



Issue #18 | Summer 2025

Consortium Quarterly

Welcome

Hello and welcome to the Summer edition of your CQ.

NWLC Annual Training Event 2025

The Management Board has been busy planning your Annual Training Event on 7th October. We are really looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the event.

This year it will be held at the Hilton Liverpool City Centre. We listened to your feedback from last year's event and have taken this on board so this time we will have a more spacious venue with plenty of capacity for exhibitors, refreshments and networking. We are very excited to be in a great city centre location with easy access via public transport and there will also be discounted parking nearby for those wishing to drive.

We are looking forward to hearing from one of our keynote speakers, Dan Kane, founder of 'O Shaped' and we have an interesting programme of other keynote speakers and workshops that we will tell you about over the coming weeks including a Social Care Update for our many social care lawyer members.

The event is free to members including lunch and refreshments throughout the day and members can register using this link [NWLC Annual Training Event, 7 October 2025 | RSVP Blank](#)

NWLC AGM

We have decided to hold the AGM via webinar again this year on 2nd September at 1.15pm so please look out for an invitation and join us if you can.

NWLC Training

I have two training updates for you in this edition.

Firstly, we will be launching our new NWLC Social Care Barristers complimentary Training Programme to commence in the Autumn. We have put a lot of work into setting up this new benefit for members and hope that our social care colleagues will take advantage of it.

Secondly, the Board are currently working on the NWLC Annual Training Programme of webinars and in person events to also commence in the Autumn. Details will be announced soon so do look out for them.

We hope you have been able to attend some of the training sessions from our partner firms in the last 12 months. I know that they have been very well attended with excellent feedback so do please join any sessions that are of interest. As usual, if you cannot attend any of the online sessions on the day you can 'catch up' on them at a later date via the NWLC website. There is now an excellent comprehensive library of past webinar recordings and slides on the website, including those from the last Annual Training Event.

In this edition of CQ we have our regular, topical articles and a Legal Updater from our new Partner firms. We have an update from our Junior Lawyers Group and you can also find out more about what's new with the Consortium on page 4.

As always, if you have any comments or suggestions about what you'd like to see in future CQ editions or about the Consortium generally, please do get in touch with me at Anne.Greenwood@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk.

With best wishes



Anne Greenwood

**CHAIR OF NWLC
MANAGEMENT BOARD**

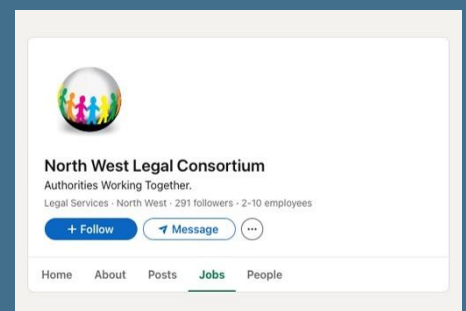
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What's new at NWLC

Fiona Pritchard highlights some of the latest developments at the North West Legal Consortium.

To contact Fiona please email: info@nwlegalconsortium.com



NWLC Barristers Portal 2025-2028

We have received two more applications from Chambers to join our Barristers Services Portal from [Browne Jacobson Barristers](#) and [Mountford Chambers](#).

Rates, fixed for 3 years, will be added to the NWLC website when received.

Members can see the rates and run mini competitions through the '[Commissions](#)' tab on the website, after signing in.

We are working on a Social Care training programme with some chambers starting in the Autumn and will send details to members once they are finalised.

The eleven Chambers who have registered so far are:

- [4-5 Gray's Inn Square](#)
- [7 Harrington Street](#)
- [Broadway House](#)
- [Browne Jacobson Barristers](#)
- [Charterhouse](#)
- [Cornerstone Barristers](#)
- [Francis Taylor Building](#)
- [Kings](#)
- [Landmark](#)
- [Mountford Chambers](#)
- [St Johns Buildings](#)

NWLC Annual Training Event 2025

This year's event is on **Tuesday, 7 October 2025 at The Hilton Hotel, Liverpool City Centre**

The programme will include a keynote speech from Dan Kane, Founder of O Shaped, a public law plenary session and workshops including:

Best Value, Legal Privilege, Council Reports Demystified, Time Management and Prioritisation, Communication Preferences and a Social Care update.

The day is free to attend for all members.



NWLC Junior Lawyers Group

Lydia Wright, Junior Lawyer Group Management Board member, would like to put together a small team of junior lawyers to help with the group's strategy and to organise future events.

