

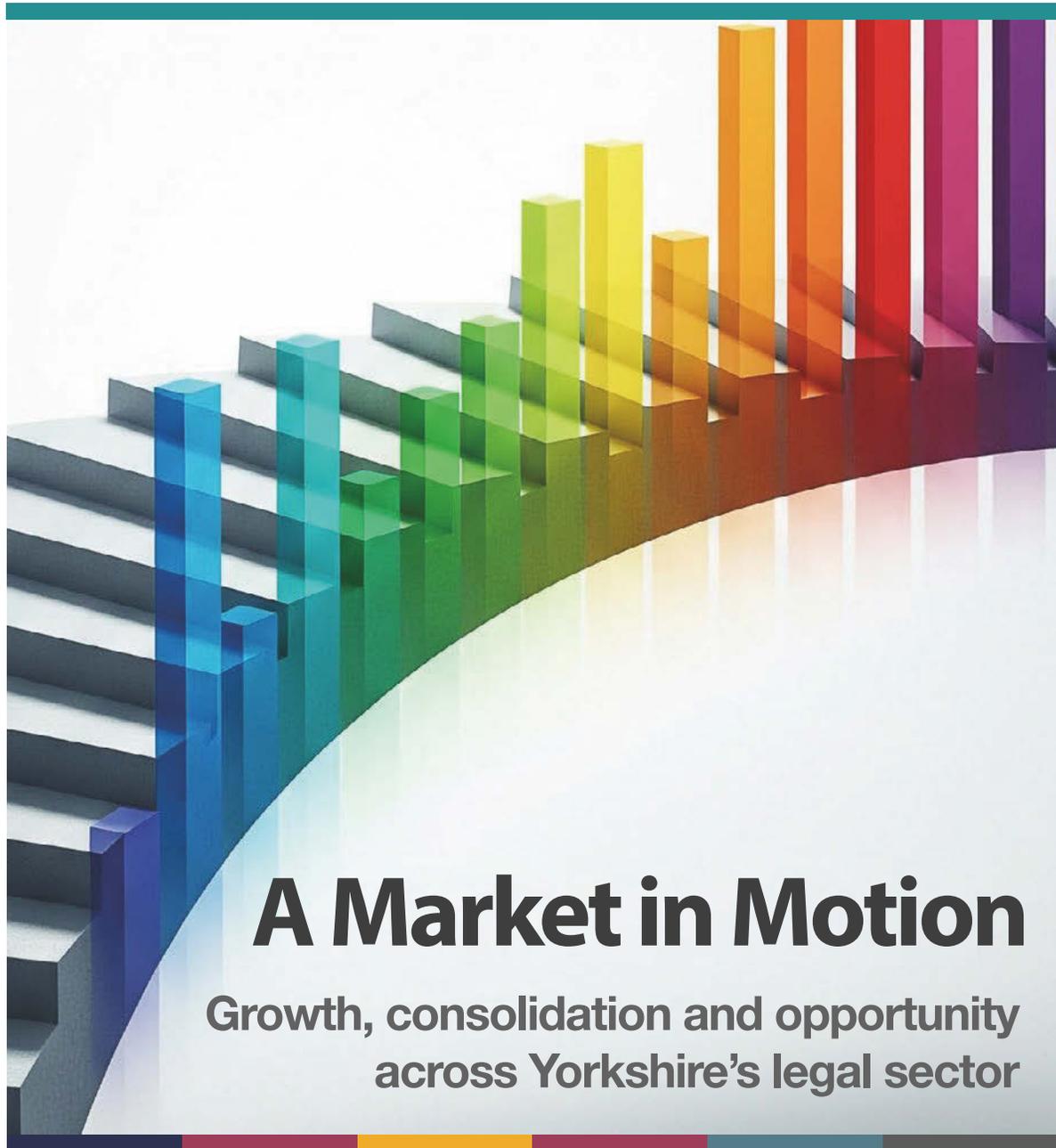
Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer

The Official Journal of Leeds Law Society

 Leeds
Law Society

March 2026

Issue 198



A Market in Motion

Growth, consolidation and opportunity
across Yorkshire's legal sector

Leeds JLD

Macy Wynn reflects on 2025 and looks ahead to 2026

Business Development

Northern law firm Brabners announces London expansion

Regulatory

Compli's Andrea Cohen gives an update on regulatory matters and compliance

People Moves

Harrogate Family Law welcomes senior family lawyer Charlotte Davies

Last word

We catch up with Steven Petrie, Managing Partner at Ward Hadaway



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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 198th edition of the Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer, official journal of Leeds Law Society. This month's edition is focused on growth, consolidation and opportunity across Yorkshire's legal sector.

Consolidations, take overs and mergers are hardly new phenomena in the legal world, but they do certainly seem to be gaining pace. Recent statistics show that the legal sector is growing in revenue, but the number of firms is shrinking, supporting that perception.

This month's topic is also particularly timely, as I write these words the news about PM Law is hot off the press. A cautionary tale on consolidation perhaps, amongst many more successful examples. As devastating as it has been to see so many professional peers left completely in the lurch, it has also been heartening to see many others

offering support, often without charge.

Here in Yorkshire, we are home to a number of growing firms across a number of sectors. Being a proud Yorkshireman, it is no surprise to me that people across the country and beyond value the advice they get from lawyers based here, in God's own county. While us Yorkshire folk have an unfair reputation for being "tight", I would suggest that the success of many of our firms shows that we should really be known for being savvy, with a keen eye for an opportunity!

Some of the world's biggest law firms trace their roots to Yorkshire, time has seen them grow well beyond these shores into every corner of the globe. These are true success stories. But in an ever evolving and challenging legal market, we should also look to the success of many of local, high street and direct to consumer firms. The work they do might not inspire the next legal focused drama like *Suits*, but it is of critical importance to their clients – often in their time of most need, like when going through a divorce or buying their first home.

Many firms across our region are exploring other opportunities, notably those offered by legal technology. While the often-predicted robot lawyer feels more sci-fi than reality, it is definitely the case that firms in region can see great benefit by adopting all kinds of technology, for the benefit of them and their clients. As well as being home to many great law firms, Yorkshire is also home to many great technology companies, a growth opportunity for all involved!

Like many other places in the legal sector, Leeds Law Society is also keen to grow! If you are interested in getting involved with Leeds Law Society – with a practice-area committee, such as employment law, our technology sub-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 or by calling our office on 0113 245 4997.



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Wilkin Chapman Rollits ranked in the UK's top 10 'elite' law firms for trainee solicitor satisfaction



Wilkin Chapman Rollits has been ranked among the UK's top ten firms for trainee solicitor experience after achieving an Elite rating in

the Chambers Student 2026 Guide.

