a finalist for Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year. The nomination recognises her role in leading £140 million of complex corporate transactions over the past 12 months, a record rivaling some of the region's largest firms. Anna is also one of the few regional Notary Publics and a mother of three.

CMP Legal is shortlisted in three further Yorkshire Legal Awards categories, with winners announced on 10 October 2025: Trainee of the Year – Harrison Easley, recognised for introducing AI technology into the firm's practice management system;

Employment Law; and Corporate & Commercial.

The firm is also shortlisted in the Enterprising Women Awards on 26 September 2025 for Team of the Year and Small Business of the Year.

These nominations follow CMP Legal's growing national recognition. Earlier this year, it became the first Chesterfield corporate law firm to secure a place in Legal 500 for its Corporate and Commercial work on its first submission.

Anna Cattee said: "2025 marks a decade of juggling corporate lawyer life and parenthood – two jobs for the price of one. From junior lawyer to salaried partner and now co-founder, these nominations reflect the hard work of everyone at CMP Legal. I'm honoured to work alongside such dedicated colleagues providing expert legal services and exceptional client care."

Founded four years ago, CMP Legal has quickly built a regional and national reputation for high-value corporate work, innovation, and community impact. Earlier this year, the 12-strong firm was named Niche Law Firm of the Year and Legal and Dispute Resolution Team of the Year by the Sheffield and District Law Society.

## Taylor Emmet Trainee shortlisted at Yorkshire Legal Awards

Trainee solicitor Jamal Aslam from Taylor Emmet has been shortlisted for 'Trainee of the Year' at the 2025 Yorkshire Legal Awards, taking place on 9 October at the New Dock Hall, Leeds. The awards celebrate the region's legal community, recognising achievements across corporate firms, barristers, rising stars, and senior partners.

Since starting his training contract in September 2024, Jamal has made a notable impact in Taylor Emmet's corporate commercial and private client departments. During his corporate commercial seat, he worked on high-profile transactions, navigating complex regulatory requirements and demonstrating exceptional legal expertise.

Before his training contract, Jamal gained over five years of paralegal experience, including nearly three years in Taylor Emmet's commercial real estate department. His experience spans commercial, retail, industrial, agricultural, and land transactions across the UK, allowing him to make an immediate impact as a trainee.

Outside work, Jamal is active in the local community, leading initiatives in education, inclusion, charity, and local enterprise. Jamal said: "I am honoured to be shortlisted for this award.

Working at Taylor Emmet has given me incredible opportunities to develop my skills across different practice areas. I'm grateful for the support of my supervisors and colleagues, which has allowed me to go above and beyond throughout my first year. This recognition reflects the culture at Taylor Emmet, where trainees are supported, valued, and empowered to succeed."

Steve Hinshelwood, CEO at Taylor Emmet, added: "We are delighted Jamal has been recognised with this well-deserved shortlisting. Since joining, he has consistently demonstrated exceptional talent, commercial awareness, and client care skills. This nomination reflects his hard work and dedication, and we are proud to have him on our team."



## Sills & Betteridge Solicitors' ambitious expansion after Bell & Buxton merger

From 1 September 2025, historic Sheffield firm Bell & Buxton Solicitors merged with Sills & Betteridge Solicitors, creating a major new presence in the Sheffield legal market. Bell & Buxton has 150 years of expertise in litigation and corporate law, known for long-term client relationships.

Sills & Betteridge, established in 1759, has 16 offices across Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, and the East Midlands with over 400 staff. Its South Yorkshire expansion included acquisitions of Bridge Sanderson Munro (2019), Rawson Family Law (2021), and Acclaimed Family Law (2023). The merged team now occupies New Oxford House, Barker's Pool, while Bell & Buxton staff remain at Telegraph House.

The combined Legal 500-ranked firm has a turnover exceeding £25 million and offers a broad range of services across multiple practice areas. Initially named Sills & Betteridge incorporating Bell & Buxton, the firm aims to leverage both teams' strengths to deliver top-tier legal services in Sheffield.

Matthew Rodgers, Partner at Bell & Buxton, said: "This merger allows us to offer a wider range of services while maintaining the trusted relationships both firms have built. We look forward to reinforcing the Sills & Betteridge brand in Sheffield."

Alex Ross added: "We also thank Adam Ames, Jo Cresswell, and Alicia Williams of Shorts Accountants for their vital support during the merger."

Martyn Hall, CFO of Sills & Betteridge, said: "By combining our talents and resources, we will enhance our ability to deliver innovative legal solutions. This merger is a major step in our regional expansion strategy."



## Han Law shortlisted in four categories at the 2025 Yorkshire Legal Awards



Han Law is proud to announce its shortlisting in four categories at the 2025 Yorkshire Legal Awards, including the coveted Managing Partner of the Year honour for founder Hannah Strawbridge.

The firm has been recognised in the following categories:

- Best ESG Campaign
- Employment Law Team of the Year
- Law Firm of the Year (Small)
- Managing Partner of the Year

This marks the third consecutive year Han Law has been shortlisted, and this time, it is nominated in more categories than any other firm. The recognition reflects the team's bold vision, hard work, and unwavering commitment to excellence.

"We're genuinely thrilled," said Hannah Strawbridge, the firm's Founder and CEO. "It's been a year of challenges and growth, so this recognition truly means a lot. We're keeping everything crossed that it's third time lucky!"

Founded in 2019, Han Law was born out of Hannah's desire to challenge the traditional law firm model and create a space where legal professionals could thrive. Her nomination as Managing Partner of the Year highlights her leadership in building a people-first practice, while also advocating for inclusive and transparent employment practices, including support for women in the workplace and awareness of menopause at work.

Han Law continues to redefine employment legal services with its human-first, flexible approach. From ESG leadership to expert tribunal representation, the firm blends legal precision with empathy, making it a standout in the industry.

With a growing reputation for innovation, integrity, and impact, Han Law is proving that small firms can make a big difference.

## Yorkshire solicitors ranked in top 3% of UK law firms for customer satisfaction

A team of solicitors from Yorkshire and the North East is celebrating after being ranked in the top three percent of UK law firms for customer satisfaction.

Milners' Private Client team, specialising in Wills and Estate Planning, Trusts, Probate, and Lasting Powers of Attorney, earned the recognition from independent platform ReviewSolicitors, the UK's leading legal review site with over 8 million users and 4,000 law firms.

The team, which operates across Milners' offices in Leeds, Harrogate, Pontefract, and Darlington, scored an average client rating of 4.9 out of 5 from more than 300 reviews. Its six members are Iain Robson, Millie Schofield, Destinee Ellis, Emma McDonnell, Lynn Kirtley, and Managing Partner Simon Bass.

Mr Bass said: "Having served Yorkshire and beyond since 1897, we are proud of our local roots and delighted to see our team recognised nationally. This reflects our commitment to providing clear, expert legal support to

clients during life's most important moments. Thanks go to our dedicated team and to every client who has trusted us with their future."

ReviewSolicitors added:

"With over 300 client reviews and a 4.9-star average, Milners' dedication to client care and expert legal support is clearly making an impact. Our platform provides clients with guidance in choosing the right solicitor and valuable feedback for law firms."



