

Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer

The Official Journal of Leeds Law Society

 Leeds
Law Society

August 2024
Issue 189



The human side of law

Can our Yorkshire roots facilitate more
compassionate legal practice?

Leeds Law Society

LLS celebrates Leeds
Pride

News

Yorkshire KC
shortlisted for silk of
the year

Last Word

LCF Law's Ragan
Montgomery on building
client-centric company
culture

Community

Meet the team behind
the region's revitalised
Pro Bono movement

Leeds JLD

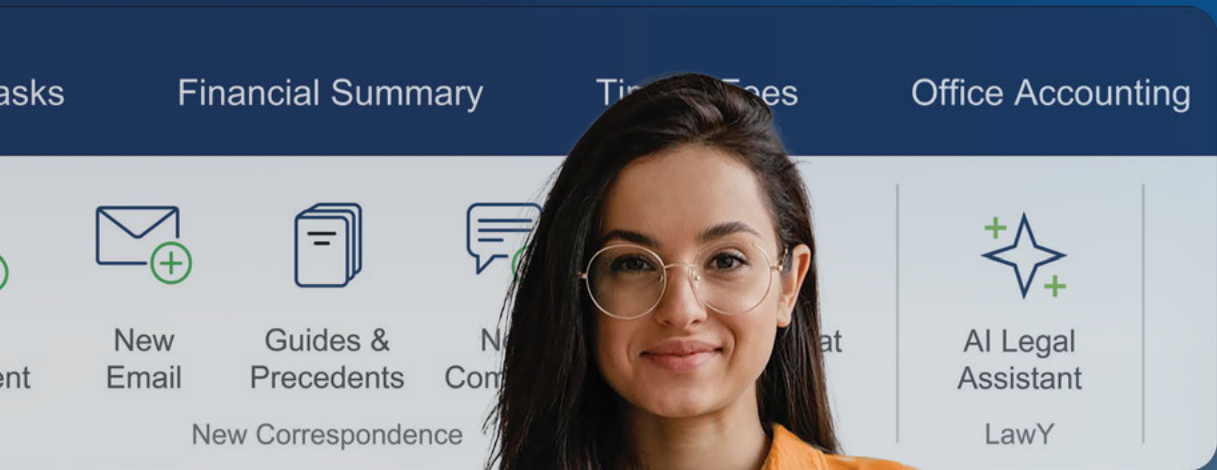
Daniel Allison on
the importance of
client care





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The human side of law



Nigel Brook is the legal director of Tyr Law

Summer has finally arrived. If you have escaped to sunnier climes, and are bizarrely reading this from a sunbed, please stop reading and pick this up when you return. Otherwise, I am pleased to kick off your summer reading, with issue 189 of the Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer. Our theme this issue is 'the human side of law'.

Humans in law

But isn't all law human? Law is an inherently human endeavour. It is a quintessential example of what Yuval Noah Harari (in his excellent book, *Sapiens*) calls a 'collective myth'. It exists only because we believe in it in sufficient numbers. It is one of the means through which – as a species – we organise ourselves en masse.

Despite that, we can lose sight – whether through the daily grind or being peppered with articles about artificial intelligence – of the fact that ours is very much a people profession. Our efforts for our clients are ultimately to the benefit of individual people. Nearly all of our work involves dealing with or negotiating with others. Large parts are competitive, if not openly adversarial.

Couple that with the pressure of operating and/or striving within a business, and for some in our profession the cocktail

can sadly become unpleasant. Last week, The Guardian reported that LawCare, the legal mental health charity, saw a 14% rise in people requesting mental health support in 2023.

Attitude to risk

One source of stress is likely that we are trained to identify risks and to contemplate the worst-case scenarios. Good lawyers are generally good problem-spotters. Particularly for junior colleagues, that can lead to a heightened awareness of problems (likely stressors) without the experience to put them into perspective.

If I could give only one piece of advice to those in the early years of their career, it would be: never suffer in silence. The vast majority of issues can be resolved. Most are best resolved if dealt with promptly.

Even when things are going well, life as a solicitor generally means juggling a busy diary of client demands and overlapping deadlines. Improving your skills at both managing your time and yourself are some of the best things you can do both to make you a better lawyer but – more importantly – a happier human.

Making time and what to do with it

In that spirit I will recommend two more books. The first is *Make Time* by Jake Knapp and John Zeratsky. This book is from the two ex-Googlers responsible for the concept of a 'Design Sprint' (a five-day process of rapid prototyping). *Make Time* serves up a series of tactics aimed at getting some extra time in your day and directing your attention more to 'what matters'.

As to 'what matters', my final recommendation is *Four Thousand Weeks* by Oliver Burkeman. I particularly enjoyed the audiobook version, read by the author. Burkeman is a recovering productivity-geek, previously penning a column in the Guardian focused on 'life-hacks' and other means of mechanically attempting to improve your efficiency, cramming more into your days.

The core tenet of *Four Thousand Weeks* is emphasising the short-lived nature of our lives. That many weeks is approximate to eighty years. Many reading this will already be a couple of thousand down. The book is a philosophical ramble, profound and entertaining, it can help you to refocus on what you can actually hope to achieve, and what would be better neglected.

Being better colleagues

A further means through which we can make law more human is to strive to improve the cultures in which we work. To me, this means both making our workplaces more pleasant places to be and making them more welcoming and diverse. You don't need to be 'the boss' to be a force for positive change within your organisation.

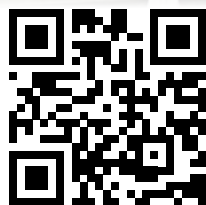
The same extends to dealing with people on the opposite side of a transaction or case; they are human too. Robustly advancing your client's position does not mean needing to dehumanise or disrespect others.

At its simplest, all this likely boils down to the golden rule: treat others as you would want to be treated.

Thank you for reading – I hope that you enjoy the rest of this issue and that you have a pleasant summer.

Upcoming events

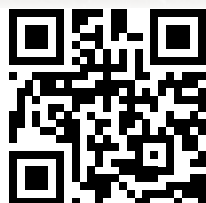
 Leeds
Law Society



Queer History Tour

Continue celebrating with Leeds Law Society's upcoming Queer History Tour on 12 September. The tour is free and departs from The Bookish Type at 6pm.

Sign up on Eventbrite here - <https://shorturl.at/jbvKc>



Business and Networking Lunch

Join us for our popular Business and Networking lunch at the popular Restaurant Bar & Grill in Leeds.

Sign up on Eventbrite here - <https://shorturl.at/nNx7>

Leeds Pri



ide 2024



West Yorkshire Mayor Tracy Brabin joined the Leeds Law Society and Bare Brass Band as part of the celebrations

Leeds Law Society celebrated Pride in the annual parade

Starting from Leeds Town Hall, the Pride 2024 parade snaked through Leeds city centre along the Headrow, Vicar Lane, and Kirkgate.