The guide, widely regarded as a benchmark for training contract quality, is based on interviews and survey feedback from trainees and newly qualified solicitors nationwide. The firm was placed in the highest Elite category for both trainee satisfaction and supervision and contact time, positioning it alongside major international practices.

Lead Training Partner Lisa Boileau said the recognition reflected the firm's commitment to combining high quality, hands on legal work with accessible and supportive supervision. Independent feedback in the Chambers Student "True Picture" review highlights early responsibility on live matters, strong access to senior lawyers and a culture that supports both professional development and work life balance.

Training contracts are structured around four six month seats across private client and business services, including contentious and non contentious work, with opportunities to gain experience across multiple offices.

Wilkin Chapman Rollits employs more than 530 people across Lincolnshire and Yorkshire and continues to expand following its 2025 merger.

Double digit growth for law firm Ward Hadaway

Ward Hadaway has reported record turnover of £53.6m for 2024/25, an 11.6% increase on the previous year and its fifth consecutive year of growth.

The results cover May 2024 to April 2025 and mark continued progress against the firm's long term strategy under Managing Partner Steven Petrie, who has set targets of increasing turnover by more than 50% within five years and doubling the firm's size over the next decade.

Revenue rose across all departments, with particularly strong performances from Housing, Private Client and Commercial Disputes. All offices recorded growth, led by Manchester with a 42% increase, while Leeds achieved double digit growth.

The firm also invested in recruitment at all levels to

support rising demand and expansion of key practice areas.

Since the year end, Ward Hadaway has merged with Teesside firm The Endeavour Partnership

and opened a new Birmingham office, extending its Midlands presence. Further investment in 2026 will include additional partner appointments and a move to larger premises in Birmingham.



Gordons Advises Murphy on 479,000 sq ft, 25-Year Warehouse Lease to Sysco



Gordons has advised construction and engineering group Murphy on the 25 year letting of a 479,000 sq ft warehouse in Hertfordshire to food distributor Sysco.

The facility, known as Hemel 465, is located at junction 8 of the M1. Murphy took back the vacant building in 2023 in a state of disrepair and carried out a substantial upgrade using its self delivery model. Works included installation of a new slab, construction of a multi storey car park and

hub offices, and power upgrades, delivered to a tight timetable.

The letting was led by Gordons commercial property partner Nick Chamberlain, supported by construction lawyer George Pegasiou. Terms were undisclosed.

Murphy, which employs more than 4,200 people and operates internationally across key infrastructure sectors, was also advised by CBRE, with DTRE acting for Sysco.

Gordons, headquartered in Leeds, employs 180 people and advises a range of national commercial property clients across the retail, utilities and financial services sectors.

Huddersfield's BM Packaging Acquired by Global Operator

Holmfirth based BM Packaging Ltd has been acquired by Nova Paper & Packaging B.V, part of global group Eren Holding.

Established in 1990, the family owned manufacturer supplies corrugated packaging and bespoke die cut solutions to a range of industries from its two Huddersfield sites. Managing Director Chris Latham will remain in post following the sale.

Mr Latham was advised by Yorkshire law firm Schofield Sweeney, with a multidisciplinary team supporting the transaction across corporate, environmental, commercial property and tax matters.

Nova Paper & Packaging operates in the paper and packaging sector, while its parent company Eren Holding

is one of Turkey's largest industrial groups with international interests spanning energy, paper and packaging, cement, textiles, retail and port operations.

Chris Latham said the deal marked an important step in securing the company's long term growth as part of a larger global group.

Nova was advised by law firm Tunç Fırat Dereli, with financial and tax advice to the seller provided by KJA Group.



Walker Morris advises in landmark Building Safety Act test case involving Urban Splash



Walker Morris' Real Estate Litigation team have been recognised in The Lawyer's Top 20 Cases of 2026; representing the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

in a significant test case under the Building Safety Act 2022 (BSA) concerning seven residential developments in Manchester.

The case, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government v Urban Splash and others, involves the Government's application for Remediation Contribution Orders under section 124 of the BSA.

The Secretary of State is seeking recovery of approximately £50 million in respect of funding which had previously been made

available from the Building Safety Fund to support post-Grenfell remediation works.

The claims, brought against 11 respondents and involving 7 buildings, represents one of the first occasions the Government has sought to recover Building Safety Fund expenditure directly from developers and associated parties.

The Walker Morris team is being led by Martin McKeague (Partner), Asia Munir (Director), and David Manda (Director). The team has instructed Kerry Bretherton KC of 39 Essex Chambers and Alexander Burrell of 4 Pump Court to act on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Discussing the case, Martin McKeague, said: "We're pleased to be supporting the Secretary of State, in a matter that will help clarify how the Building Safety Act's enforcement powers are applied in practice and will contribute to shaping the future landscape of building safety compliance across the sector."

Product Partnership Ltd acquires Think Compliance

Product Partnerships Ltd has acquired a majority stake in Think Compliance, a specialist consultancy providing compliance support and regulatory data reporting services to consumer credit and claims management firms.

Leeds based Think Compliance will join the PPL group, broadening the compliance support available to regulated businesses nationwide. The partnership combines Think Compliance's relationship led consultancy expertise with PPL's authorisation support and technology platform, Artemis.

Rebecca Wilson, managing director and shareholder of Think Compliance, was advised on the deal by Yorkshire law firm Schofield Sweeney. She will retain a 20 per cent stake following the partial buyout.

PPL said the acquisition strengthens its consultancy

capability following its recent management buyout, backed by TDC, Arete Capital and Seneca Partners. Think Compliance clients will continue working with their existing advisers while gaining access to expanded services, with PPL clients benefiting from additional specialist expertise.

Schofield Sweeney advised through a multidisciplinary team spanning corporate, tax, employment and commercial disciplines.



Brabners Expands to London After Record Revenues and Eight Years of Growth

Brabners has reported its eighth consecutive year of growth, with turnover rising 11.7% to £60.2m for the year ending April 2025.

Pre tax profits increased to £20.3m, up from £18.1m the previous year, as the independent firm grew to almost 600 colleagues.

The results provide momentum for the firm's planned expansion into London, with a City office set to open in mid 2026. The move follows its entry into the Leeds market in 2022 and is intended to strengthen national reach and support clients operating across the UK and internationally.

The London launch will be led by corporate partner Stuart Hatcher, joining from Forsters, and litigation partner Russell Strong from Gunner Cooke, alongside existing London based partners.



During the year, Brabners' corporate team advised on more than £500m of transactions in the first half of 2025, while the firm also recorded a Supreme Court defamation victory and continued growth in its sports practice.

The firm remains B Corp certified and reported a 19% reduction in energy consumption across its offices.