# Balancing service with compliance

**Andrea Cohen**, legal director in the Compli team at Weightmans, is back with our regular update on regulatory matters and risk and compliance:

This month's focus is "Justice in our communities: pro bono, access to justice & public interest law". I anticipate that the majority of lawyers joined the profession because they wanted to help people and whilst not all are involved in areas that are seen as providing access to justice or public interest law, many continue to provide pro bono work in one form or another on a regular basis. From a regulatory perspective, and without wanting to put a dampener on the wonderful work that is undertaken by members of our profession, when carrying out pro bono work we must not lose sight of our obligations, the SRA Principles and the SRA Codes of Conduct etc. Ask yourself:

- Does your firm have a pro bono policy/guidance document?
- Do you open a new file for each pro bono transaction?
- Does your firm's usual file opening procedures/AML requirements apply to pro bono work in the same way it does for fee paying clients?
- Do you run a conflict search before undertaking pro bono work, and what happens if a conflict arises during the course of a matter?
- Do you send out a retainer letter?
- Is pro bono work supervised?

All these questions should be considered if your lawyers undertake pro bono work. In the wider world of regulation and risk and compliance, matters to draw to your attention include:

## SRA Declaration - High-volume claims

COLPs of firms handling high-volume consumer claims must submit a mandatory declaration by Friday 3 October 2025, completed by the managing partner, CEO or equivalent. The SRA estimates it takes up to two hours if all information is at hand, but it may take longer for firms with multiple claim types, referrers, or ATE insurers. It's strongly recommended not to leave it until the last minute, as the main form has 121 questions over 16 pages, with additional forms containing 6–25 questions each.

## Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act (ECCTA)

On 1 September 2025, ECCTA introduced a new offence of failing to prevent fraud for 'large organisations' and removed the cap on the SRA's fines for certain economic crime breaches. The SRA's updated fining guidance is still awaited. From 18 November 2025, identity verification will be mandatory for all company directors and people with significant control (PSCs), phased by new or existing status. Non-compliance will be a criminal offence for both companies and individuals.

## SRA Sectoral risk assessment – Anti-money laundering and terrorist financing

The SRA updated its risk assessment on 31 July. If your firm is in scope, your FWRA, PCPs etc should be updated to reflect the changes, and the updated documents or a note circulated.

## SRA guidance/news

- [SRA | The scope of the money laundering regulations | Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)
- [SRA | Guidance on desk-based reviews | Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)
- [SRA | Complying with Principle 6 - encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion | Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)

## Law Society practice notes

- [Handling complaints | The Law Society](#)
- [What to do when a complaint goes to the Legal Ombudsman | The Law Society](#)
- [Residual client balances | The Law Society](#)

## AML fines

- Law firm fined £58,000 plus £20,000 costs for lacking AML risk assessment, PCPS, and independent audit; 80% of work was in scope of MLRs.
- Director dealing with a PEP client fined £32,500, £50,000 costs, and restricted for five years for failing to verify source of funds and misusing client account.
- Firm fined £173,000 for identifying a PEP client two months late and giving inaccurate information to another firm.

## Struck off / suspended solicitors

- Struck off for lying to a client about receiving an expert report.
- Suspended one year for editing an email address to cover a mistake.
- Struck off for over-recording time, including 23 hours in a day.

## How Compli can help...

The Compli Solicitor Regulatory and Professional Discipline Team can provide expertise and advice on risk and compliance, AML, disciplinary assistance etc. If we can help in any way, please get in touch at [compli@weightmans.com](mailto:compli@weightmans.com)





## Taylor Emmet lace up for their annual Charity Office Walk



Employees at Taylor Emmet will take part in their annual Charity Office Walk on Friday 8 August, following last year's successful event, which

raised £2,775 for the firm's charity partners.

This year, the walk will support Taylor Emmet's four charity partners: Support Dogs, Alzheimer's Society, Sheffield Children's Hospital Charity, and Weston Park Cancer Charity, with a fundraising target of £20,000, split equally among the organisations.

The walk connects the firm's five offices, starting in Rotherham, passing through the Sheffield Isaac Building, Sheffield South West, and Dronfield offices, before finishing at the firm's Peak District office in Bakewell, covering a total distance of 45 kilometres. Participants can choose distances of 5km, 10km, 15km, 22km, or challenge themselves to complete

the full 45km route.

Taylor Emmet regularly hosts creative fundraising initiatives for its charity partners, including charity bungee jumps, Dog and Doughnut Days, family fun days, and a Volunteer Day programme, which encourages employees to donate their time to support the charities.

Charlotte Rampley, Medical Negligence Solicitor at Taylor Emmet, said:

"We are excited to once again take on our Charity Office Walk. It's a fantastic way to bring colleagues together across our branches while supporting causes that are close to our hearts. At Taylor Emmet, making a positive impact in our community is really important, and we appreciate every contribution towards our £20,000 target. Everyone is welcome, and we encourage family, friends, colleagues, and even pets to join the walk!"

Those wishing to support the event and the firm's charity partners can donate via the Taylor Emmet JustGiving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/taylor-emmet-charity-walk-2025>

## Gordons advises on launch of digital lottery to boost grassroots sports fundraising



Leeds law firm supports launch of Fundraising Club Lottery for UK sports clubs

Leeds-based law firm Gordons has advised digital sports platform Pitchero on the creation of The Fundraising Club Lottery, a new not-for-profit

digital initiative to help UK sports clubs generate funds for vital infrastructure projects.

The Fundraising Club Lottery allows any eligible club, regardless of size or sport, to create an affiliate page and promote it to members, who can purchase lottery tickets to enter a monthly draw. For every ticket sold, the club receives a grant to invest in charitable causes, such as new pitches, refurbished changing rooms, or new technologies to support players and fans.

Gordons' sports, media and marketing team advised on

the launch, including key terms and documents, led by commercial solicitor Ella Fitzpatrick and head of privacy Lauren Wills-Dixon, with support from partner Simon Tingle and solicitor Harvey Blake.

Mark Fletcher, co-founder of Pitchero, said:

"The cost of running a club has increased while funding sources are decreasing. Many clubs have ambitious plans to improve facilities. The Fundraising Club Lottery empowers clubs to raise funds and build momentum for these investment plans. Achieving this complex undertaking would not have been possible without Gordons' expertise – the team understood our vision and provided practical, straight-talking advice."

Ella Fitzpatrick added:

"The Fundraising Club Lottery opens a vital source of revenue for sports clubs and creates new opportunities for fans to support their teams. It was a pleasure to advise on this exciting initiative, and we look forward to seeing the difference it makes for grassroots sports."

Founded in 2007, Pitchero provides online platforms for 70,000 sports teams and reaches over four million users each month. Gordons, with 170 employees and its head office in Leeds, represents clients across sports, media, marketing, fashion and beauty sectors.

## Walkers complete the Yorkshire Three Peaks to raise thousands for charity in memory of colleague

Gateley walkers raise £11,000 in memory of colleague during Yorkshire Three Peaks challenge

A group of walkers from Gateley's Leeds office have completed the Yorkshire Three Peaks challenge, raising over £11,000 in memory of their much-missed colleague, Martin Barnes.

Martin, a senior associate in the construction team, was an avid walker and had previously completed the Three Peaks challenge with Gateley colleagues. To honour his memory, 28 family, friends and former colleagues undertook the 24-mile round trip covering Pen-y-Ghent, Wharfedale and Ingleborough, raising crucial funds for The Brain Tumour Charity, the world's leading charity dedicated to brain tumour research.

The group initially raised £5,660, which was generously matched by Gateley, taking the total to £11,320. Donations are still being welcomed online.

Roger McCourt, partner and head of Gateley's Leeds office, said:

"Despite the horrendous weather, early start, and a forecast of thunderstorms, we completed the

challenge on an incredibly special day. Walking alongside Martin's friends and family reminded us of the joy he found in this challenge. We've been amazed by the fundraising efforts, which reflect how much Martin meant to so many."

Lily Finlay, community fundraiser at The Brain Tumour Charity, added:

"We are grateful to Gateley's Leeds team for their ongoing support. Their generous donations will fund pioneering research, support families affected by brain tumours, and help campaign for change. We are honoured to continue supporting their fundraising efforts as their chosen charity of the year."