Leeds Law Society participants were part of the 50,000-strong crowd who came to the city centre to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community.

A huge thank you to the sponsors and those who walked with us including Leeds Junior Lawyers Division, Selborne Chambers, Gordons LLP, Ridley & Hall Solicitors, Weightmans, Barton Legal Limited, Mills & Reeve, BARE BRASS BAND LTD., Morrish Solicitors LLP, Tyr, Browne Jacobson, Spire Barristers, Leeds Beckett University, Ison Harrison Solicitors, and The Law Society.

It was once again a fantastic day!



Reconnecting with the core values of client service

Daniel Allison, Leeds JLD's LLS liaison and national JLD representative, is a company commercial paralegal with Ison Harrison. He explains why the best solicitors understand that trust, empathy, and communication are as vital as legal acumen:

Often when people think of a 'lawyer' they think of a robotic person in a suit, delivering advice behind glazed eyes, protecting the faceless corporation. However, this isn't truly reflective of an industry built on the foundations of trust, honesty and integrity. To protect these foundations, solicitors require an additional skill set to ensure the highest level of client care and customer service.

Trust is fundamentally what underpins the client-solicitor relationship. Without it, there would be a lacuna in the legal representation of members of society.

Consider members of society who have worked their entire life to provide for themselves and their families; they need to trust that the solicitor preparing their wills will be able to reflect their wishes after they have passed on. Equally, clients will often put themselves in a vulnerable position by trusting solicitors with life-changing decisions (for example, selling their business). They need to trust that the solicitor is competent, able to provide the best advice, and will complete the work within the required timeframe.

However, trust isn't something that is magically conjured up in the offices of solicitor's practices behind closed doors. It is something that takes time, effort and perseverance to cultivate. It requires honesty and integrity when providing advice to ensure that clients feel valued and respected.

This may result in difficult conversations as the advice that is given may not be what the client wants to hear, and solicitors often walk the tightrope of trying not to offend or upset their clients whilst also ensuring that they always act in their best interests. It requires high levels of emotional intelligence and delicate communication to ensure that both parties remain calm and engaged in the process.

Aside from being skilled communicators, solicitors must also seem present and accessible to their clients and must juggle multiple competing deadlines to provide the best service to many clients simultaneously. This is something that clients often fail to understand: the solicitor must make them feel like they are their only client, and fulfil all their needs, or risk them

choosing another legal service provider.

In today's legal practice, this overwhelms some solicitors, and they begin to resent the 'needy clients' who require frequent updates on their legal issue. However, solicitors need to remember that whilst it may just be a job to them, the outcome of the legal issue they are addressing can affect the client's whole life.

Parallels can be drawn between the legal industry and other industries. Plumbing, for example: when a pipe bursts in a home, the homeowner will call the plumber to fix the pipe (and will want them to arrive as soon as possible). The homeowner wants to limit the damage to the property whilst the plumber must manage their time to perform the services for all their clients. Further, the homeowner will rely on the plumber to fix the burst pipe without any knowledge of residential plumbing and will have to trust that the plumber has the tools and the expertise to fix the issue. Like a good solicitor, a good plumber will only need to visit the property once to address the issue and will make sure that the pipe will not burst for years to come.

Fundamentally, solicitors need to remember that they operate in a service industry, albeit from behind a desk as opposed to a bar.

Whilst the customer may not always be right, accommodating their needs and addressing their concerns must be our main priority.

"Solicitors need to remember that whilst it may just be a job to them, the outcome... can affect the client's whole life."



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Blacks Solicitors grows holiday and home parks team



Blacks Solicitors is celebrating the expansion of its holiday and home parks team with the appointment of several new members. The team now includes senior associate Andrew Foulds, solicitor Alannah Crux, associate solicitor Anna Schiavetta, and senior associate Annie Beaumont. Each brings significant expertise in family law, commercial dispute resolution, employment law, and private wealth and succession.

The 15-strong holiday and parks team has secured £50 million in transactional work over the past year, advising more than 40 new clients on estates worth over £100 million. They support businesses through all stages of park ownership, from acquisition to management and succession planning.

Nick Dyson, who heads up both the holiday and home parks and real estate teams at Blacks Solicitors, commented, "Over the past decade, we've honed our expertise in this field and, in the last 18 months alone, we've noticed a significant rise in clients seeking assistance with succession planning, wills and lasting powers of attorney across the holiday and home parks sector, which has led to the expansion of the team.

"We continue to provide national expertise across the holiday and home parks sector whilst being based in Yorkshire."

McCormicks Solicitors makes move to larger premises

Harrogate law firm McCormicks Solicitors is making a move after 33 years in its East Parade home.

The practice is relocating to Scottsdale House on Springfield Avenue, adjacent to the Crowne Plaza Hotel and Convention Centre, in Harrogate town centre. The move reflects the need for increased space as the practice continues to grow.

Senior partner Peter McCormick OBE said: "East Parade has been our home for many years and has seen the steady growth of the practice but it now no longer meets our needs. Our new premises will enable more effective communication across all of our departments, as well as an improved environment not only for our colleagues but also for our many visitors.



"We will have improved access, which had been a challenge in our old four-storey building, as well as additional meeting space."

Warburtons rises to the occasion, advised by Gordons LLP

Leeds-based firm Gordons has advised Britain's largest bakery brand on the pre-letting of a new, bespoke 65,847 sq ft distribution centre to be developed in Biggleswade, near Bedford.

Bolton-headquartered Warburtons currently produces more than two million products every day at its 11 bakeries, including one in Wakefield. It delivers fresh to 18,500 stores across the UK every morning from the company's 18 depots.

A team led by Gordons commercial property partner, Sarah

Ratcliffe, advised Warburtons on the deal.

Commenting on the support from the Gordons' team, Jim Norton, head of distribution network transformation at Warburtons, said: "The practical commercial advice provided by Sarah and the team at Gordons played a pivotal role in enabling us to secure the pre-let of our new depot."

Sarah added: "It was a pleasure to advise Warburtons on the pre-let deal."

Gordons gets glam with Cloud Nine partnership

Gordons has advised hair and beauty brand Cloud Nine on its latest brand ambassador partnership with presenter, broadcaster and singer, Frankie Bridge.



Senior lawyer, Lauren Wills-Dixon, and Andy Brian, partner and the head of Gordons' retail sector practice advised Harrogate-based Cloud Nine.

The same team advised Cloud Nine on commercial agreements with beauty retail brands Sephora and LookFantastic.