Senior partner from Lincolnshire and Yorkshire's biggest law firm named among UK's 'Hot 100'



Wilkin Chapman Rollits senior partner Chris Grocock has been named in The Lawyer's Hot 100 for 2026, an annual list recognising legal professionals who have made a significant impact on the sector over the past year.

Chris, who leads the firm's recoveries department, has dedicated almost 37 years to the practice. He became senior partner in 2024 and played a pivotal role in the merger between Wilkin Chapman and Rollits,

creating the largest law firm in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, with a combined turnover of £40 million.

The Lawyer highlighted Chris's career journey, noting his progression from joining the firm as a paralegal in 1989 to building its debt recovery team into a nationally recognised practice. The publication also praised his leadership in delivering the merger and establishing a new strategic direction for the combined firm.

Reflecting on the accolade, Chris said he was "surprised but delighted," adding that the recognition was a testament to the collective efforts of colleagues across the firm.

Wilkin Chapman Rollits now employs over 530 people across its offices in Grimsby, Lincoln, Louth, Hull, York, and Beverley, continuing to grow its regional presence and national reputation.

Growth, consolidation and opportunity across Yorkshire's legal sector

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

As we move into 2026 (where have the last few weeks gone?), the legal sector continues to navigate an environment defined by rapid regulatory evolution, structural change, and sustained demand for legal services. For firms across Leeds and Yorkshire—home to one of the UK's most dynamic regional legal markets—this moment presents both challenge and opportunity. The themes of growth, consolidation and opportunity are not merely abstract; they are visible in market behaviour, regulatory focus, and the shifting expectations placed on practitioners.

A sector reshaped by consolidation

Over the past year, consolidation has continued across the UK legal market, and Yorkshire is no exception. Mergers driven by competitive pressure, investment appetite, and regulatory costs have reshaped the region. Mid-sized firms increasingly seek strategic partnerships to achieve scale, expand services, and strengthen resilience.

Client sophistication—from public bodies to large corporates—also drives consolidation, as they expect continuity, expertise, and robust risk frameworks. Yorkshire firms with strong specialisms, from healthcare to commercial litigation, have attracted national interest, while others have grown through acquisitions.

Consolidation is both structural and operational. Increasing regulatory complexity—from AML rules to consumer protection—requires firms to centralise expertise, invest in training, and strengthen oversight. Risk and compliance are now strategic drivers of sustainable growth rather than just safeguards.

Regulatory developments creating both pressure and potential

Regulation continues to shape the sector's trajectory, requiring firms to stay agile and forward-looking. The SRA's work on client money—revisiting protections, reporting requirements, and the potential return of universal accountants' reports—remains a key focus. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Justice's proposed Interest on Lawyers' Client Account (ILCA) Scheme, which could remit up to 75% of pooled client account interest to the government, highlights the speed and scale of regulatory change. Despite a short consultation period (extended to 9 March), the profession has responded strongly, reflecting concerns over practicality, fairness, and client impact.

Thematic reviews of high-volume consumer practices, claims management, and motor finance commissions have intensified scrutiny on supervision, systems, and culture. Cases like the Mazur litigation underscore that regulatory expectations apply to both authorised and unauthorised individuals handling litigation.

For Leeds and Yorkshire firms, adapting requires ongoing investment in oversight, processes, and professional development. At the same time, strong compliance, transparency, and consumer

protection can become competitive advantages, helping firms build client trust and stand out in a crowded market.

Opportunities emerging from change

While regulatory pressure can feel constraining, the current environment offers strong opportunities for innovative firms.

Yorkshire is seeing renewed growth across resilient practice areas, including litigation, regulatory investigations, construction, commercial property, and private client services. Leeds's ongoing economic development—driven by financial services, tech, healthcare innovation, and infrastructure—continues to generate demand for high-quality legal support.

Remote and flexible service delivery is also allowing firms outside London to attract national and international clients. Compliance is increasingly a value proposition: firms with strong governance, transparent pricing, and clear risk communication can differentiate themselves while meeting regulatory standards.

Finally, technology is boosting productivity, provided digital tools complement professional judgment and maintain client confidentiality, supervision, and competence.

An evolving but optimistic landscape

Despite the increased scrutiny and operational pressures, the legal market in Leeds and Yorkshire remains vibrant. Growth is not accidental—it is the product of firms investing in people, systems, and culture. Consolidation, while sometimes disruptive, is often a sign of maturity in a sector responding to modern demands. And opportunity is plentiful for those who embrace the realities of today's regulatory landscape rather than resist them.

As regulatory expectations continue to evolve at pace, the profession's commitment to integrity, transparency and public confidence will remain central. For firms that align their strategy with these principles, 2026 offers a genuine moment of possibility—one defined by growth, strengthened by consolidation, and energised by the opportunities that change inevitably brings.

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



Yorkshire school takes Law into its own hands' thanks to the success of A Level course



A Harrogate school is bucking the national trend by continuing to offer pupils the chance to study A Level Law – a course hailed by a former student as ‘an amazing gateway’ into the profession.

While some schools have chosen to withdraw the option completely from their curriculum, Ashville has instead enjoyed success from its AQA A Level, with pupils progressing to study Law at leading UK universities.

A total of 14,973 students nationwide took A-level law in 2025, placing it as the 17th most popular subject choice, way behind the top three of Maths (112,138), Psychology (75,943) and Biology (71,400) and still some way short of Geography (34,336), Media Studies (23,320), Computer Science (19,800) and Religious Studies (16,439).

However Ashville - named this month as one of the leading independent schools in the North of England - has been offering its specialist Law course since 2023. Four of its initial cohort have gone on to study the subject at university, with two at Newcastle, one at Keele, and one at Northumbria.

Amongst the current crop of Upper Sixth (Year 13), there are also eight pupils who have recently taken up work experience placements with leading law firms such as Addleshaw Goddard, Ison Harrison, and Gordons LLP.

Harrogate's Ben Ewing, one of the former Ashville pupils now studying law at Newcastle University, believes his A Level Law grounding was not only crucial in securing his degree place, but has already proven invaluable during his first term of studies.

He said: "Law is an amazing gateway and a great degree for many career options. It gives you a good grounding as the law is attached to every aspect of life."

"I first gave it some proper thought in Year 11 when I was considering my A Level options. Ashville held a subjects' fair, which I found really interesting. I chose Law, Politics and Economics.

"Studying A Level Law has been a tremendous help for me. It has made the transition to being an undergraduate much easier. I settled into the course straight away, and I feel I can process the information quicker."

"I have been lucky enough to be chosen as one of twelve students for the prestigious Sequentus programme, a pro bono experience helping students get unparalleled access to criminal defence work by actively assisting clients with wrongful conviction applications."