Following a very successful webinar in June on Email Engagement from Browne Jacobson, Capsticks will present the next webinar, Presenting with Confidence on 24 September, 12 noon – 1pm.

For more information on how to get involved with the group and or attend future events, please see Lydia Wright's update on [page 15](#).



NWLC Commissions Portal

All members can run mini competitions for panel law firms and chambers through the NWLC website, after signing in under **Commissions, Start a Commission**. This tool allows members to:

- Select the invited firms or chambers by lot or work area
- See their rates
- Describe the work required and upload any attachments
- Set a deadline for responses
- View responses
- Notify all participants whether or not they have been successful

And keeps a record of all previous commissions on the website.



Top Tips for Commissions

To get the most from your commissions please follow these top tips:

- ✓ Unless urgent, give as much notice as possible.
- ✓ Be clear on what you are asking for – just a price or a more detailed proposal?
- ✓ Tell bidders the evaluation criteria – price, quality or both?
- ✓ Provide contact details and respond to any reasonable requests for clarification.
- ✓ Notify all bidders whether they have been successful.
- ✓ If possible, give feedback. This will help bidders to provide a more competitive quote next time.



NWLC Practice Managers Group

The next Practice Managers Group meeting is on Tuesday 9 September, 11.00am – 2.00pm on the very popular topic of Artificial Intelligence, delivered by Capsticks.

Liverpool City Council have again very kindly agreed to host the meeting and we are going to trial a hybrid format with delegates able to attend in person and remotely. Details on how to join will be circulated soon.

This follows a very successful meeting in May on electronic signing and sealing.



NWLC Website – Are Your Team Registered?

The NWLC website is a fantastic resource for members.

It includes information about the Solicitors Framework Agreement, a barristers portal, a commissions portal to facilitate mini competitions, the free NWLC training programme, a library of webinar recordings and slides, and much more.

To access all this information and receive email updates from me, you do need to be registered so please contact me to make sure you don't miss out.

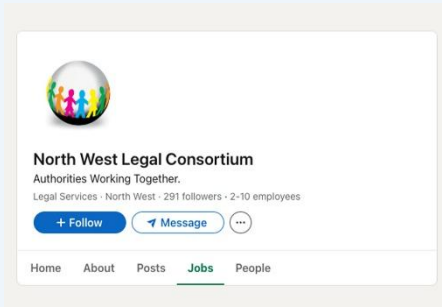
Jobs & LinkedIn

Check out the website jobs page at:

nwlegalconsortium.com/jobs

Have you seen us on LinkedIn?

linkedin.com/company/nwlc/



NWLC Member Vacancies and LinkedIn

Did you know that we advertise vacancies for member organisations free of charge on our website and our LinkedIn page?

If you are recruiting in your team, please send me a link to the vacancy and I will add it to our website for you.



Added Value – Spotlight on... Meeting Rooms

You may be aware that both partner firms offer free meeting facilities in their Manchester offices.

But did you know you can also use their meeting rooms in other locations free of charge, including Birmingham, Leeds, London, Nottingham, Exeter and Winchester? So, if you are looking for a location outside of the North West or have other meetings away from the office and are looking for somewhere to work for a few hours it is worth bearing them in mind, subject to availability of course.

Please let me know and I can put you in touch with the partner firms.

Legal Updater from our Partner Firms

The Immigration White Paper.

The government's immigration White Paper Restoring control over the immigration system was published in May 2025 and sets out significant proposals to control immigration and promote growth. In this insight, we examine the key reforms and what they mean for local authorities.

[Read more](#) →

What does the 10-year health plan mean for social care?

Though Baroness Casey's commission is just beginning its work, this 10-year health plan offers the clearest indications yet of the government's vision for social care. The vision is one of person-centred support, which maximises autonomy and independence through a combination of prediction, prevention and technology.

[Read more](#) →

Latest updates on local government reorganization and devolution.

Following the submission of the Interim Plans for Local Government Reorganisation by local authorities within the 21 two-tier areas in March, there have been several recent announcements made by the Government. In this article, we look at the key government announcements most affecting local authorities.

[Read more](#) →

What might the public inquiry on child exploitation look like?

Since 2012 the Health and Safety Executive have been able to charge for their fees when investigating breaches of health and safety legislation, but that cost recovery scheme is limited to the HSE and health and safety regulations.