Commenting on working with Gordons, Cloud Nine's group finance director, Ian Davies, said: "Having worked together for over five years, on a number of different projects, we have a great relationship with the Gordons team."

The firm has advised a variety of its retail clients on celebrity and influencer deals, including menswear retailer MOSS, online jewellery retailer Abbott Lyon and Wren Kitchens.

Schofield Sweeney facilitates £10 million acquisition

MDP NE29 Ltd has acquired Mandale Industrial Park for over £10 million, with legal assistance from law firm Schofield Sweeney. The park, featuring 39 hybrid and industrial units, represents a strategic addition to MDP NE29 Ltd's commercial property portfolio.

Farooq Zar, a partner at Schofield Sweeney, led the advisory team. He remarked, "We are thrilled to have facilitated this significant acquisition for our client. Mandale Industrial Park is a newly built industrial estate and represents a key investment in a prime location, and we are confident it will deliver substantial value to our client's portfolio."

Abigail Miskimmon, a paralegal at Schofield Sweeney, supported Farooq Zar. Her contributions ensured the smooth execution of the transaction.

Reflecting on their collaboration with Schofield Sweeney, Nigel Arnott added, "Working with Farooq Zar and Schofield Sweeney has been a delight. Their professionalism, attention



to detail, and consistent communication made the entire process smooth and efficient. We value their expertise and look forward to future collaborations."

Han Law partners with menopause specialist



Boutique firm Han Law have announced the appointment of Haley White, founder of Menospace, as a consultant. Haley will support the firm in delivering niche menopause-related

training, consultancy, and accreditation to employers.

The new Menopause Support Packages will include bespoke consultancy and insight, strategic and legal advice, employee surveys and analysis, dedicated workshops, and accredited training for managers.

This appointment comes off the back of the overwhelming results of Han Law's 'Menopause at Work' survey.

Hannah Strawbridge, CEO and founder of Han Law, explains: "There are over 6.5 million menopausal women in the UK workforce and almost 1 million of them have left their jobs due to inadequate support.

"Together, we want to improve the working lives of women, at the peri and menopause stage of their lives. Now we aim to bridge the gap between employers and employees with this new offering."

Capsticks joins NEPO legal services framework

Capsticks' local government team has been appointed to the NEPO legal services framework for all mandatory requirements. This includes data protection, public law, contracts, procurement, employment and HR, property development and planning, competition law, banking and finance, partnerships and projects.

The appointment commenced on 5 June 2024 and is set for four years.

The firm has also applied for the framework's additional requirements which range from information, communication & technology, intellectual property to family law, health and safety and food, rural and environmental law and others.

NEPO facilitates high-value procurement in major strategic areas of spend (such as construction, energy, and facilities management) in conjunction with northeast local authorities and a range of associate members from the wider UK public sector. It currently has more than 1,000 member organisations nationwide, ranging from local authorities and

educational establishments to NHS bodies, registered social housing landlords and emergency services.

Carl Telford, professional services lead at NEPO, said: "Delivering positive outcomes to the communities we serve is at the heart of what we do at NEPO. Our legal services framework has been designed specifically with the needs of the public sector in mind, offering access to a wide variety of legal specialisms that are reflective of contracting authorities requirements."

Tiffany Cloynes, head of local government and partner at Capsticks said: "This is a significant appointment for Capsticks and the local government team. Not only do frameworks such as NEPO create more efficient, cost-effective and accessible solutions for the member organisations, it also allows for our team to offer a wide range of support showcasing the firm's impressive expertise and offering."

Mills & Reeve invests in new offices

The Leeds office of Mills & Reeve is nearly doubling its size with a new 10,200-square-foot space at 1 City Square, starting October 2024. This expansion follows a 25% headcount increase over the past year.

Since its 2008 opening, the Leeds office has launched several new practice areas. The last 12 months has also seen its client base expand significantly, with new wins from Yorkshire companies and beyond.

To fit out the new premises, located near the train station, the firm is working with Overbury, and commissioning local artist Melody Sutherland for artwork.

Paul Johnson, head of the Leeds office, said: "The state-of-the-art office will create a perfect environment for existing staff, clients and planned recruits as the office continues its expansion strategy."



Blacks Solicitors celebrates team members' new accreditation



Blacks Solicitors is celebrating the award of the Residential Property Accreditation to nine members of its residential property team.

The Residential Property Accreditation is the Law Society's prestigious and newly-recognised quality standard for residential property. The Law Society designed the accreditation for individuals to complement the existing Conveyancing Quality Scheme (CQS) for legal practices.

Emma Garfitt, senior associate solicitor and learning and development manager, drove the initiative at Blacks Solicitors. It involved the team undertaking an examination and application process set by the Law Society, incorporating a two-and-a-half-hour foundation exam or a three-and-a-half-hour intermediate exam for each of the nine team members.

Clare Brattan, Faye Parkinson, Lauren Parkinson, Rebecca

Skeet, and Paul Firth, all conveyancers, received certifications at the foundation level. Anna Harrison and Elizabeth Minns, both conveyancing assistants, also received the certificate. Helen Carter, a conveyancer associate, and David Lawes, a conveyancer, received the intermediate-level accreditation. All accreditations within the team will be valid for the next three years.

Blacks Solicitors aims to have as many staff members as possible accredited or holding professional qualifications. Ian Errington, partner and head of the residential conveyancing team added: "By investing in comprehensive training programmes, Blacks Solicitors demonstrates its unwavering dedication to maintaining high-quality standards in our work."

Top legal firms to connect with students at Yorkshire Legal Careers Fair

Yorkshire Legal News announced it will launch the inaugural Yorkshire Legal Careers Fair on 23 October at the Leeds Marriott Hotel. This event, in collaboration with the University of Sheffield, the University of Huddersfield, Leeds Beckett University, and Yorkshire Legal Jobs, is designed for law students at all stages to connect with a variety of law firms and legal employers.

Firms Appleyard Lees, Bevan Brittan, Brabners, Clarion Solicitors, ESP Solicitors, Greeths, Ison Harrison, Pinsent Mason, PM Law Group, Ramdens Solicitors, Shoosmiths, Spire Barristers, Switalskis, and Thompsons Solicitors are all confirmed to exhibit, as well as the University of Law and BPP

University, with more to be announced.

Attendees will engage directly with legal professionals, gain insights on applications and interviews, and build professional networks crucial for their careers. A spokesperson for the University of Huddersfield said, "We are proud to support the first Yorkshire Legal Careers Fair. It is a great opportunity for law students at all stages of their academic courses to speak to such a broad range of law firms and legal employers of varying sizes and legal specialisms."

Firms interested in exhibiting should call Harry Thomas on 0113 521 6091.