One of the many Sixth Form options now available as part of the school's new Six@Ashville educational pathway, the A Level course is run by Graeme Stonehouse, a former senior lawyer who specialised in civil litigation before becoming Yorkshire Water's Senior Litigation Lawyer.

Head of Ashville, Rhiannon Wilkinson, said: "Law is a fascinating subject that touches upon all aspects of modern life and continues to excite and interest young people who are looking at their options for further education and potentially future employment.

"National statistics prove there is a need for an A Level introduction into law, and I am delighted that, through the expert teaching of Graeme, we can provide our pupils with a grounding that will set them up perfectly for the next stage in their educational development."

Law firm Gordons announces partnership with Harehills based children's charity CATCH

Gordons has partnered with local charity CATCH to support social mobility and provide mentorship for over 1,000 young people in the community. The collaboration builds on Gordons' long-standing commitment to opening doors for aspiring lawyers, offering practical experience, fundraising initiatives, and opportunities to engage directly with youth through events and outreach programmes.

The charity provides valuable mentorship and a positive community for more than 1,000 local young people. It undertakes activity to enable those young people to reach their full potential and facilitates social mobility by providing them with access to the tools and resources needed to do so.

Gordons has long been a champion of social mobility, having pioneered the first legal apprenticeship scheme of its kind in 2011, so its partnership with CATCH is a natural fit for the firm. The apprenticeship scheme's objective, both then and now, is to provide bright young people with the right attitude access to a career in law irrespective of their background.

Gordons colleagues are already working closely with CATCH, which has included the firm's apprentices and trainees attending youth evening events. In addition, the firm is organising fundraising activities throughout the year, including bake sales and a team running in the Leeds 10K in June.

Commenting on the partnership, CATCH's James Pearson said: "Both organisations are like-minded and opportunity-focused, promoting the values of Gordons while driving the ambition of CATCH.



Our partnership is opening new doors for young people and allowing aspiring lawyers to get an insight into real legal career pathways."

Each year, Gordons' colleagues select a charity to work with, and over the past 10 years, the firm has raised more than £185,000 for its chosen charities. These have included Bowel Cancer UK, women's charity Smart Works Leeds, homelessness charity Centrepont Bradford, national children's charity KidsOut, and The Friends of Alfie Martin, amongst others.

Gordons partner and charity committee lead, Sarah Ratcliffe, said: "Every day, the CATCH team provides young people with a safe space where they can engage with their wider community, have access to role models, and learn practical skills and knowledge to set them up for the future. Gordons' ongoing commitment to further enabling social mobility for young people complements the excellent work CATCH is doing. Our relationship has got off to a great start, and we are looking forward to building on that over the next 12 months."

Employing 180 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.

Raworths ends 2025 on a high with new recruits, promotions and career milestones



Raworths has concluded 2025 with a raft of appointments, promotions and long service milestones as part of its continued strategic growth.

The Harrogate-based firm has strengthened its commercial, private client and business services teams. In Commercial, Catherine Pugh has joined as an associate in Employment alongside solicitor Eve Gregory. Judith Pike has been appointed consultant partner in Commercial Property, with Ramsha Nayab joining as solicitor. Jessie Wray has also joined the Corporate and Commercial team as a paralegal.

The Trusts, Wills and Estates team has expanded with the arrival of senior associate Lois Channon and solicitor Oliver Foster. Samantha Laycock joins as probate executive, while Lucy Warren and Natalie Dorset have been appointed as paralegals. In Business Services, Kiera McCarthy joins as receptionist and Victoria Inglis-Taylor has been promoted to senior receptionist.

Promotions include Thaynara Charlesworth to legal director and Jennifer Watson to senior associate in Corporate and Commercial. Ryan Carter and Katie Watts have become senior associates, with Heather Laws promoted to associate.

The firm is also supporting several colleagues through solicitor qualification and has celebrated 20 year anniversaries for Sally Togher, Claire Clow and Debbie Laurence.

Ison Harrison appoints award-winning inquest specialist as TEVV Public Inquiry is announced

Ison Harrison has appointed award winning inquest specialist Alistair Smith as the Government confirms a statutory public inquiry into Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust.

The inquiry, announced by Health Secretary Wes Streeting, follows years of concerns over patient safety, governance and leadership at the trust, amid serious incidents and preventable deaths. More than 40 families have campaigned for meaningful scrutiny, arguing previous reviews lacked independence and transparency.

Alistair joins Ison Harrison's specialist inquest and public law team from Watson Woodhouse, where he represented families in cases including the deaths of Christie Harnett, Nadia Sharif and Emily Moore. Solicitors Sarah Magson and Dawn Makepeace have also recently joined the firm.

Recognised for his work supporting bereaved families,

Alistair received the Outstanding Achievement award at the 2024 Northern Law Awards. The new statutory inquiry will have powers to compel witnesses to give evidence under oath and require full disclosure of documents, examining both inpatient and community services.

Ison Harrison, which operates from 24 offices, represents a significant number of families affected by the TEVV scandal and has been closely involved in the campaign calling for a public inquiry.



Law firm Gordons announces commercial property and banking hires



Law firm Gordons has further expanded its commercial property and banking teams with two lawyer appointments.

Ruqeya Ahmadi joins the firm's commercial

property practice from Pinsent Masons. She advises on a range of matters including acquisitions and disposals; leases from the perspective of both landlords and tenants; asset management; and corporate support work.

Arriving at Gordons from Clarion, Gresa Bakolli's banking experience includes advising a diverse portfolio

of borrower and lender clients in debt; development; real estate; and acquisition finance deals.

Welcoming the two new lawyers to the firm, Gordons partner, Joanne Fearnley, said: "Ruqeya and Gresa are excellent additions to our outstanding commercial property and banking teams.

"They have already made a very positive impact with our clients, providing straightforward, commercially effective advice and are forging strong relationships with them.

"Ruqeya and Gresa have engaging personalities and are talented lawyers, traits which we know set our people apart and that our clients truly appreciate."

The 2026 Leeds JLD

Macy Wynn, trainee CILEX Lawyer at Clarion and the new chair of the Leeds Junior Lawyers Division reflects on the success of 2025 and continuing that momentum into 2026.

As the new Chair of Leeds JLD, I am delighted to write this article and celebrate the achievements of the last 12 months of the LJLD and to drive forward this success into 2026.

Who are we?

The Leeds JLD is a non-for-profit organisation across Leeds and West Yorkshire providing the opportunity to network with likeminded individuals, build relationships and confidence, and empower the next generation of lawyers to thrive in their careers.