[Read more](#) →

Spending Review 2025: what does it mean for the Local Government sector.

Following the announcement by Rachel Reeves in the Spring Statement 2025 to increase capital spending by £2billion per year to drive economic growth, Government laid out its spending plans at the 2025 Spending Review on 11 June. We look at the key considerations and their impact.

[Read more](#) →

PuFin takes flight: Homes England launches new bank.

The recent announcement by Homes England about the launch of the National Housing Bank (a PuFin) marks a significant step towards achieving the government's ambitious housing targets.

Paul Ray and Clare Rumble provide their expert insights on how this initiative could transform the UK's housing landscape.

[Read more](#) →

Failure to publish Section 106 renders permission unlawful.

The Court of Appeal's recent decision in the case of R (Greenfields (IOW) Ltd) v Isle of Wight Council and another [2025] confirmed that planning permission granted in breach of Article 40(3)(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (DMPO 2015) was unlawful. The decision confirms the consequences of failing to ensure that proposed planning obligations are published on the local planning register before planning permission is issued.

[Read more](#) →

Legal project management: A cornerstone in operational delivery of inquiries.

In light of the recent government initiative to pilot locally-led inquiries into child grooming gangs, the role of legal project management (LPM) becomes increasingly important in supporting the delivery of public inquiries. This approach not only promises a more nuanced understanding of local issues but also demands a robust framework to manage the complexities of such sensitive investigations effectively.

[Read more](#) →

Lessons from regulatory inspections of local authorities.

It has now been just over a year since the implementation of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 introduced a system of proactive regulation against the new consumer standards. With it came inspections of local authorities by the Regulator of Social Housing for the first time. In this article, we provide some top tips on how local authority RPs can get top gradings.

[Read more](#) →

Disciplinary procedures and mental health: Employer considerations.

In the recent case of Woodhead v WTTV Ltd, the High Court found that an employer's conduct of disciplinary proceedings had caused their employee psychiatric injury. In brief, the case concerned the employer's handling of disciplinary proceedings against an employee who suffered from serious mental health conditions and had suffered a serious deterioration in his health following the start of an investigation into alleged misconduct.

[Read more](#) →

Procurement in AI – Analysis of Ada Lovelace Institute’s ‘Buying AI’ report.

The Ada Lovelace Institute has published a report warning that local authorities need more support to responsibly procure artificial intelligence (AI) systems, as existing government guidance does not provide a clear or comprehensive account of how to procure AI in the public interest. We examine the report in more detail and the impact of procurement in AI for local government.

[Read more](#) —>

Navigating legal realities for new councillors.

Recent local elections have seen Reform UK councillors gain control in several areas across the UK, notably securing an outright majority in Lincolnshire, Lancashire, Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Durham County Councils.

[Read more](#) —>

Changes in the new Pensions Scheme Bill for the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Following Rachel Reeves’ confirmation that the Pensions Schemes Bill will be signed into law “in the next few months”, we’ve taken a deeper look at what some of the changes mean for the **Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)**.

[Read more](#) —>

Are local authorities going to gain powers to charge fees for intervention?

Since 2012 the Health and Safety Executive have been able to charge for their fees when investigating breaches of health and safety legislation, but that cost recovery scheme is limited to the HSE and health and safety regulations.

[Read more](#) —>



NWLC Free Training Programme 2025

The Training Programme is taking
a short break over the Summer.

We are working with our partner firms Capsticks and Browne Jacobson to bring you a new
12 month programme from September 2025.

Details will be circulated to members as soon as they are available.



Our Partner Firms

Value Added

Browne Jacobson

Introducing James Arrowsmith

Social Care

James leads Browne Jacobson's national social care practice, focusing on both adult and children's services. He supports daily operations, care projects, service transformations, and legal challenges. His team collaborates with local authority clients through a bespoke 'hub' collaboration, enhancing in-house capabilities and reducing external costs. James values client collaboration and is always open for discussions.

Recently, James has applied his local authority experience to a significant central government project. He and his colleagues have worked with initiatives including a pilot Regional Care Cooperative, a supported lodgings scheme, and a county-wide domiciliary care transformation challenge.

Collaborating with the health team and external experts, he is examining ongoing changes in care, particularly related to the Casey Commission.

James is driven by his personal experience with local authority services, having two adopted sons. His dedication to improving these services aims to secure the best outcomes for those in need.