Rollits embrace excellence during Humber Business Week



During Humber Business Week, business leaders attended Rollits' 'Embracing

Excellence' event to explore modern learning techniques.

Sarah Young, Ralph Gilbert, and Caroline Hardcastle led interactive activities, including an historic year 6 English comprehension test to highlight the importance of experiential learning.

Sarah Young, from Young+ Limited, discussed cognitive load and how individuals identify and retain information. Sarah emphasized that learning is complex and based on

interconnected knowledge, or "sticky knowledge." Caroline Hardcastle then challenged the common excuses about the cost and time of training, stressing the benefits of continuous development.

Emma Waudby, operations director of Cobus, attended the event as part of her company's commitment to empowering its workforce through development and learning.

She said: "Now I understand more about the science of how we learn and our cognitive space I will reassess our team's professional development requirements with this in mind. It was a thoroughly enjoyable session, one which I felt will be very beneficial in the workplace."

Ralph Gilbert noted that 'Embracing Excellence' was inspired by the firm's annual staff conference, emphasising the value of lifelong learning for both personal and organizational growth.

Nigel Brook officially takes the helm of Leeds Law Society

Nigel Brook, a seasoned commercial litigator and founding member of Tyr, has formally begun his twelve-month tenure as president of the Leeds Law Society.

With a career spanning multiple decades, Nigel has been a dedicated member of the society for many years. Originally from West Yorkshire, he began his professional journey in London before relocating to Leeds in 2015, making significant contributions to the legal community.

Nigel specializes in contentious tax, handling disputes with HMRC and commercial claims involving tax issues, earning

him a stellar reputation among peers and clients.

Tyr, where Nigel is a founding member, is known for handling complex commercial issues for a diverse client base. Located in Leeds, the firm prides itself on an innovative and progressive culture, offering personalized and professional legal services.

Dean Jowett, a colleague at Tyr, expressed his enthusiasm for Nigel's new role: "Everyone at Tyr is really proud of Nigel, and looking forward to his year as president. Good luck, Nigel!"

Hudgell Solicitors hosts Yorkshire medical negligence conference

Hudgell Solicitors will host a free legal conference for medical negligence professionals in York in 2024, focusing on women's health issues like obstetric care, birth trauma, and health inequalities.

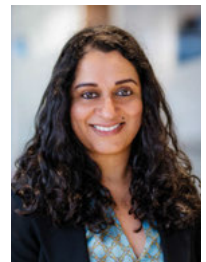
Hudgell's principal solicitor, Elizabeth Maliakal, said, "I'm excited about the conference as it's going to be informative and an opportunity to collaborate and to network with experts in their field."

Previously held in Hull, the event moves to York to broaden engagement and maintain Yorkshire roots for its third year. The conference will address increasing cases involving women's health and aim to improve legal outcomes and

healthcare standards.

Speakers include Dr. Angeli Thallon, Rachael McGrath of the Birth Trauma Association, Dr. Dharshana Sridhar of the Spinal Injuries Association, Dr. Claire Wilson, and Theresa Greenwood of Hudgell Solicitors.

The conference will be held on 17 October 2024 at the Principal Hotel Company. Attendees should register via the Hudgell Solicitors website.



Capsticks partners with 10,000 Interns Foundation



Capsticks is partnering with the 10,000 Interns Foundation for the second year on the '10,000 Black Interns' programme. This year, four interns will join the paid internship which lasts six weeks: Rudo Ushewokunze and Enoch Sakyiama in Leeds, Emmanuel

Edwards in London, and Tumi Mayowa-Peters in Central Business Services (CBS).

Martin Hamilton, managing partner said: "I'm really pleased that we're partnering again with the 10,000 Interns Foundation – our partnership is important to making Capsticks an ever more diverse and inclusive place to work and improve further our recruitment and retention of global majority candidates and colleagues. I'm looking forward to welcoming Rudo, Enoch, Emmanuel and Tumi for this year's summer programme."

Following the conclusion of the internships, the firm will be welcoming a new cohort of apprentices in September.

Blacks Solicitors hosts walking tours in Leeds

Blacks Solicitors celebrated the success of its walking tours in Leeds, organised to support the Real Estate, Investment, and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiIF). The free tours invited business entrepreneurs and property experts from across the country to explore the city, each led by local guides.

Participants journeyed through Leeds to discover the city's artistic hotspots, explore the evolution of Leeds retail, uncover African footsteps in the city's history, and tour the residential urban renewal projects.

Guides included Robert Dyson of Leeds Civic Trust, Joe Williams, founder of Leeds Black History Walk, and Rachael Unsworth, director of Leeds City Walking Tours.

Nick Dyson, head of the real estate team at Blacks Solicitors, commented: "We are embedded in the real estate sector in Leeds.

The city has a fantastic property offering which our team is passionate about showcasing. Our real estate team are experts in the sector and it was fantastic to be involved in the latest UKREiIF event in Leeds."

Following the tours, attendees joined a drinks reception and exclusive viewing of the Peter Mitchell exhibition at Leeds Art Gallery.



Jones Myers named among best in UK for family law



Family law specialists from Jones Myers feature in the latest edition of 'The Best Lawyers in the United Kingdom'. The guide recognises excellence in practice.

Peers have once again nominated managing partner Richard Peaker, head of the firm's financial remedies department, and

partner Kate Banerjee, leader of the children's department.

Launched in 1981, Best Lawyers' methodology aims to capture, as accurately as possible, the consensus opinion of leading lawyers about the professional abilities of their colleagues within the same geographical area and legal practice area.

Richard Peaker commented: "Thank you to our peers for nominating us for inclusion in the 2025 edition of The Best Lawyers in the United Kingdom which is based on a rigorous peer review survey."

Jones Myers, founded in 1992 as one of the first family law firms of its kind in the north, has its headquarters in Leeds city centre. The firm also has offices in the heart of York and Harrogate town centre.

Yorkshire KC shortlisted for silk of the year

Legal 500 has named Nick Johnson KC, based in Yorkshire, as one of England and Wales's leading silks. Johnson, a member of Exchange Chambers in Leeds, is the only KC outside London shortlisted for the prestigious Silk of the Year accolade at the Legal 500 Bar Awards 2024.

The awards recognize legal excellence based on independent research by Legal 500's experts.

"I am delighted and honoured to be shortlisted for national Silk of the Year," said Nick. "I'm so grateful for the support of colleagues and friends over a 30-year practice in which I have been lucky to specialise and travel, while basing my home in Yorkshire."

Nick specialises in financial crime, regulatory work, and serious organized crime, often internationally. He is highly ranked by

Legal 500 and Chambers & Partners for his expertise. He is also deputy head of crime at Exchange Chambers.