The year of 2025

2025 brought a wave of new opportunities and events, including our first apprentice / trainee event at Roxy Lanes and the introduction of wellness in the workplace as part of our Mental Health May series, which offered a space to truly unwind and commit to personal wellbeing. Our education offerings excelled among them was our collaboration with Legal Tech Leeds, Trinity Chambers and Paramount Legal Costs all providing members with valuable insights into high-interest topics. The Summer Social, Speed Networking, Comedy Night and Winter Ball all made a return as our 'super sell out' events.

A milestone moment

In addition, we supported our charity of the year, The Ella Dawson Foundation by raising funds via charity sports tournaments, non-member tickets and our Summer Social and Winter Ball raffles. I am delighted to share that we were able to raise over £6,150.00, our biggest fundraising year yet.

What's next for the Leeds JLD

Following our annual elections, we have sadly said goodbye to six long standing members. However, we welcomed five new committee members, who are already working incredibly hard to build on the success of 2025. That being said, here are some of our first offerings of 2026.

26 February: Panel event with LegalTech.

5 March: Meet the Committee, join us for cheese and wine and get to know your 2026 committee.

We are also collaborating with The Law Society and The Fashion Ball later in the year.

The year ahead promises a focus on opportunities for junior lawyers to enhance their networks, further their professional development and discover new possibilities across the profession. Follow us on LinkedIn ('Leeds Junior Lawyers Division') and Instagram (@JLDLeeds) for updates on upcoming events and announcements.

Meet the Leeds JLD 2026 Committee

Chair: Macy Wynn (Trainee CILEX Lawyer - Clarion)

Vice Chair: Leigh Freeman (Solicitor - Schofield Sweeney)

Treasurer: Holly Goldsbrough-Pike (Trainee Solicitor - Schofield Sweeney)

Publicity & Media Officer: Rebecca Foster (Solicitor Apprentice - Schofield Sweeney)

Events Officers: Victoria Boothby (Solicitor - Schofield Sweeney) & Pippa Bradley (Solicitor - Knights)

Sponsorship Officer: Florence Wharton (Solicitor Apprentice - Schofield Sweeney)

Sports: Georgina White (Trainee Solicitor, Squire Patton Bloggs)

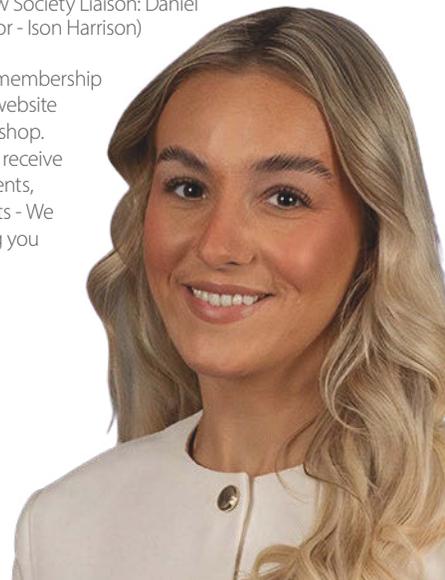
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Apprentice & Trainee Representative: Katie Cage (Solicitor Apprentice - Schofield Sweeney)

FELT / In-House Representative: Ryan Revill (Paralegal - Tyr)

National & Leeds Law Society Liaison: Daniel Allison (Trainee Solicitor - Ison Harrison)

Information on our membership can be found on our website at www.leedsjld.com/shop. As a member, you will receive exclusive access to events, discounted/ free tickets - We look forward to seeing you there!



Ridley & Hall gears up for £7million growth push ahead of centenary year



Ridley and Hall has appointed Vicky Medd as its first executive partner as the Yorkshire firm targets £7 million turnover ahead of its

centenary in 2027.

Ms Medd, a partner in the firm's family and matrimonial team since 2012, will work alongside the board of shareholder directors to support business strategy and operations, with a particular focus on the continued growth of the family department.

Since the current board formed in 2017, the firm has increased turnover from £1.5 million to £5.5 million and expanded its workforce from 50 to 120 staff across offices in Huddersfield, Leeds, Barnsley and Pontefract.

Managing director Emma Pearmaine said the newly created executive partner role would be central to achieving the firm's £7 million target as it approaches its 100 year anniversary.

The appointment follows significant investment in infrastructure, including bringing finance, HR, marketing and IT functions in house, alongside the introduction of a new IT system, case management platform and management software to support the next phase of growth.

Harrogate Family Law welcomes senior family lawyer Charlotte Davies

Harrogate Family Law has appointed experienced family lawyer Charlotte Davies as it continues its steady organic growth.

Charlotte joins with seven years' post qualification experience, having spent 11 years at Clarion where she built a strong reputation advising on complex divorce cases involving significant financial assets and high net worth individuals. Her expertise includes pre and post nuptial agreements.

Her arrival further strengthens the firm's senior team as demand for specialist family law advice continues to grow. Harrogate Family Law now has a legal team of 15 and a total headcount of 19, making it the largest niche family law practice in the Harrogate area.

Managing director Andrew Meehan said Charlotte's experience in complex financial cases and nuptial agreements made her an excellent addition to the team, reflecting the firm's commitment to careful, sustainable growth.

Charlotte said she was looking forward to joining a specialist practice focused on quality and supporting clients through significant life decisions, adding that the firm's values and approach aligned closely with her own.



Shoosmiths bolsters Litigation team and Leeds presence with Partner hire



Shoosmiths has appointed Tim Pickworth as a partner in its Leeds based Litigation, Regulatory and Compliance team.

Tim joins from DAC Beachcroft, where he established and led the firm's Leeds Commercial Disputes team over the past five years. He advises on high value and complex commercial disputes, including M&A, fraud and contractual claims, across sectors such as aerospace, energy, technology, healthcare and retail.

His practice focuses on complex litigation, with particular expertise in urgent injunctive relief, including freezing orders, breaches of covenant and misuse of confidential information. He has acted in multi million pound litigation and international arbitration matters and is recognised by Legal 500 as a Next Generation Partner.

Head of Litigation, Regulatory and Compliance Alex Bishop said the appointment would strengthen the firm's ability to attract and deliver high value disputes work nationally and internationally.

Based in Leeds, Tim will support the firm's regional growth strategy and commercial litigation presence as Shoosmiths continues to expand its national disputes offering.

A Market in Motion - Growth, consolidation and opportunity across Yorkshire's legal sector

James Staton, President of the Yorkshire Union of Law Societies and Partner at Schofield Sweeney, reflects on recent trends in the Yorkshire legal market and the opportunities and challenges they present for firms across the region.

The Yorkshire legal market, centred on Leeds, is possibly the largest concentration of legal firms outside London. In addition to Leeds there is Sheffield in the south, Hull in the east and Middlesbrough and Teesside in the north along with significant legal presences in York, Bradford and Huddersfield.