## Taylor Emmet raises over £2,600 in successful Charity Office Walk

Leading law firm, Taylor Emmet, has successfully completed their annual Charity Office Walk, raising an impressive £2,626 for charity.

The sponsored walk, which took place on Friday 8th August, raised funds for the firm's four charity partners: Support Dogs, Alzheimer's Society, Sheffield Children's Hospital Charity, and Weston Park Cancer Charity, contributing towards the firm's annual target of £20,000 for these organisations.

The walk connected the firm's five office locations. Starting in Rotherham, participants journeyed through Sheffield city centre, visited the Sheffield Southwest and Dronfield offices, before concluding at the firm's brand-new Peak District office at the Riverside Business Park in Bakewell.

The relocation of the Bakewell branch from its former location to the new Riverside Business Park marks a significant change for the firm, transitioning from a "Bakewell-based" to "Peak District Solicitors" to better reflect its client base throughout the region, while complementing its Sheffield operations.

Mike Robinson, Senior Web Developer at Taylor Emmet, said: "We are thrilled with the success

of this year's Taylor Emmet Office Walk. Raising £2,626 for charities that are so close to our hearts is a fantastic achievement. It was a wonderful day that brought colleagues from across all our branches together for causes we deeply care about.

"It was great that we got to finish the walk at our new Peak District office and celebrate our move to the Riverside Business Park. Thank you to everyone who donated and supported us throughout the day. It's support like this that enables us to continue supporting causes that make a big difference in our community."



## Austin Kemp Grows Specialist HNW Divorce Team with Appointment of Nationally Recognised Partner Michael Gregory

Austin Kemp Solicitors, a Legal 500 Leading Firm, has announced the appointment of Michael Gregory as a Salaried Partner. The move marks a significant addition to the firm's leadership team and reflects its continued focus on attracting high-calibre legal talent.

Michael becomes the sixth salaried partner at the firm, with further strategic appointments expected before the end of the year as part of Austin Kemp's wider growth plans.

With more than 20 years of experience, Michael is a nationally recognised name in private family law. He joins from a specialist family law firm, where he was a Partner and played a key role in expanding the firm's presence in the North West and London.

Michael is known for his expertise in high-net-worth and ultra-high-net-worth divorce, international family law, and modern family structures. He is a trusted advisor to entrepreneurs, business leaders, and public figures, bringing a wealth of experience in financial remedies involving complex and multi-jurisdictional wealth structures, trust assets, forensic asset tracing, and cross-border enforcement.

He is also particularly noted for his niche practice in surrogacy and fertility law. The Legal 500 (2025) describes him as "the go-to"

advisor in this specialist area.

Commenting on the appointment, Amandeep Kooner, Managing Director at Austin Kemp Solicitors, said:

"Michael's appointment sends a strong message about the direction we're heading as a firm. He is a heavyweight addition to our leadership team, with a national reputation for delivering results in complex and sensitive family law matters. His deep legal insight, technical excellence, and personal integrity embody the values that Austin Kemp stands for. He will not only enhance the service we provide to our high-net-worth clients but will also help shape the next generation of elite family lawyers within our team."

Michael will be based across the firm's Manchester City Centre and Mayfair, London offices, strengthening Austin Kemp's national footprint and ability to deliver specialist advice to clients across the UK.



## Hat-trick of news starters move to Yorkshire's conveyancing specialist



Yorkshire-based LCF Residential, the specialist conveyancing division of leading law firm LCF Law, has welcomed three new team members as part of its latest expansion.

Conveyancing assistants Umme Karim and Harry Brackenridge have joined the Bradford and

Harrogate offices respectively, while Shaheen Iqbal has been appointed as a post-completions assistant in Bradford. The additions bring LCF Residential's team to 27 people across LCF Law's offices in Leeds, Bradford, Harrogate, and Ilkley. This regional presence gives the firm strong insight into the local property market while enabling it to work closely with homebuyers, sellers, estate agents, and almost every mortgage lender in the UK.

Harry recently graduated with a law degree from Sheffield Hallam University and previously spent a year at LCF Law as a legal assistant during his studies. Umme holds a postgraduate law degree from the University of Bradford, while Shaheen brings over 20 years of legal sector experience to her new role.

In their positions, Harry and Umme will liaise with clients and estate agents throughout sales and purchases, while supporting the wider team with tasks such as drafting contracts, verifying ID documents, handling searches, and managing mortgage reports. Shaheen will focus on post-completion matters, including submitting Stamp Duty Land Tax returns, registering properties with the Land Registry, resolving requisitions, and managing file closure to ensure all paperwork is complete.

Julie Davis, head of LCF Residential, said:

"We know that buying and selling property can be stressful, so our ethos is about making transactions run as smoothly and efficiently as possible, for a fixed price with no hidden fees. We pride ourselves on being proactive, keeping clients updated, and ensuring they always have direct access to the individuals working on their behalf."

"Welcoming bright and ambitious individuals like Shaheen, Umme, and Harry is key to that. All three have hit the ground running and are already having a positive impact as we continue to grow our client base and strengthen our network of estate agents and mortgage lenders across the North of England and beyond."

## Ramsdens Solicitors' graduate entry solicitor apprenticeship application now open

Yorkshire-based Ramsdens Solicitors has opened recruitment for its graduate solicitor apprenticeship scheme, offering an alternative route to qualification.

The two-year, eight-month programme leads to qualification as a solicitor alongside a Diploma in Legal Practice. Applications close on 31 August 2025, with this year's focus on candidates with experience in Real Estate (Commercial Property) or Court of Protection – Health and Welfare, both growth areas for the firm.

The scheme combines on-the-job training with study, enabling graduates to qualify without the traditional master's degree route. Earlier this year, Megan Smith became the firm's first solicitor to qualify through the programme after starting as a legal assistant in Child Law. She said: "Learning whilst being an active team member has been incredibly valuable and allowed me to develop beyond what I thought possible so early in my career."

Partner and training principal Natalie Lang said: "We are always looking for talented and diverse young people, so alternative routes are really important to us. The graduate

scheme attracts top candidates who can build long and successful careers here."

Current apprentice solicitor Annalise Hodgson added: "Taking the apprenticeship route has been brilliant because I can really get hands-on with the work at the same time as studying. The team here is so knowledgeable and I've learned so much by being here."

Applicants must have three A-Levels at BBB+ and either a 2:1 in law or a 2:1 in a non-law degree with a GDL/PGDL, plus relevant experience in Real Estate or Court of Protection – Health and Welfare.





# Justice beyond the courtroom

**Macy Wynn**, Trainee CILEX Lawyer at Clarion Solicitors reflects on how pro bono work, improved access to justice, and public law initiatives combine to transform lives. This article explores each strand, offering insights and strategies for lawyers seeking impact in our communities.

In Leeds and Yorkshire, the principles of justice extend far beyond courtroom victories. They live in the neighbourhood advice centre, the volunteer lawyer clinic, and the campaigns that safeguard our collective rights.

Pro bono legal services build bridges between law firms and the public. By offering expertise without fee, practitioners develop empathy for clients wrestling with practical problems, housing, welfare benefits, family disputes, that might otherwise escalate into crises. This engagement cultivates trust in the legal profession, demonstrating that representation has no reservation.

## Enhancing Access to Justice: Barriers and Solutions

Despite legal aid reforms, many vulnerable individuals still struggle to access affordable representation due to cost, complexity, digital exclusion, and stigma. Overcoming these barriers relies on charitable grants, community events, innovative delivery methods, local advice portals, mobile clinics, and partnerships with non-profits.