Nick's notable cases include representing a chartered accountant and senior bank executive in a major money laundering investigation and defending in complex homicide cases. This includes defending the "iceman assassin" Mark Fellows, who shot alleged north-west gangland bosses Paul Massey and John Kinsella, and defending the teenage girl who killed 7-year-old Katie Rough in York.





“If you are lucky enough to be in a position to help, never stop.”

Natalie Cosgrove, a partner in the medical negligence team at Ashton’s Legal, has gained national recognition for her work addressing substandard maternity care at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust.

There is an inherent limit to the civil justice system. The full compensation principle aims to restore claimants to the position they would have been in if not for negligence. And it makes sense in theory.

But money simply cannot bridge the gap when your world has been immeasurably torn into rubble and who you were, and what you were, is gone.

In 2019, I was allocated two cases relating to Nottingham maternity by (arguably the matriarch of clinical negligence) my mentor, Janet Baker. She had been representing the Hawkins family and I had assisted her. We knew at that point something was seriously adrift in maternity care, particularly at Nottingham NHS Trust, because the Hawkins family told us, and we believed them.

What happened since then is far beyond any nightmare.

Call it intuition. Call it seeing the same ‘mistakes’ over and over, with little hope of change. Call it experience. But when a lawyer is faced with a moral necessity, you answer that call. You say, ‘yes’.

Since 2019, I’ve spent countless hours on Zoom with TV producers, network legal teams, and regulatory bodies, explaining that the families affected by the Nottingham Maternity Scandal are telling the truth. I’ve drafted statements, spoken with hundreds of families, participated in a documentary, and spent many late nights on Teams. I’ve held babies born after deep loss; their parents pour their hearts out about the babies who never had the chance to come home.

The moment that changed everything, for me, followed an inquest. A family were told that their recollection of events was perhaps changed by time. That everything was fine.

They were not fine. I was not fine.

I messaged Shaun Lintern, health editor at the Sunday Times, on Twitter, incandescent. The conversation led to nine months of scooping up evidence, from a whistleblower who contacted me one evening, to the many families who so bravely told their stories of how their hearts were shattered into fragments so small that no apology will ever piece them back together.

Momentum was building, but COVID delayed proceedings. Jack and Sarah Hawkins, along with a growing cohort of families, tried to sound the alarm week in week out, warning that they were part of a wider issue.

The job of a lawyer is often to get clients from A to B. But in maternity cases, the destination has many stops. Each family wants something different, dictated by their unique grief. It’s rarely clear from the outset what they’ll want in the end.

How can anyone navigate life after loss or serious injury? That’s the challenge for us as lawyers. We’re never sure if what we’re doing is right. Getting from A to B is what we know. All we can do is approach it with good intentions and strive for the best outcomes.

It is hard work. It really is, but often that’s the job of a lawyer.

However, it’s never about the lawyers. We should be seen, not heard. What we say is immaterial; it’s what we do that matters. It’s not just about giving an exceptional service or putting the client first. Many families I speak to never become clients. As I tell my stepdaughter: “If you are lucky enough to be clever, then use other intelligence to do good.” For me, if you are lucky enough to be in a position to help, never stop.

This isn’t about going above and beyond. It’s about knowing that what you can give and who you are goes beyond your billable hours. Sometimes that may be inconsistent with your firm’s values, which can be incredibly different as a junior.

Would I do it all again? Absolutely, yes. I’m too tied to Nottingham and promoting safer maternity to ever step away. And there are many more like me in pockets all over the country doing similar. You won’t always see them on TV; they may be in different areas of the law; but they’re there.

There is good in the law. We have to reflect on what made us lawyers in the first place. It wasn’t for the billable hours, was it?



The Yorkshire Pro Bono Committee

Now in its second year after being re-established, the **Yorkshire Pro Bono Committee** provides free legal advice and representation to those in need across the region.

It is perhaps worthwhile reminding ourselves what is meant by pro bono. The Joint Pro Bono Protocol was developed under the auspices of the attorney general's Pro Bono Committee by Law Works and Advocate and endorsed in 2004 by the Law Society of England and Wales, the Bar Council of England and Wales, the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives and the wider Committee. The definition of pro bono contained in the Protocol is as follows:-

"1.1 When we refer to Pro Bono Legal Work we mean legal advice or representation provided by lawyers in the public interest including to individuals, charities and community groups who cannot afford to pay for that advice or representation and where public and alternative means of funding are not available.

1.2 Legal work is Pro Bono Legal Work only if it is free to the client, without payment to the lawyer or law firm (regardless of the outcome) and provided voluntarily either by the lawyer or his or her firm.

1.3 Pro Bono Legal Work is always only an adjunct to, and not a substitute for, a proper system of publicly funded legal services."

The Yorkshire Pro Bono Committee was established at a roundtable event in June 2023 convened by the Leeds Business & Property Court Forum, Leeds Law Society, the North Eastern Circuit and the Yorkshire Union of Law Societies with support from Advocate, Law Works, Support Through Court and the Access to Justice Foundation and is one of the regional pro bono committees that are members of the attorney general's Pro Bono Committee.

The co-chairs of the Yorkshire Pro Bono Committee are Louisa Soper, UK pro bono director, of Squire Patton Boggs (UK) LLP and Eleanor Temple KC, Kings Chambers, chair of R3 Yorkshire and chair of the NECCBA. The honorary president of the Yorkshire Pro Bono Committee is David Barraclough, chair of the Access to Justice Foundation Yorkshire, and Law Society Council member representing Yorkshire. David is also director and past president of Leeds Law Society and past president of the Yorkshire Union of Law Societies.

The attorney general's Pro Bono Committee was initially established in 2002 and then with broad support from across the

sector re-established with new terms of reference in 2023. The objectives of the attorney general's Pro Bono Committee are:

1. To facilitate effective, collaborative and coordinated legal pro bono in England and Wales by sharing information about particular needs for pro bono help, in order to help projects focus help to where it is needed most, to share information about current or planned pro bono initiatives, including challenges being faced or good practice models, in order to learn from others' projects or to support working together, and to receive updates from and to provide input into the work of other pro bono committees and groups in order and to inform such initiatives.

2. To inform and update the law officers regarding pro bono in order to support their roles as government champions of pro bono.

3. To provide a forum to discuss and work together on other cross sector matters relevant to pro bono, including pro bono costs.

The attorney general's Pro Bono Committee is chaired by the attorney general and the solicitor general as part of their role as pro bono champions in Government and usually meets twice a year. In addition to the regional pro bono committees, the attorney general's Pro Bono Committee includes representatives from the Law Society of England and Wales, the Bar Council of England and Wales, the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives, the UK Collaboration Plan for Pro Bono, the In-House Pro Bono Group, GC 100, the Government Legal Department pro bono and volunteering network, the Financial Conduct Authority Pro Bono Group, national charities who deliver pro bono, law schools who are involved with pro bono initiatives, legal associations that deliver pro bono schemes, national advice organisations, national initiatives that support pro bono and organisations that provide funding for pro bono.