The legal sector in Yorkshire, with strong offerings in corporate and commercial work, litigation and specialist areas of advice is important to the economy in Yorkshire and the North. This leads firms to invest heavily in improving technology and expanding their core teams as well as looking for opportunities to acquire individuals with niche specialisms to enhance their service provision and acquire new client areas. It also attracts firms from outside the area either to open brand new offices or seek to acquire existing firms as a way into the Yorkshire market.

Whilst in some contexts it is said that size does not matter that is increasingly not true in the legal marketplace. The needs for investment in technology, to be attractive to potential recruits, to scale operations and to be able to compete efficiently and effectively has meant that there has been a spate of mergers and consolidations in the Yorkshire legal market in recent months.

Firms have seen mergers as the opportunity to compete more effectively, to spread their expenditure across a larger income stream and offer new services to their existing client base as well as a bridgehead into a new geographical area. These were factors which led to my own firm's merger with a Huddersfield practice. The other firm had a good client base but feared that larger jobs would be lost to Leeds or Manchester and it could not offer all the services its commercial clients were seeking. For us it was an opportunity to expand into an area which we had viewed for some time as one that offered opportunities, to expand the client base and acquire a strong private client offering to enhance our existing team. My firm also illustrates the fact that increasingly commercial/corporate clients want to source their services from one firm. We began offering only corporate, commercial property and litigation but have expanded by recruitment over the years to encompass, for example, employment, tax, environmental, planning,

regulatory and insolvency teams so as to provide an all round service to our commercial/corporate client base.

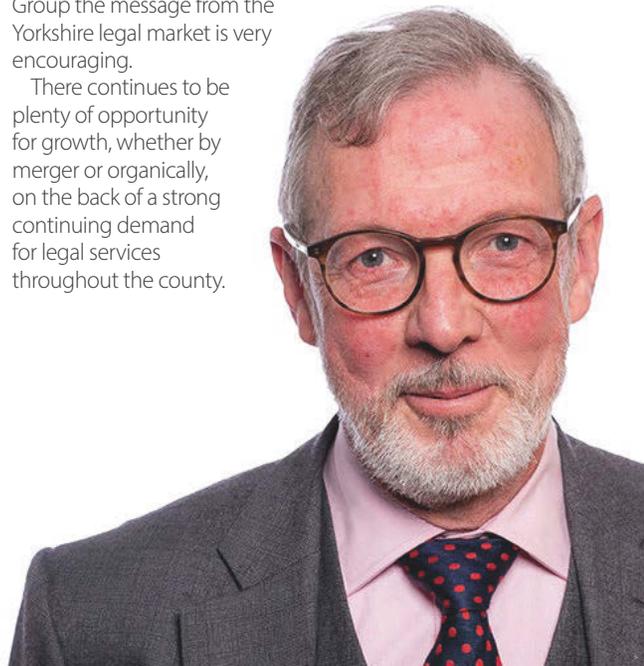
There are however other firms in the area who see organic growth and expansion as the way to go. There is one Yorkshire based firm which has grown to 24 offices with others which have 8, 10 and 11 offices respectively in the area. Whilst these firms are largely expanding organically the fact that the market for their services is seen to be buoyant has led them to expand across the county by opening new offices rather than looking for mergers.

The strength of the Yorkshire legal scene has also seen the interest of private equity investment being aroused. Firms that want to invest heavily in technology, grow their teams and expand their offering to clients are looking towards private equity for funding. In recent months there are a number of examples of private equity capital being provided to Yorkshire firms.

But consolidation is not without difficulties as the recent closure of the Sheffield headquartered PM Group has shown. Whilst the details are only just emerging this was an organisation which had expanded to encompass multiple offices across the region, mainly high street type practices which were brought under the PM umbrella. This collapse follows on the heels of the Axiom Ince and Metamorph failures and highlights that whilst mergers and consolidations can bring benefits they are not without risk and there needs to be proper regulatory oversight to prevent such collapses bringing the profession into disrepute.

Despite the news about the PM Group the message from the Yorkshire legal market is very encouraging.

There continues to be plenty of opportunity for growth, whether by merger or organically, on the back of a strong continuing demand for legal services throughout the county.



Experienced Commercial Lawyer Joins Knights in Leeds



Knights has strengthened its Leeds office with the appointment of Milena Falciano Padron as a partner in its Commercial team.

Milena joins from DLA Piper and brings extensive experience advising in house legal teams, directors and senior managers across a broad range of sectors. Her client portfolio has included a global glass and metal packaging manufacturer, a Yorkshire based consumer care and life sciences PLC, and international hospitality and leisure brands expanding into the UK market.

Having previously worked in house, she offers a commercial perspective alongside legal advice, with a focus on pragmatic, solutions led support for key stakeholders.

In Leeds, she will work alongside data protection specialist Tori Lethaby and competition lawyer Charlie Markillie, enhancing the breadth of the firm's commercial offering across Yorkshire.

David Lister, Client Services Director in Leeds, said Milena's experience and client focused approach would complement the firm's established national commercial team.

Knights is ranked among the UK's top 50 law firms by revenue and provides legal and professional services to business clients and private individuals nationwide.

Capsticks hires new Head of Commercial Technology

Capsticks has appointed Aneeqa Kisol as Legal Director in its Corporate and Commercial team, where she will lead the firm's Commercial Technology offering.

Based in Leeds, Aneeqa joins from DAC Beachcroft and specialises in technology contracts. She advises on high value, complex and innovative projects across healthcare, local government, financial services and real estate, with particular expertise in digital transformation and emerging technologies, including AI.

Her appointment strengthens Capsticks' ability to support clients adopting new technological solutions and navigating an evolving regulatory and commercial landscape.

Mary Mundy, Partner and Head of Commercial in Leeds, said Aneeqa's experience would enhance the firm's technology offering and support clients seeking innovative ways to

deliver services.

Senior Partner Rachael Heenan added that the growing Corporate and Commercial team reflects Capsticks' continued investment in specialist expertise for organisations working to make a difference in their communities.

Capsticks operates nationally and focuses on providing sector led, practical legal advice tailored to complex public service and regulated environments.



Medical Solicitors welcomes senior solicitor Robert Clarke to the team



Medical Solicitors has strengthened its Sheffield team with the appointment of senior fee earner Robert Clarke.

Robert brings more than 25 years'

experience in personal injury and clinical negligence litigation across South Yorkshire. Since qualifying in 2002, he has built a reputation for claimant focused advocacy and handling complex cases, with particular expertise in Cauda Equina syndrome and delayed diagnosis claims, including necrotising fasciitis, bowel

obstruction and aortic dissection.