The Access to Justice Foundation supports law centres and pro bono providers through grants, pilot virtual clinics, legal literacy workshops, welfare-rights hubs, and volunteer lawyer training to ensure sustainable free legal advice services.

The annual Leeds Legal Walk raises awareness and funds for local advice centres and Citizens Advice, uniting the profession and highlighting unmet legal need across Yorkshire.

Public interest law offers a mechanism to uphold rights and the rule of law, with strategic cases addressing systemic issues through judicial reviews, statutory appeals, and public inquiries in areas like environmental protection and social care.

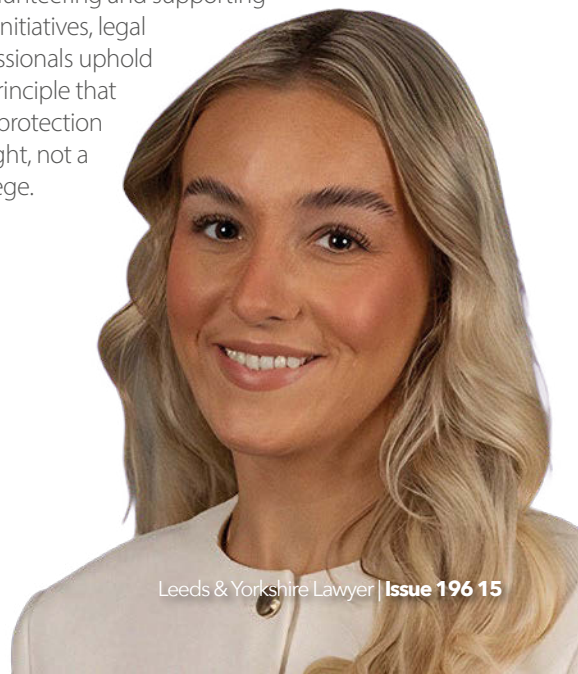
Outreach programmes, such as Policy Leeds at the University of Leeds, connect researchers and policy professionals to tackle societal challenges through collaborative projects in climate action, education, urban development, and community-informed decision-making.

Lasting impact comes from cross-sector collaboration between legal professionals, academics, non-profits, and public bodies to create more inclusive and responsive legal frameworks.

## The Enduring Value of Pro Bono Service

Pro bono work transforms legal expertise into social impact. In Leeds and across Yorkshire, practitioners support advice hubs and community centres, helping clients navigate family, housing, and welfare law. These efforts resolve individual disputes and reinforce the profession's responsibility to ensure equal access to justice.

Justice requires more than courtroom skill, it demands partnership, innovation, and generosity. By volunteering and supporting local initiatives, legal professionals uphold the principle that legal protection is a right, not a privilege.



## Knights appoints new Partner to lead competition law growth in Leeds



National professional services business Knights has strengthened its Leeds office with the appointment of experienced competition lawyer, Charlie Markillie, as Partner.

Ranked as a Leading Associate in Legal500

and an Associate to Watch in Chambers 2025, Charlie brings over 15 years' experience advising on UK and EU competition law, including merger control, trade practices, commercial agreements, investigations, and compliance. He joins from Eversheds Sutherland, where he acted for major UK and international clients across sectors such as retail, aviation, food and drink, and financial services, and has led high-profile clearance processes before the UK Competition and Markets Authority and the European Commission.

Charlie also advises on Foreign Direct Investment matters under the UK National Security and Investment Act 2021,

alongside compliance training, dawn raid preparation, and internal investigations. He previously undertook secondments at Cathay Pacific and HSBC in Hong Kong, designing major compliance programmes.

He said: "Knights is on a rapid growth journey, but what stood out is its clear commitment to regional clients. Joining at this stage presents a rare opportunity to build something meaningful. I'm excited to help develop a national competition practice that adds real value across the firm's M&A work and client relationships."

His appointment also bolsters Knights' wider regulatory team in Leeds, where he will work alongside Partner Tori Lethaby, a data protection and privacy specialist. Together, they offer clients joined-up advice on GDPR, competition law, FDI, and compliance.

Lisa Shacklock, Group Client Services Director at Knights, added: "Charlie brings exceptional expertise and energy. His arrival strengthens our corporate and commercial offering and enhances our ability to provide high-level regulatory advice."

Knights is ranked among the UK's top 50 law firms by revenue, with 1,350 professionals across 32 offices nationwide.

## Square One Law boosts Leeds property team with senior hire Pav Lalia

B Corp commercial law firm Square One Law has expanded its property team with the appointment of senior associate Pav Lalia. Pav joins from Gowling WLG, where he spent more than six years in the real estate team, acting for household retailers, supermarkets, and institutional landlords.

Specialising in commercial property, Pav will be based in Square One's Leeds office, advising clients on freehold and leasehold acquisitions and disposals, commercial developments, and estate management matters.

Speaking about his new role, Pav said:

"I'm absolutely thrilled to have joined the commercial property team at Square One Law. Over the past decade, I've been able to hone my skills as a lawyer and gain valuable experience, and I'm sure working with the fantastic property team we have here will help me further build on that. It's an exciting time to be joining such a progressive, growing law firm and I can't wait to begin working with the team on upcoming projects."

His arrival is the latest in a series of appointments made by Square One Law over recent months as the firm continues to invest in talent to support its expanding client base.

Matthew Thompson, head of the Leeds office and partner in

the commercial property team, added:

"I think I speak for everyone when I say how delighted we are to have welcomed Pav to the team. We have made a raft of appointments and promotions over the course of the last 12 months to ensure we can continue supporting our growing client base, and in Pav we have someone who has the determination, skill and expertise to not only hit the ground running but also to really strengthen our offering to clients."

"He's a fantastic addition to our team and will be key to ensuring that, as we continue to grow and build on last year's record performance, we have everything we need as a firm to continue helping our clients to innovate and grow."



## Double director appointments bolster Switalskis' medical negligence team



Switalskis appoints two new directors to medical negligence team.

National law firm Switalskis has strengthened its medical negligence team with the appointment of Chris Gresswell-Green and Clare Thompson, enhancing its support across East Yorkshire,

Lincolnshire, and the North East. Chris, joining from a Lincolnshire firm, has 15 years' experience in catastrophic claims including amputation, brain and spinal injuries, and fatal cases. Based in Doncaster, he is a member of the Law Society's Clinical Negligence Panel. Clare brings over 25 years' experience from Newcastle, specialising in

complex birth injury cases and accredited by both the Law Society's Clinical Negligence Panel and AvMA.

The two join an 85-lawyer team, including 11 directors, ranked fifth nationally by the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers.

Chris said: "Medical negligence is an area where I can make a genuine difference. I'm excited to help expand Switalskis' reach across East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire." Clare added: "I'm proud to join a firm with such a strong national reputation and look forward to supporting clients in the North East."

Suzanne Munroe, head of medical negligence, said: "We're delighted to bring two talented directors into the team. These appointments strengthen our regional support and ensure clients receive personalised, expert care. Further new recruits are expected soon."

# Justice through service

**James Staton**, President of the Yorkshire Union of Law Societies and Partner at Schofield Sweeney, reflects on the profession's tradition of service and the importance of pro bono work in Yorkshire.

In addition to being President of the Yorkshire Union of Law Societies, until July I was also president of the Keighley Rotary Club. Rotary is a worldwide organisation with a motto "Service Above Self". The principal idea of Rotary is that its members provide service to their communities and to the international community; whilst fundraising is a part of Rotary's activities, to finance projects in which members are engaged, service to others is the main thing.