The terms of reference for the Yorkshire Pro Bono Committee largely reflect the objectives of the attorney general's Pro Bono Committee but focus on the provision of pro bono in Yorkshire and Humberside, the coordination and collaboration of pro bono in Yorkshire and Humberside and the encouragement of pro bono volunteering in Yorkshire and Humberside.

The Yorkshire Pro Bono Committee plans to meet four times a year with three meetings being held online and the fourth meeting being held in person during Pro Bono Week. The quarterly meetings aim to provide a forum to discuss all aspects of pro bono in Yorkshire in particular the need to map the existing provision of pro bono in Yorkshire and Humberside.

If you are interested in attending the next quarterly forum of the Yorkshire Pro Bono Committee, please contact Louisa Soper (louisa.soper@squirepb.com), Eleanor Temple (etemplek@kingschambers.com) or David Barraclough (dwm.barraclough@yorkshireunion.org.uk)

Bailoran Solicitors raise over £11,000 for Leeds Baby Bank



Bailoran Solicitors and a group of dedicated supporters took on the Rob Burrows Leeds Half Marathon back in May, successfully raising over £11,000 for the Leeds Baby Bank.

The Bailoran representatives sweated in 21°C heat to help the local charity provide essential baby items to families experiencing

poverty.

Ellie Brown, charity manager at Leeds Baby Bank, expressed her deep gratitude for the generous donation, stating, "Their fundraising is phenomenal, and the support helps local families in need – because of that support we can buy items that children desperately need such as buggies and beds for babies."

The fundraising effort showcased the physical and mental resilience of the participants and the strong community spirit surrounding the event.

"I'm simply amazed at the generosity of our friends, clients and contacts," commented John Bailes, managing director of Bailoran Solicitors.

"A big thanks to everyone involved in the run and those who provided sweets, drinks, high fives and super soakers, not to mention the cheers of support from the crowd and other runners," he remarked.

Wake Smith chooses new Sheffield charity to support

Wake Smith Solicitors will offer a discount to a Sheffield charity's clients, staff, volunteers and supporters as part of its commitment to the good cause for the next year.

The city firm has chosen Cavendish Cancer Care as its nominated charity for the next year. To kick off the initiative, they are offering an incentive through its wills, trusts and probate team.

The charity is close to the hearts of employees after the sad and untimely death of its director of HR, Kelly Pashley-Handford last year.

Stephanie Chung, wills, trusts and probate associate at Wake Smith and charitable board member, said: "Employees at the law firm voted for Cavendish Cancer Care to become its chosen charity for the next year in memory of Kelly."

"As well as raising funds through a variety of challenges, the first initiative in the partnership is to offer Cavendish's clients, staff, volunteers and supporters a 15% discount on normal rates for wills for the next year starting this month."

Kirsty White, head of fundraising at Cavendish Cancer Care, said: "We are delighted Wake Smith Solicitors has chosen us as their



charity for the next year."

The Wake Smith team are now gearing up to take part in upcoming fundraising events including running challenges, a wine and cheese evening, an abseil down the Owen Building at Sheffield Hallam University, and a 10km run.

Last year's fundraising campaign at Wake Smith collected more than £5,200 for Sheffield charity PACES.

Walker Foster does the legal legwork with charity walk



Staff from Walker Foster Solicitors marked 105 years in business in June by swapping their suits for walking boots to raise funds for a Yorkshire children's charity.

The team joined family and friends on 8 June for a 13-mile hike to raise funds for The Principle Trust, which provides free respite holidays to children who are underprivileged, disadvantaged, disabled, have life-limiting conditions, or who have experienced poverty, trauma or abuse.

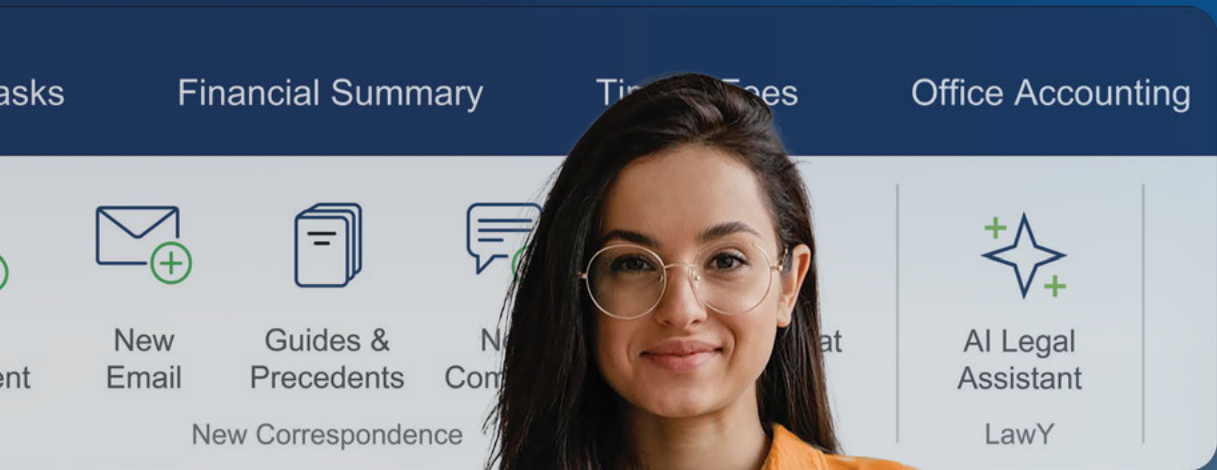
The walk raised £700 and took the team from their Skipton office to their Silsden branch, notching up 37,000 steps.

Kelly Chambers, head of people at Walker Foster commented, "We want to thank everyone who supported this event, which follows on from our volunteering day in March, when some of our team spent a day preparing the charity's holiday homes, ready to welcome more families this year. It was a very fitting way to mark 105 years of service to local communities."



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Nine promotions boost Bevan Brittan



The Leeds office saw new senior associates Jessica

Nine colleagues in Leeds are celebrating promotions at Bevan Brittan, part of a record 38 promotions. The firm has also hired 32 new senior staff in the past year, of which three are based in Leeds.

Boardman, Kyle Duggan, Courtney Janotta, and Maria Fert. Five others became associates, including Gemma Graham, Lisa Postlethwaite, Lyndsay Mair, Nicole Natur, and Lauren Howe.