He previously spent almost a decade at a Doncaster firm, where he helped develop its clinical negligence practice. A career highlight includes successfully taking a workplace injury case to the Court of Appeal, challenging a security for costs order and reinforcing principles of access to justice.

Robert said he was drawn to Medical Solicitors' empathetic, client centred ethos, adding that accountability and openness are often as important to claimants as financial compensation.

Director Caroline Moore said his experience and values align closely with the firm's commitment to providing compassionate, high quality representation to those affected by substandard healthcare.

Senior promotions for Harrogate law firm

McCormicks Solicitors has announced two senior promotions across its Crime and Corporate teams.

Brian Nuttney has been made a Partner in the firm's Crime and Fraud department. A qualified solicitor since 2018, he represents clients in the Magistrates' Courts and at police stations across North Yorkshire and beyond. His practice covers a broad range of offences, including serious sexual allegations, violence, drugs, fraud and motoring matters. A qualified police station representative, he also holds Duty Solicitor status.

Head of Crime Peter Minnikin said Brian's diligence and analytical approach had made him a key member of the team, both in client representation and in preparing cases for higher courts.

David Leuchars has been promoted to Senior Associate Solicitor in the Corporate and Commercial department. He advises individuals and companies on business sales and acquisitions, corporate structuring and commercial contracts, and was recognised in the latest edition of Legal 500.

Head of department James Towler said the promotion reflects David's commitment to securing the best outcomes for clients.



Hethertons Celebrates New Solicitors and Homegrown Talent



Hethertons Solicitors has begun 2026 by celebrating the qualification of Grace Beamer and Megan Hallam as solicitors, highlighting the

firm's ongoing commitment to developing talent across Yorkshire.

Grace has completed her LPC and training contract, qualifying into the Civil Litigation department at the firm's York office. Having joined as a paralegal in 2023, she gained experience across Commercial Property, Family

and Corporate before specialising in property litigation. She will now work alongside Director Anthony Corps.

Megan has qualified via the Solicitor Qualifying Examination route and joins the Residential Conveyancing and Commercial Property team in Boroughbridge. Since joining the firm in 2021, she has completed qualifying work experience across several departments and will now work closely with Director David Hallam.

Their success follows the recent qualification of Neal Macdonald, now part of the Commercial Property team.

Managing Director David Hallam said the trio's achievements reflect both their dedication and the strength of the firm's structured training and mentoring programme.

Simpson Millar Boosts Public Law and Court of Protection Teams

Simpson Millar has made a series of appointments across its Public Law and Human Rights and Health and Welfare Court of Protection teams as part of its continued strategic growth.

Graeme Rothwell joins as Team Leader in Public Law and Human Rights, alongside solicitor Abigail Hart and paralegal Somayya Butt. In the Court of Protection team, Jamila Ssali has been appointed as a paralegal in London, with Emily Park joining as Senior Paralegal and Eleanor Revell as Paralegal in Leeds.

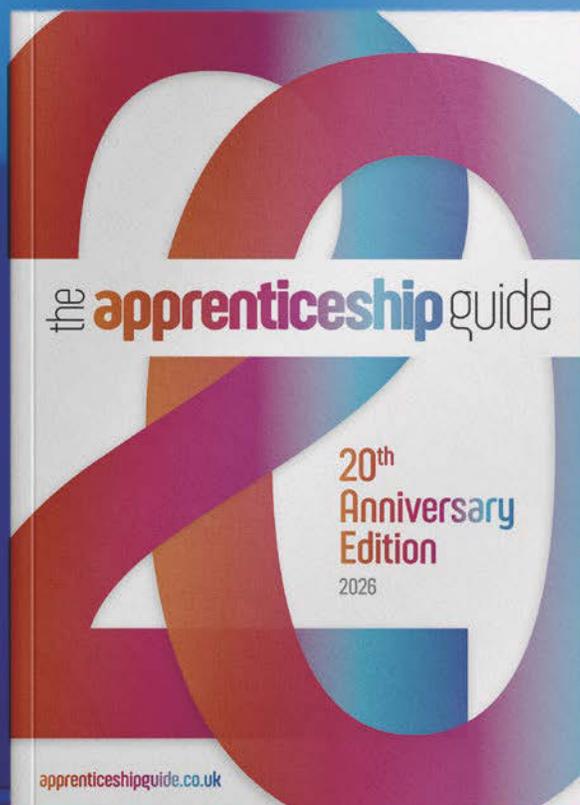
Graeme brings more than 20 years' legal experience, specialising in civil liberties, police and prison law, unlawful detention and Article 2 inquests. He has acted in a number of high profile cases, including the inquests following the Plymouth shootings, and was

recognised in the 2024 Legal 500. The appointments strengthen the firm's capacity to advise on judicial reviews, deprivation of liberty cases, best interests decisions and wider human rights claims.

The expansion follows the recent appointment of a new Head of Education Law, reflecting ongoing investment in specialist public law services.



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Switalskis recognises talent with new round of promotions

Switalskis has announced 11 promotions across its legal and support teams, marking a strong start to the year.

Four colleagues have progressed to senior associate: Briony Ely in conveyancing, Ros Raine in development, Sandra Kowalska in contentious probate and Sarah Myatt in crime.

Seven have been promoted to associate roles. Alison Clifton joins the ranks in residential conveyancing, alongside Amandeep Dosanjh in Court of Protection. In the care team, Michelle Lawton and Gabrielle Richardson have been promoted, with Callum Palmer advancing in clinical negligence. Victoria Pearson becomes an associate in her role as change analyst and junior developer, and Jaron Shahidi is promoted to associate talent manager within the people team.

All promotions were achieved through the firm's structured Career Development Programme, designed to provide a clear and transparent pathway for progression.

Chief executive John Durkan said the promotions reflect the depth of talent across the firm, which employs nearly 400 people across Yorkshire and London and was recently recognised as one of the Sunday Times Best Places to Work.



Rebecca Shah joins Thrive Law



Thrive Law has appointed Rebecca Shah as Head of Commercial, Data Protection and Legal Operations, strengthening its

support for SMEs and growing businesses across the UK. Rebecca brings significant in house experience advising on complex commercial agreements, data protection compliance and risk governance.

Her expertise spans drafting and negotiating commercial contracts, including MSAs and SaaS agreements, alongside advising on privacy compliance,

data breach response and governance frameworks.

The appointment enhances Thrive Law's commercial and data protection offering, supporting organisations to manage risk while enabling growth.

To mark her arrival, the firm is offering discounted legal health checks throughout January 2026. The service is designed to help businesses review contract management processes, assess data protection compliance and identify potential legal and operational risks.