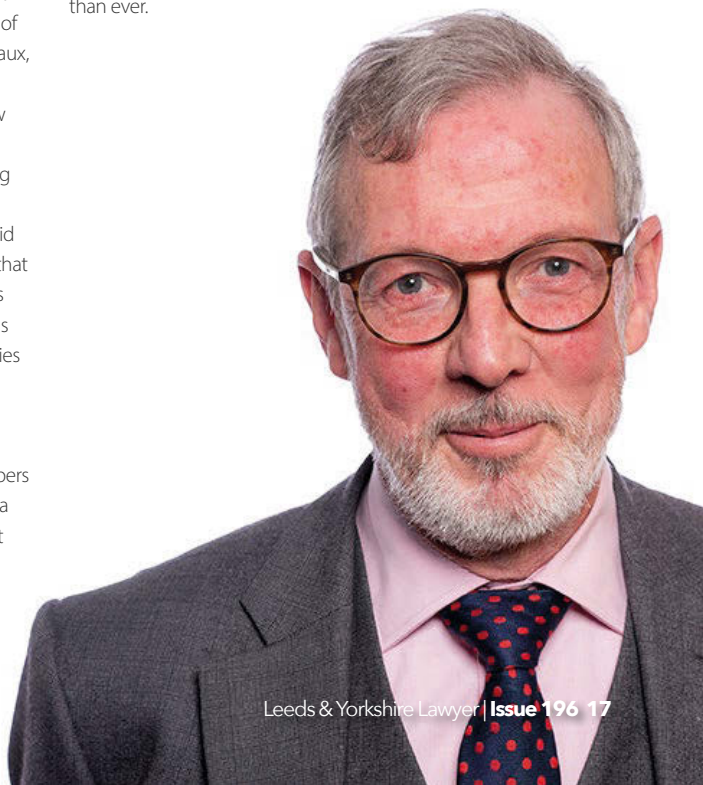
Whilst many people seem to regard lawyers as "fat cats", it seems to me that the Rotary motto of "Service Above Self" can apply equally to most lawyers; it is very common for lawyers to provide advice and assistance free of charge to people who approach their firms, and having been a judge in last year's Yorkshire Legal Awards, it was clear to me from reading submissions that most firms in the Yorkshire area are undertaking some form of pro-bono work supporting their local communities.

When I qualified as a solicitor in late 1982, Legal Aid was available to a large part of the population; the Green Form Scheme paid for initial advice and Civil Legal Aid was widely available for all sorts of disputes. Many firms supported their local Citizens Advice Bureaux, by running free advice sessions. I was articled at what is now Lupton Fawcett and on qualification moved to Booth & Co (now Addleshaw Goddard) before moving to Wright & Wright (now Gordons). All of those firms supported their local CABs providing free advice to members of the public. That was at a time when Legal Aid was still available for civil advice and disputes. Legal Aid is now very rarely available; it is therefore even more important that firms provide pro-bono advice to the less advantaged members of society who need advice but cannot afford to pay for it. It was heartening to see the number of firms who had submitted entries for the Yorkshire Legal Awards and who are providing pro-bono services to their communities.

Huddersfield is a town where free advice is available to members of the public through local solicitors. At least one firm runs free a weekly advice session, and another provides a free employment advice session. The University Law Faculty operates a law clinic where students under the guidance and assistance of local practitioners can offer advice to members of the public who attend with legal problems.

The lack of Legal Aid impacts upon access to justice. Many people cannot afford to be represented, even if those proceedings are important to them, such as housing and debt cases. In many courts, local solicitors provide a pro-bono advice service and sometimes free representation, particularly in housing cases, and there are of course Law Centres and other legal advice charities, including Shelter, which assist people before the courts. The Access to Justice Foundation holds events throughout the country each year, the Great Legal Quiz and legal walks in which lawyers take part and through which funding is raised for the Foundation which provides money to legal advice charities which support those less advantaged members of society. Legal walks take place in places such as Hull, Doncaster, York and Leeds. I and members of my firm have regularly taken part in the Leeds Legal Walk. That involves members of the judiciary, the court staff, law students, barristers and solicitors from the whole range of firms in the Greater Leeds area. Over 900 people were registered for the Leeds Legal Walk this year, making it the largest legal walk outside London.

Yorkshire lawyers do live up to the motto of "Service Above Self" by providing pro-bono legal advice and assistance to the less advantaged and by supporting initiatives to enable those for whom Legal Aid is no longer available to gain access to justice. It is unrealistic to expect a return to a comprehensive Legal Aid system, so the support by lawyers for advice schemes and activities such as the Access to Justice Foundation's legal walks is more important than ever.





## tmGroup Appoints Matthew Green as New Chief Executive Officer



tmGroup has announced the appointment of Matthew Green as its new Chief Executive Officer, effective 18 August 2025.

Matthew brings more than 20 years of leadership experience in the property technology sector. He spent over two decades

at CoStar Group, the global leader in commercial real estate information, analytics and online marketplaces listed on NASDAQ and included in the S&P 500 Index. Most recently, he served as European Managing Director, leading operations across the UK, France, Germany, and Spain while reporting directly to the global CEO.

A Chartered Accountant, Matthew began his career at Arthur Andersen in 2000 before moving into property technology. After taking a career break over the past year, he now joins tmGroup "full of energy and enthusiasm" to shape its next chapter.

Matthew said:

"I'm thrilled to be joining tmGroup at such an exciting point in its journey. Having spent time getting to know the property technology industry from many angles, I can already see the huge potential here and I'm looking forward to working closely with the talented team to unlock it. This next chapter is all about building on tmGroup's strong foundations, embracing innovation, and delivering even greater value to our clients."

As part of the leadership transition, outgoing CEO Thomas Maerz will take up a new position on the tmGroup Advisory Board. He will continue to support the business, maintain key relationships, and focus on identifying acquisition opportunities.

Reflecting on his time in the role, Thomas said:

"The past two years have been a fantastic journey, and that's entirely thanks to the tmGroup team. Their commitment, collaboration, and drive have brought the company to where it is today. I'm excited about what's ahead – for Matthew, for the team, and for tmGroup."

Originally from Gloucester, Matthew studied at Reading University and attended school in Bristol. He now lives in East Sussex with his wife and three children, but says the South West remains "familiar territory."

## Sheffield solicitors make two family law appointments

Sheffield-based Wake Smith Solicitors has bolstered its family law team with the appointment of solicitor Johanna Brewer and paralegal Stephanie Smart, as head of family law Lindsey Canning retires after 24 years.

Johanna brings 15 years' experience in divorce, financial disputes, private children matters, and domestic injunctions. She is a member of Resolution and achieved The Law Society Family Law Advanced Accreditation in 2023. Johanna said: "I chose to focus on family law to help people through difficult times and look forward to using my negotiating skills to achieve the best outcomes while making clients feel as comfortable as possible."

Stephanie joins after five years' experience in family law, having completed her LLB at Leeds Beckett University in 2020 and worked alongside Johanna for the past four years in Chesterfield.

Paul Gibbon, joint managing director, commented: "The appointment of Johanna and Stephanie reflects our commitment to expert family law services. We thank Lindsey for her dedication in building the department and wish her the very best in retirement. Our team is proud of its reputation for expertise and compassionate client care."

Wake Smith's family team advises on prenuptial and cohabitation agreements, divorce, financial settlements (including pensions), capital provision for children, residence and contact disputes, and domestic injunctions.



## Yorkshire law firm commits to future talent with new generation of trainees



Leading Yorkshire-based law firm Ramsdens Solicitors is welcoming a new wave of talent as it continues to provide expert legal advice and support across the region.

Ramsdens proudly announces that four trainees have completed

their training contracts and been offered full-time roles, demonstrating the firm's commitment to developing the next generation of talent. Katie Bonnard and Niamh Docherty will join the Family department, while Alex Tattersall and Courtney Moore will work in Dispute Resolution.