Separately, the firm has also recently celebrated the appointment of Julie Morrison, a property expert who will bring over 20 years of real estate experience with her from Eversheds Sutherland. She will be working on property matters for several NHS bodies and the Welsh Education Partnership (WEPCo).

Shake-ups and key appointments for Ramsdens Solicitors

Ramsdens Solicitors has had a tumultuous and exciting month, with significant promotions and new appointments across various departments.

Adam Cockroft has taken over from Stephen Newman as the head of the corporate team. Newman remains a partner. Jennifer Slater, Katie Sharp, Jane Holroyd, and Rosanna Drewery have been promoted to partners, and Jolene Briggs to conveyancing manager. James Knowles joins as a partner to strengthen the private wealth team, bringing over 20 years of experience in capital tax planning and estate administration. Ian Miles and Kirsty Dunn have been promoted to senior

associate and associate respectively. Ian Hartley has been appointed as a new real estate partner. Finally, Liam Brooke joins as a partner to lead the will, trust, and estate disputes practice, aiming to expand Ramsdens' contentious probate services.



AWB Charlesworth bolsters private client department



Melissa Butler will bring almost a decade of experience in estate administration to AWB Charlesworth Solicitors as a paralegal in the wills, trusts and probate department.

The firm's wills, trusts and probate, or the private client department, is

split across three offices in Skipton, Keighley, Bradford and the wider Aire Valley/Yorkshire Dales area.

Melissa said: "I'm delighted to have joined AWB Charlesworth. They're a long-established firm with a great reputation. They're progressive in their approach to the law, and yet still have the strong values of a family firm."

New partners brings LCF Law headcount to 145

Three new partners have joined Yorkshire-based LCF Law. The firm has appointed Rebecca Ridley, Liam O'Neill and Ellie Foster, with a combined 60 years of legal experience.

LCF Law's managing partner, Ragan Montgomery, said: "All three new partners are not only highly experienced lawyers, but they really care about their clients and have longstanding relationships that results in plenty of repeat work and recommendations. We look forward to working with Rebecca, Liam and Ellie as we continue to strengthen our 145-strong team."



Wrigleys promotes two to partner



Wrigleys Solicitors has promoted Joanna Blackman and Hannah Allen to partner.

Joanna, now a partner in the charities and social economy department, joined Wrigleys in 2013

after a career in finance. She specialises in charity law, governance support, and structural transactions, with a focus on the health and social care sector.

Hannah, promoted to partner in the private client department, joined Wrigleys six years ago. She provides tax and succession planning advice, and handles wills, powers of attorney, trust management, and drafting of nuptial and cohabitation agreements.

New head of charities joins Hempsons



Hempsons LLP has appointed Stephen O'Reilly as the new head of charities and social enterprise. O'Reilly, joining from Eversheds Sutherland, brings extensive experience in the charity, education, and social enterprise sectors.

Stephen joins as a junior equity partner, a role designed to harness the talents of promising solicitors. Outgoing head Ian Hempseed will continue supporting clients until his retirement.

A series of promotions for Ward Hadaway

Ward Hadaway has announced key promotions, including a partner and a director.

In the Leeds office, Phil Edmondson was promoted to partner in the commercial litigation team. Rachel Blythe, with over 13 years of employment law experience, was promoted to director.

Additionally, Sarah Stockdale, Sally Popplewell, Olivia Field, and

Josh Fielding became managing associates, while Sophie Smith, Ella Dodgson, and Richard Noble were promoted to associates.

Emma Digby, executive partner in Ward Hadaway's Leeds office, said "I am delighted for my promoted colleagues, who have shown that they live and breathe [our] values every day."

Wake Smith appoints three fee earners

Sheffield-based Wake Smith Solicitors has bolstered its individual and business legal teams with three new fee earners.

Lisa Molinari, who has over a decade of experience, joins as a director in the residential conveyancing team. Rozeena Aslam, with three years of experience, joins the commercial property team, advising clients on property matters. Charlie Jones-Connor, an experienced paralegal, joins the private client department.



Rising star promoted to associate director



Yorkshire law firm Berwins has promoted Parminder Matharu, head of the commercial property unit, to associate director, recognising her outstanding contributions since joining in 2022.

CEO Paul Berwin praised Parminder's impact on both the firm and its clients: "Since joining the firm in 2022, Parminder has made an outstanding contribution not only to our business, but also to the businesses of the clients she and her team represent."

Reflecting on the appointment, Parminder added, "Berwins is an exciting place to be at the moment. Across the firm, we're seeing developments which will enhance the way legal services are offered and the commercial property team is very much a part of that."

Thornton Jones progresses three colleagues

Thornton Jones Solicitors' progression programme has identified colleagues for promotion for the second year running.

This year, the firm has promoted three colleagues to more senior positions. Amanda Gait has been promoted from senior associate solicitor to partner and Melanie Pickering and Claire Ward have both been promoted to senior associate solicitor.

Colleagues who apply must undergo a rigorous process which

includes interviews, presenting to the board and obtaining feedback from their colleagues.

Clare Thornton, managing director of Thornton Jones commented: "We are so passionate about our people, and we are committed to ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities to develop. Our progression programme is our annual commitment to providing those opportunities."

Wilkin Chapman expands dispute resolution and debt recovery team

Wilkin Chapman has strengthened its dispute resolution and debt recovery litigation teams by appointing Victoria Quinn, Sarah Hamby, and Jessica Dickinson, all formerly with Hull-based Gosschalks.

Victoria, now a partner, brings over 20 years of experience in real estate litigation and expertise in the licensed leisure and retail sectors. She will lead the dispute resolution team in Beverley.

Sarah, a senior associate with 15 years of experience, joins the dispute resolution team, specialising in commercial property disputes and telecoms network issues under the Electronic Communications Code.

Jessica, rejoining Wilkin Chapman at the Grimsby office, will focus on

energy litigation and debt recovery. She aims to provide efficient and cost-effective services for businesses.



From linguistics to legalese: court translator joins Switalskis as paralegal



Magdalena Dootson has been appointed as a paralegal in Switalskis' Leeds-based criminal law department. With over ten years of experience as a

court translator for Polish speakers, Dootson is transitioning to a legal career. She has completed the Police Station Representative Accreditation Scheme and holds a Master of Laws (LLM).

Michael Devlin, head of the crime team, praised her ambition: "It's clear [Magdalena] has the ambition to progress strongly and quickly in her career to the benefit of our department and firm. We look forward to seeing the contributions she will make to our criminal law department."

Crombie Wilkinson puts together commercial and dispute dream teams

Crombie Wilkinson Solicitors has expanded its commercial and dispute resolution divisions.

New legal advisors Richard Wrightson and Kirsty Fairbairn have joined the commercial team. Emily Darke, newly qualified after her traineeship, specialises in commercial and agricultural property law.