Founder and Managing Partner Jodie Hill said Rebecca's commercial insight and collaborative approach align closely with the firm's focus on delivering accessible and practical legal advice.

Schofield Sweeney Continues Growth and Service Expansion with new Appointments

Award-winning Yorkshire law firm Schofield Sweeney has strengthened its teams with a series of senior appointments and the recruitment of four new solicitor apprentices, taking total headcount to 178.

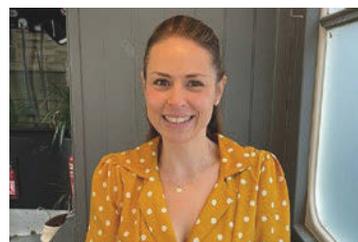
The firm has welcomed six senior hires across key practice areas including private wealth, insolvency, contentious probate, debt recovery and property litigation, reflecting growing demand for its commercial legal services.

New appointments include Gillian Kaufman as director in restructuring and insolvency, Kim Hammond as associate in private wealth and succession, and Dale Fawcett as head of debt recovery. The property litigation team has been bolstered by the arrival of director Claire James and solicitor Kimberly Tao Le, while Julia Fenton joins the contentious probate team as a solicitor.

Managing partner Graham Sweeney said the

appointments represent significant investment in talent and service capability, enabling the firm to continue delivering high-quality advice across a broad client base. He also highlighted Schofield Sweeney's long-standing commitment to developing young talent through its solicitor apprenticeship programme.

The latest recruitment supports the firm's continued expansion in both size and service offering, strengthening its position as a leading regional law firm.



Last Word

We caught up with **Steven Petrie** Managing Partner at Ward Hadaway, to reflect on the firm's record financial results in the 2024-25 financial year.

Ward Hadaway has seen five years of growth, with double-digit turnover last year. How does this reflect broader trends in Yorkshire's legal market, and where is the region gaining a competitive edge?

What we are seeing in Yorkshire is a market that has matured. Clients are increasingly comfortable instructing regional firms on complex, high-value work, particularly where those firms can demonstrate sector depth and long-term relationships. The region benefits from strong universities, a stable talent pool and lower operating costs than London which allows firms to invest in people and service rather than overhead. Our recent performance reflects that shift. Yorkshire firms that are well managed, focused and client-led are competing confidently on a national stage.

With targets of 50% turnover growth in five years and doubling the firm in a decade, how do you balance ambition with sustainable, values-driven growth in an uncertain market?

Ambition only works if it is underpinned by discipline. Our growth targets are not about scale for its own sake; they are about building a stronger, more resilient business over time. That means being selective about where we invest, maintaining financial control and ensuring any growth aligns with our culture and values. In uncertain conditions, consistency matters which is why we focus on long term client demand, strong teams and measured expansion rather than chasing short term opportunities.

Manchester grew 42%, with Leeds also in double digits. How key is Yorkshire to your long-term strategy, and how do you see Leeds' role evolving regionally and nationally?

Yorkshire is central to our strategy. Our Leeds office continues to grow in both headcount and capability and it plays a key role in servicing local and national clients across a range of sectors. The Leeds market is a large legal market and we will continue our growth journey over the coming years as we attract quality new people to the firm with strong regional roots and national ambitions.

Consolidation is a big theme in the legal market. What drove the merger with The Endeavour Partnership, and what lessons can other regional firms learn from it?

The merger with The Endeavour Partnership was driven by many factors including strong values and culture as well as allowing us to provide a strong client service from a Teesside base. Strategically, it strengthened our presence in Teesside and broadened our full client service offering. Culturally, it worked because both firms shared similar values around client service,

collaboration and community. The lesson for others is that successful mergers require patience and honesty. If the culture does not fit, the strategic rationale will not deliver in practice.

Opening the Birmingham office is a major expansion. How does this fit your growth strategy, and what opportunities arise as firms move beyond traditional regional markets?

We act for many national clients and having a Midlands presence supports that work more effectively. It also gives us access to an additional legal market with huge growth potential and an opportunity to expand our legal services across the Midlands.

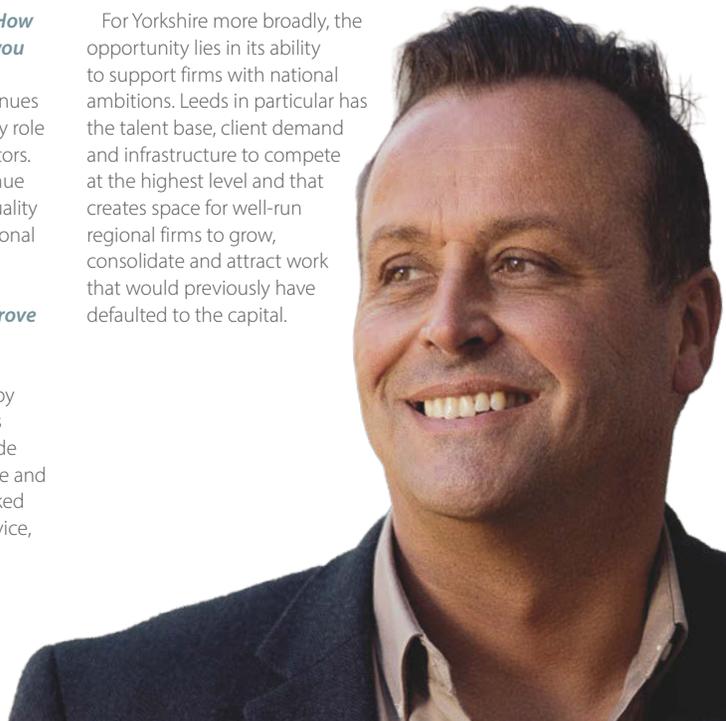
People investment drives your performance. How do you attract, develop, and retain lawyers while preserving the culture that fuels your success?

We focus on offering a supportive, flexible working environment alongside high-quality work and clear progression. Hybrid working is well embedded across the firm and reflects how people want to work. We invest in development at all levels and are careful about lateral hires, ensuring new joiners share our values. Retention is strongest where people feel trusted, supported and part of a long-term plan.

As Yorkshire's legal sector evolves, what excites you most about Ward Hadaway's next phase, and where are the biggest opportunities for the region?

We now have a national platform, with strong offices across the North and Midlands, and the focus is on strengthening our core practice areas in all offices, integrating recent growth and continuing to invest in our people. That gives us confidence we can sustain double-digit growth while maintaining the culture that has underpinned our performance.

For Yorkshire more broadly, the opportunity lies in its ability to support firms with national ambitions. Leeds in particular has the talent base, client demand and infrastructure to compete at the highest level and that creates space for well-run regional firms to grow, consolidate and attract work that would previously have defaulted to the capital.





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