Lindsey Frith, Joint CEO at Ramsdens, said: "We are incredibly proud of our trainee programme and feel these newly qualified solicitors will make a valuable contribution. Many of our partners started their careers here, and I look forward to seeing where these talented

young solicitors progress."

Following them are nine new trainees starting in September. Four will take the traditional two-year route, and five will follow the longer graduate apprenticeship path. Ramsdens offers both options, giving trainees hands-on experience in real-life settings. The graduate apprenticeship combines on- and off-the-job learning over roughly 30 months.

Natalie Lang, Partner and Training Principal, added: "Our team is our greatest asset. Each year we welcome a bright new group of talent, nurturing and developing them through our training programmes. This ensures we continue providing the very best legal advice and support across Yorkshire, helping trainees turn their passion into long-lasting careers."

Niamh Docherty, newly qualified solicitor, said: "Although early in my career, the knowledge and experience I've gained at Ramsdens has been invaluable. I'm excited to join the Family Law team full-time and continue learning from the best in Yorkshire as I grow professionally and personally."

## Lake Legal strengthens leadership team with partner promotion

Leeds family law specialists Lake Legal have promoted Hollie Burnett to partner as the firm builds on a record year of growth.

The move follows a 5 per cent rise in turnover and comes alongside the launch of a new mediation service, headed by Sam Haslam, marking another milestone for the firm.

Burnett joined Lake Legal in 2017 and became an associate in 2021. Over the past eight years, she has developed wide-ranging expertise, from handling complex financial settlements for high-net-worth individuals to advising on cohabitation disputes, domestic violence cases, nuptial agreements and child-related matters.

Hollie said: "It's hugely rewarding to see my hard work over the years recognised with a promotion to partner at Lake Legal. It has been a privilege to grow my career within such a supportive and forward-thinking firm, and I am very proud to be part of such an outstanding team. I look forward to continuing to play a key role within a firm which provides outstanding legal advice and service to all our clients, strengthened further by our new

mediation offering."

Lake Legal, which has been consistently ranked in the top tier by both Chambers & Partners and The Legal 500, is widely recognised as one of the region's leading boutique family law firms.

Managing partner

Claire Glaister added: "After achieving our highest ever annual turnover, it is exciting to see how else we can progress as a firm. By strengthening the team at a management level and adding a new string to our bow in the form of mediation, we are undoubtedly going from strength to strength. Hollie is a huge asset to the business, and her promotion reflects both her ability and her commitment to clients."



## Parklane Plowden Chambers welcomes new Barrister



Walker Morris has announced 20 internal promotions, including one partner, five directors, and 14 senior associates, highlighting the firm's commitment to nurturing exceptional talent and delivering

outstanding legal services. Among the promotions, Shabana Muneer has been elevated to partner in the Employment & Business Immigration team, recognising her pivotal role in establishing a dedicated Business Immigration practice. This rapidly growing area addresses increasing client needs and enhances the firm's international capabilities.

Shabana's rise through the firm's Forge programme, a development initiative focused on equipping future partners with the skills to navigate legal changes, grow the business,

and lead teams, has been central to her success. She is proud to be the first female Muslim partner at Walker Morris and the only hijab-wearing partner among Leeds's top six law firms, hoping her achievement inspires diversity in leadership.

Her promotion not only marks a personal milestone but also reinforces the firm's strategic focus on growth and innovation through investment in its people. Managing Partner Jeanette Burgess praised the promoted individuals for their dedication and highlighted Shabana's leadership in driving the Business Immigration team's success. She expressed confidence that this new leadership team would guide Walker Morris toward continued success and sustainability.

Shabana reflected, "Being promoted to partner is a huge career milestone for me because it recognises the hard work and innovation that have gone into establishing Walker Morris' dedicated Business Immigration offering... I hope my achievement inspires others from diverse backgrounds to aspire to leadership."

## New Partner Joins Squire Patton Boggs to Head Leeds Litigation Practice

Squire Patton Boggs has announced the appointment of Deborah Polden, partner and former head of the Leeds Commercial Dispute Resolution team at Eversheds Sutherland, who joins to lead the firm's Litigation Practice in Leeds.

Ms. Polden has over 15 years' experience of acting on complex and high value commercial disputes for national and international businesses. She has particular specialisms in corporate disputes, including post-M&A and shareholder disputes, and group litigation and class actions. Ms. Polden led the consumer and retail sector disputes offering at her previous firm and she also has particular expertise in the industrials and transport industries.

UK head of Litigation Stephen Sampson said: "Deborah is a dynamic lawyer, with impressive and varied experience. Deborah's track record in leadership roles is valuable as we seek to expand our Leeds team, while her expertise in group actions adds to the capability of our national and international practice as we look to secure more instructions in this growing area."

"We are very pleased to welcome Deborah to the firm," commented Prew Lumley, managing partner of the Leeds office. "Deborah is a pivotal hire for us, with opportunities to develop our Litigation practice working closely with our market-

leading Corporate and Financial Services teams, and to support our ambitious growth plans for the office."

Ms. Polden added: "To join Squire Patton Boggs is an exciting prospect, with the firm's strategic aims for its Litigation Practice very much aligning with my own. I am looking forward to meeting my new colleagues and having the opportunity to make my mark."

Ms. Polden's hire is part of the continued growth of the firm's Litigation Practice. She joins alongside partner Miles Robinson in London and follows [Ciaran Williams](#) who arrived in London in June, and [Ellie Pinnells](#) and [Victoria Callicott](#) who joined the firm in Birmingham last year.



## Express Solicitors continues to progress with multiple promotions announced



Manchester-based personal injury specialists Express Solicitors has reaffirmed its commitment to staff development with its annual round of promotions.

This year, 65 employees across various departments at Express have been

promoted. In addition, 14 promotions were confirmed at Ontime Reports, a sister company within the group.

Express CEO James Maxey said:

"This year marks the 25th anniversary of Express Solicitors and this latest round of promotions demonstrates our ongoing commitment to promoting from within. Building on that talent, we've welcomed new staff from HNK Solicitors and Graham Coffeys & Co Solicitors and doubled our graduate training cohort. Congratulations to all those recognised this year – it's a result of their hard work and dedication to helping injured people."

Among those promoted are two Principal Partners stepping up as Heads of Department, two new Principal Partners, and

nine new Partners. Additionally, five employees became Senior Associate Solicitors, nine are now Senior Associates, four were promoted to Associate Solicitors, and five rose to Associate level in non-legal roles.

The trainee cohort has grown from 76 in September 2024 to 125 this September, reflecting the success of the training programme, which won The Princess Royal Training Award in 2024.

Promotions were also confirmed across HR, the New Client Team, Marketing & Communications, and other legal and non-legal departments.

Chief HR Officer Carole Jones added:

"This latest round of promotions is testament to what a great place we are to work and how much we value our employees. Express now employs over 800 people and has been recognised as a Best Companies 'Outstanding' employer. We offer career pathways for everyone, including our trainee ACL lawyer programme for those without a law degree."

"Our EDI network has been recognised this year, and our charity work and social activities continue to go from strength to strength. It's no surprise we attract high levels of interest from both lawyers and non-lawyers across all areas of the business."

## Morrish Solicitors LLP announces promotion in employment team

Ranjit O'Mahony has been promoted to Associate at the Leeds-based trade union and employment specialist firm.

Morrish Solicitors LLP is very pleased to announce the promotion of Ranjit O'Mahony from Senior Solicitor to Associate in the firm's employment law team from 1 October 2025.