The firm also focuses on nurturing future talent, with 13 trainee solicitors currently in training. Jason McLeod and Alice Higham, the

latest trainees since May 2024, are working within the dispute resolution team on various legal services.



Harris takes the helm at Taylor Emmet



Sheffield-based firm Taylor Emmet has promoted Amy Harris to senior associate and head of property litigation. Amy, who joined the firm in 2023, has extensive experience

in commercial property disputes and is also a qualified mediator. In her new role, Amy will oversee all property litigation matters.

Steve Hinshelwood, CEO at Taylor Emmet said: "Since joining Taylor Emmet in October 2023, Amy immediately established a positive presence within our property litigation and the broader BLS teams. I would like to congratulate Amy on this promotion and look forward to the development of our property litigation department under her leadership."

Michelle 'proud' to begin tenure as president of Hull Law Society

Solicitor Michelle Tebbutt says she feels "immensely proud" of her appointment as president of Hull Incorporated Law Society.

Over the past 12 months, Michelle has earned a promotion to senior associate with Hudgells Solicitors. Externally, Chambers and Partners named her 'one to watch' in their leading legal guide. She also secured Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) senior

litigator status.

"I'm very much looking forward to the 12 months ahead. It's going to be a period of further change, and some new challenges for all involved in the legal sector, so to be part of a collective voice for our sector is something I am immensely proud of," said Michelle.

Last Word

The 'unflappable' **Ragan Montgomery** took on the mantle of managing partner for LCF Law in April 2024. Here, she talks us through how she makes her version of the law feel a little more human.

Hi Ragan! How has your transition into the role of managing partner been so far, and what are your immediate priorities for LCF Law?

I'm fortunate to be taking over the role at a strong time for LCF Law and to have Simon Stell (former managing partner) by my side to show me the ropes, so it's business as usual. The law is a people business and we've worked hard to build a great team and culture. In my new role, I will continue our focus on colleague wellbeing and looking after our clients - in my experience, that's how the firm thrives.

With over 20 years of experience in dispute resolution, what would you say are the key soft skills that have been instrumental in your success?

Empathy is vital. As a contentious probate lawyer, I have helped clients through difficult, emotional times. Ensuring clients feel heard allows us to understand their perspective and achieve fair outcomes for them. Active listening is also crucial with colleagues. We solve problems together, so we need to be good listeners who are open to different points of view.

Client centricity is a bit of a buzzword in law today, but it's important. How do you ensure that your clients' needs and concerns are always at the forefront of your practice?

We recognise that each client and situation is unique and take time to understand their needs, worries, and objectives.

We also emphasise proactive communication, providing clients with regular updates, so they don't have to chase us or face uncertainty about the status of their case. Clients have direct dial numbers for their assigned lawyer and team members.

We always aim to add value, not only meeting expectations but exceeding them.

LCF Law is known for its strong community ties and growth within Yorkshire. How do you plan to build on this reputation and expand the firm's reach?

We will build on our strong relationships with local charities and community organisations through legal work, volunteering, and corporate sponsorship. We'll continue our fundraising efforts, supporting a charity chosen by our colleagues each year.

This year, it's Yorkshire Cancer Research. We raised over £10,000 for the Bone Cancer Research Trust last year. We'll keep championing sustainability too. Our partnership with the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust has enabled the planting of over 1,500 trees to date."

You've been described as 'unflappable' and 'brilliant with clients.' How do you maintain composure and effectiveness under pressure, especially in high-stakes cases?

Although I'm a naturally calm person, I'm only human! But being organised, disciplined and structured in my approach helps me keep a clear head. Taking plenty of time to prepare and gaining a clear understanding of the matter in advance also helps me avoid surprises where possible.

LCF Law has a supportive, family-like atmosphere and no matter how busy colleagues are, they're always around to help or listen, which really does make all the difference.

What are the most significant changes in the legal landscape over the past two decades, and how has LCF Law adapted?

When I joined the profession, long hours and hierarchical decision-making were common. Things have improved! LCF Law has always embraced changes that will benefit colleagues. When I was promoted to partner, I worked part-time and had a young family, which surprised friends at other firms.

Happy people make better, more resilient lawyers, which is especially important because on top of being a good lawyer, you now need to be able to juggle people and leadership skills with a commercial mindset.

Mentorship is an important aspect of your firm's culture. Can you tell us about your experience with mentoring and how it influenced your career and leadership style?

I feel extremely lucky to have been mentored by some great people, including Simon Stell and Charles Abraham, head of our dispute resolutions department, who have shown me that there is always a solution to everything. My family inspired me to work hard, remain dedicated, and be understanding. No one answered my questions for me but helped me find the answers myself, a practice I aim to replicate. Also, my grandmother had a dry, Yorkshire sense of humour, which made her very approachable. I hope some of that rubbed off on me.

Thanks Ragan!





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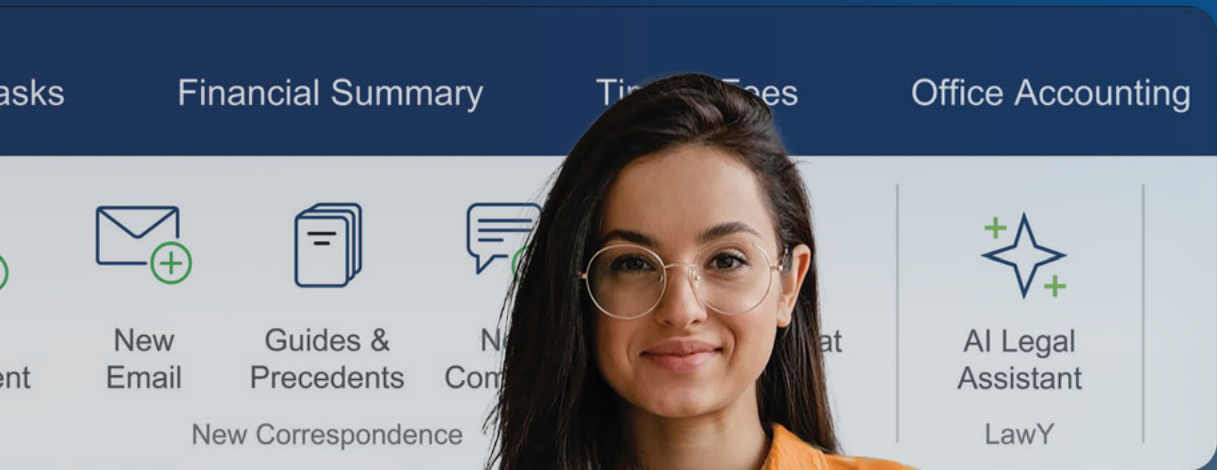
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