With more than 18 years' experience advising individuals and trade unions, O'Mahony has developed specialist expertise in employment tribunal claims, including discrimination, unfair dismissal, whistleblowing, protective awards and TUPE cases. She is widely recognised for her skill in handling complex claims and her commitment to achieving the best outcomes for clients.

Commenting on her new role, O'Mahony said: "I am excited to take on this new role as Associate and am grateful for the opportunity to continue growing my career at Morrish."

I look forward to continuing to advocate for our trade union and their members in complex and challenging cases."

Managing Partner David Sorensen said: "Ranjit's promotion is thoroughly

deserved. She combines technical excellence with a real passion for her clients, and her contribution has been invaluable to the employment team. We are excited to see her continue to grow in her new role as Associate."

O'Mahony is based at Morrish's head office in Leeds city centre.



## Leeds Law Firm Continues To Nurture Talent With Eleven Newly Qualified Solicitor Opportunities



Recognised by The Sunday Times as one of the UK's best places to work in 2025, national law firm Clarion continues to cement its reputation as a leading incubator of legal talent in the North.

The firm has retained seven newly qualified solicitors and made four external offers across its business. Among the retained team are Ben Hockenhill and Anna Moore (Commercial Property); Niamh Burke (Private Wealth); Sina Gertsch (Intellectual Property); William Froud (Corporate); Hayley Renton (Employment); and Clara Hunt (Commercial Dispute Resolution).

Niamh and Hayley progressed through Clarion's trainee programme, which emphasises legal qualification

alongside business development and personal growth initiatives.

Helen Saunders, People Director, said: "We're delighted to retain these seven talented individuals. With 11 newly qualified roles across the firm and four external offers in Banking, Corporate, and Employment, we continue to provide excellent opportunities for emerging legal talent. This year's cohort has shown enthusiasm, skill, and entrepreneurial mindset – key qualities we value at Clarion. Nurturing emerging talent is central to our growth strategy, and we look forward to seeing them flourish."

Clarion also supports young people entering the legal profession through apprenticeships, paralegal development, work experience, and mentoring initiatives. The Leeds-based firm, recognised by The Lawyer, Legal 500, and Chambers, serves a range of corporate and private clients nationally and internationally and now employs over 300 people.

## Ward Hadaway appoints nine newly qualified solicitors

National law firm Ward Hadaway has appointed nine newly qualified solicitors following the completion of their training contracts.

This year's graduates – Aimee Winterbottom, Chloe Middleton, Colette Monahan, Daniel McNichol, Divyanshi Gupta, Eleanor Thurlbeck, Lizzie Collings, Lucy Baxter and Safa Kayum – will join growing departments including commercial, corporate, employment, and professional discipline and regulatory.

Caroline Jones, head of emerging talent, said:

"I am thrilled with the appointment of our newly qualified solicitors. They have shown knowledge, tenacity, and a willingness to learn throughout their training. Our programme has developed many outstanding lawyers, and we are passionate about providing an environment where our people feel supported and motivated. Congratulations to all on reaching this milestone."

The trainees join a firm that has expanded in 2025 with a new Birmingham office and the merger with Teesside-based

The Endeavour Partnership, strengthening its reach across the North and Midlands. The firm now has over 550 employees.

Eleanor Thurlbeck, joining the employment team, said:

"Completing my training at Ward Hadaway has been invaluable. Working across four departments, I've gained experience from a wide range of specialists. The support and structure from the emerging talent team have been excellent, and I look forward to progressing my career here."

These appointments reflect Ward Hadaway's ongoing focus on developing legal talent and providing opportunities for long-term careers.



## Law firm Gordons announces seven new trainees and apprentice solicitors



Law firm Gordons has appointed five new trainee solicitors and two apprentice solicitors as part of its ongoing commitment to finding, hiring and developing legal talent within the

region. Of the trainee solicitors, Charlotte Bramall, Isobel Pryor and Gabriela Maclean are starting their legal careers with the firm. Tia Kirkland was already a paralegal at Gordons, whilst Hannah Cottrell returns to the firm for her training contract having previously been a paralegal.

The trainees will each undertake four six-month seats which will see them involved across a variety of Gordons specialist service areas. During this time, they will develop the combination of legal and client relationship skills that are distinct to the way Gordons operates.

Amira Kun and Isaac Breckons have joined the firm's pioneering, multiple award-winning apprenticeship scheme.

Gordons Law Apprenticeship was the first of its kind in the UK legal sector when it was launched in 2011 to enable greater social mobility within the profession.

During their apprenticeships, the firm will provide Amira and Isaac with hands-on experience combined with academic study, as well as paying their salaries and course fees.

Welcoming the new trainees and apprentices to the firm, Gordons' managing partner, Victoria Davey, said: "Our seven new trainees and apprentices demonstrated academic excellence, as well as engaging personalities and positive attitudes, all of which will play a key role in them becoming trusted advisers."

"We look forward to supporting our new colleagues to develop as people, realise their potential and become excellent lawyers who contribute to Gordons', and our clients', continued success."

Employing 170 people, Gordons has its head office in Leeds. The firm's clients include retailers AO, Iceland Foods, Morrisons, Ocado Retail and Wren Kitchens as well as drinks company Molson Coors and parcel delivery business Evri.

## Leeds Law Firm Welcomes 11 New Legal Specialists

Top 100 law firm Ward Hadaway has appointed 11 legal specialists to its Leeds office, reinforcing its position as one of Yorkshire's leading independent full-service firms.

The new hires join departments including real estate, debt recovery & insolvency, employment, private client, and social housing, covering directors, associates, solicitors, and paralegals, reflecting the firm's commitment to developing talent at every stage.

Appointments include Hanaan Mohammed (associate, construction), directors Ian Abel (employment) and Scott Nodder (debt recovery & insolvency), Emilia Nowicka (solicitor, real estate), and managing associate Greg Cross in the matrimonial team.

This follows the opening of Ward Hadaway's Birmingham office and the merger with Teesside-based The Endeavour Partnership, expanding the firm's reach across the North and Midlands and supporting long-term growth.

Emma Digby, executive partner in Leeds, said: "Leeds is an increasingly important centre for business and legal services, and we're investing in talent to match. These appointments

strengthen our ability to support clients across sectors and reflect our commitment to grow with the Yorkshire business community."

New joiners benefit from tailored induction programmes, mentoring, and opportunities to collaborate across offices and disciplines, helping them settle quickly and contribute to client work from day one.

Greg Cross added: "The firm's approach to career development and collaboration is really encouraging. There's a genuine commitment to helping people progress while ensuring clients get joined-up advice. It's exciting to be part of a growing office with a strong Yorkshire presence."





## BRM welcomes Sheffield Hallam graduates as solicitor apprentices



Derbyshire and South Yorkshire law firm BRM has welcomed two apprentice solicitors, Sam Wroe and Eva Gardner, as they begin their Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) assessments, administered by the

Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA).

The SQE pathway requires two years of qualifying legal work experience, which Sam and Eva will complete across various teams at BRM. Sam will join the real estate team, while Eva takes up a role in dispute resolution, supporting BRM's legal professionals in delivering comprehensive advice and services to clients.

Sam, who recently completed a university placement with BRM as part of his law in practice module at Sheffield Hallam University, said:

"It feels incredible to start my new role here. During my placement, I realised BRM was a place I would love to work, and it's been great to return and see so many familiar faces while meeting new colleagues."

Amy Hallam, director and head of employment at BRM and Sam's mentor, added:

"Sam has developed significantly over the past year, and his SQE studies and apprenticeship will aid his professional growth further. It's an exciting time for BRM with our new apprenticeship and BRM Futures programmes."

Eva, also from Sheffield Hallam University, joins after completing a law with criminology degree and a seven-month placement at Derbyshire Law Centre. She said:

"I am incredibly grateful to develop my skills and knowledge at BRM while studying to qualify as a solicitor. I look forward to moving seats, gaining experience in different areas of law, and preparing for SQE1 and SQE2."

Claire Mayfield-Tulip, director in the real estate team overseeing Eva, commented:

"We're excited to have Eva and Sam as our inaugural solicitor apprentices. Their arrival represents the next stage of BRM's investment in junior talent and demonstrates our commitment to structured training and professional development."

The appointments reflect BRM's adoption of the SRA's SQE qualification framework, introduced in September 2021, and its ongoing investment in early-career talent. The firm's structured development programme, led by Claire Mayfield-Tulip and Amy Hallam, ensures apprentices gain the two years of qualifying work experience required to progress toward full solicitor status.

Claire added:

"BRM is committed to partnering with local universities and training providers to support our junior cohort so they can excel both within the firm and across the region. Opportunities for growth and applications can be found on our website."

## New director brings strength to Berwins' board



Leading Yorkshire law firm, Berwins has strengthened its leadership team with the appointment of a new director.

Derek Hellawell, who also heads the firm's private client team, has joined the firm's board.

The development adds depth as well as fresh insight and perspective to Berwins' leadership team.

Reflecting on the appointment, Managing Director, Danielle Day said "Since joining the firm, Derek has

shown that not only is he an outstanding lawyer who has the highest levels of care for the clients he supports, but he is an excellent leader. He has nurtured the individuals in his team, embedding the skills which are key to his own success and allowing them to develop both personally and professionally."

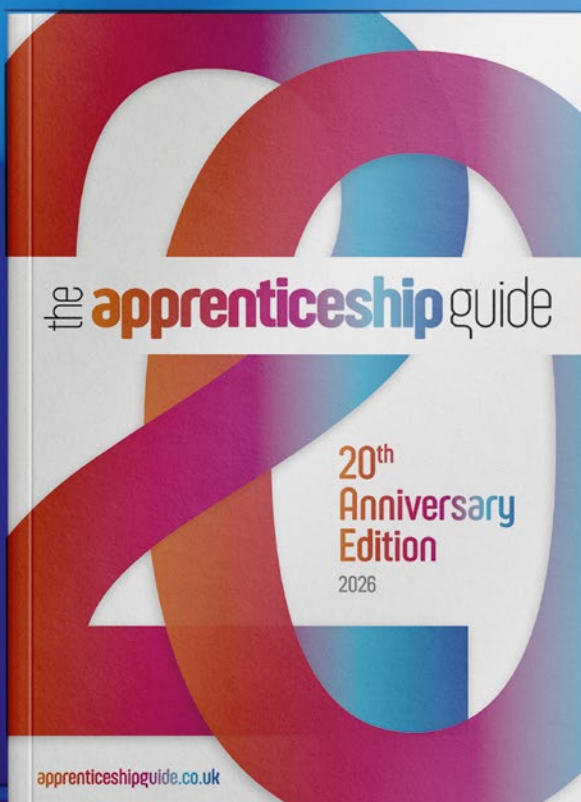
"We are looking forward to him making a similar positive contribution to the board and the firm as a whole and are delighted to see him become a director."

The announcement comes ahead as Berwins looks to develop key areas of the business, bring new opportunities for existing staff and perspective employees.

Derek added "I'm thrilled to have taken this next step and am looking forward to supporting the ongoing growth of the firm."

"Berwins is a special place to do work and offers not only a caring and supportive environment but a space where potential can be realised. This is to the benefit not only of individuals with burgeoning careers but for our clients and those professionals we work alongside. Maintaining and developing this will be one of my priorities at board level."

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# Last Word

**Emily Sherratt**, Project Director at the National Pro Bono Centre, discusses the challenges facing access to justice, the evolving role of pro bono, and why regional collaboration is key to the future:

***Can you tell us about the mission of the National Pro Bono Centre and your role as project director?***

The National Pro Bono Centre supports the charities and organisations that enable and broker pro bono legal work. Sitting across the access to justice sector, we provide practical support, build networks, and act as a central hub for voluntary legal work between lawyers and charities.

As Project Director, I run projects designed to help people deliver casework or pro bono work effectively. Our ventures are shaped by the sector's needs, and I stay in close contact with charities offering opportunities so we can best support initiatives. Current focuses include training lawyers to work with vulnerable people, strengthening networks between lawyers and local advice organisations (including in Yorkshire), and sourcing expertise for cases – such as translators or expert witnesses – to widen access to justice.

***In your view, what is the most pressing challenge facing access to justice in the UK right now?***

The pro bono sector is clear that the voluntary work of lawyers should never replace a properly funded legal aid system. The greatest challenge to access to justice in the UK is long-term underfunding—both the low legal aid rates and the lack of investment in prisons, courts and tribunals. Firms offering pro bono must stand alongside legal aid specialists, who often carry out unpaid work to make sure clients receive the support they need.

Pro bono can help litigants in many ways, from filling in forms to full representation at hearings. Funding cuts, particularly for early legal advice, have led to more people coming to their MP, advice centres, pro bono organisations and legal aid firms with complex and overlapping legal problems. These problems then risk affecting their housing, employment, family life and more, leaving people increasingly vulnerable.

***How have you seen pro bono efforts evolve over the past decade, and where do you think they are heading?***

I am optimistic that we will continue to see pro bono culture grow beyond London and into the different regions. National pro bono initiatives do incredible work across the country including in rural areas, but there is something uniquely powerful about local lawyers supporting local people. This is something we are really keen on at the Yorkshire Pro Bono Committee, as our current focus is on fostering a strong network of firms and advice charities across the region to better enable local pro bono work.

***What role do you believe law firms and in-house teams should play in supporting communities through pro bono initiatives?***

The best pro bono is done when lawyers are passionate about the cause and client. Law firms, in-house teams and barristers are an invaluable resource to the advice sector, and many organisations rely on their volunteers to meet demand.

Lawyers don't always need to step outside their practice area or take on a full case to make a difference – sometimes it's just setting someone on the right path. At the National Pro Bono Centre, we call this General Practice Pro Bono: hearing a client's story, diagnosing the issue and signposting to specialists, much like a GP.

Core legal skills can have huge impact, such as:

- Reviewing procedural documents
- Writing persuasive letters
- Translating legal processes for someone in crisis

There are so many ways to have an impact that don't involve learning all the ins and outs of a new practice area

***If you could change one thing tomorrow to improve the culture of pro bono in the UK, what would it be and why?***

Pro bono is an incredible opportunity for early-career lawyers to build skills, confidence and empathy, while making a real difference. Many say starting early has shaped the kind of lawyer they've become. I'd love to see all firms taking part in pro bono view access to justice initiatives as core to their ethos. The UK's pro bono culture is already collaborative, but I'd like to debunk the myth it's only for large city firms. Local and regional firms – especially in Yorkshire – can and do make a real impact, and should connect with their regional committees to share their work.

Growing a pro bono culture within a firm needs strong support from those in leadership in order to make a lasting impact. Many firms now count pro bono hours towards annual targets, bonuses and promotions – a great step towards embedding pro bono as business as usual.

***How do you think collaboration between the legal profession, charities, and community groups can be strengthened to widen access to justice?***

Pro bono is most powerful when it's not done in isolation. The more we collaborate across firms, chambers, charities and communities, the greater impact we can have. I would love for all firms, barristers and organisations involved with pro bono work in any capacity to be in the loop with one another about their efforts. I would encourage readers to reach out to the Yorkshire Pro Bono Committee to hear more about how they can get involved with local pro bono – email me at:

**yorkshire@  
probonocommittee.uk**





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