**Browne
Jacobson**

Capsticks

Introducing Darren Hooker

Consumer Standard Inspections – is your local authority inspection ready?

Local authorities are now subject to inspections by the Regulator of Social Housing to assess compliance with the consumer standards. Receiving a bad regulatory rating could indicate that residents of social housing are receiving an inadequate service and place a local authority under intense scrutiny as well as having a negative impact on their reputation.

Led by Darren Hooker, our team of experts can help get your local authority ready for an inspection through a tailored pre-inspection package to suit you for a fixed fee.

Potential ways in which we can help you prepare are:

1. Advising on current themes in gradings and where the Regulator will focus the inspection;
2. Reviewing your key documents to assess your compliance;
3. Sitting in on your internal meetings to observe your mechanisms for assurance;
4. Interviewing key team members of your housing function just as the Regulator of Social Housing would; and
5. Reporting to you on areas that might need to be improved ahead of a real inspection.

Please get in touch with Darren for more information on the service or to find out how we can help your local authority.



In profile

Aaron Byrne

Introducing Aaron Byrne, long-standing
NWLC Management Board Member
and Senior Commercial Lawyer
at Warrington Borough Council



What is your current role and how long have you held this position?

I'm currently a Senior Commercial Lawyer, a role I've held for the past eight months. Before that, I was a Contracts and Procurement Solicitor in the same team for six years, so I've seen it all – from complex IT deals to the politics of ordering pens.

What does your role currently involve?

In short, everything the council buys or does on a commercial basis. Warrington Borough Council have a diverse range of investments, a third-party loan portfolio of half a billion pounds and several companies. I specialise in commercial contracts and procurement and lead a small but mighty team of lawyers. We're the unsung heroes making sure public money is spent wisely (and legally).

What's at the top of your in-tray today?

A non-disclosure agreement with HS2 – very hush-hush, of course. If I told you more, I'd have to redact this entire interview. Also on the list: advising on a contract award to an EV charge point provider under the governments Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund.

What are the biggest challenges facing you at present?

Professionally, it's navigating the brave new world of the Procurement Act 2023 – the biggest overhaul in a generation. It was billed as a simplification exercise. Spoiler alert: it might not be.

Personally, I've taken on the Manchester Half Marathon for an Autism charity. My legs think it's a mistake.

But it's for a great cause, one close to my heart as my eldest son, Zach is Autistic—my JustGiving page can confirm that, and every donation makes the miles slightly less painful. If anyone would like to take a look or contribute that would be amazing.

https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/aaron-byrne?utm_medium=FA&utm_source=CL



How do you see your role and the work of your team changing in the next decade?

The legal landscape is evolving fast, and local authority work is only getting more complex. Devolution, another procurement reform in 10 years? Stranger things have happened. Tech is already transforming our work—COVID supercharged digital transformation, and now AI is knocking loudly. The challenge will be embracing it while upholding the principles of fairness and transparency that underpin public procurement.

What is the one thing about you that would come as a surprise to most people?

I was once called a “goal machine” by none other than Stuart Ripley – ex-England international, former Blackburn Rovers winger, and now fellow lawyer. If that's not an endorsement, I don't know what is.

How do you relax?

With two kids aged 7 and 3, “relax” is a theoretical concept. But when I can, I'm either at the gym or teaching Shotokan Karate – I'm a 2nd dan black belt. I also unwind (and occasionally suffer) watching Blackburn Rovers, where I've held a season ticket for 24 years.

Junior Lawyers Group Update



Our Junior Lawyer Group Lead and Board Representative, Lydia Wright, updates us on the group.

Would you like to join the NWLC Junior Lawyers' Group Team?

The NWLC junior lawyers' network is growing, so we are looking to form a team of junior lawyers to assist with planning of events and to provide support/ assistance at our upcoming Annual Training Event. Please contact me via the email at the end of this article to express your interest.

'Junior Lawyers' includes trainees, legal assistants, legal executives, legal apprentices or a solicitor/barrister of up to 5 years PQE – of any age!

Events update

As we pass the halfway point of the year, the junior lawyers have met virtually, for the second time, in June, for a webinar on writing effective emails. This talk was presented by Chloe Cadman from Browne Jacobson entitled 'Email Engagement – how to write emails that get results'. Feedback from the event was positive, and we would like to thank everyone for your attendance and for taking the time to provide feedback. This allows us to improve and build on our events for the future.

Our next event will once again take place virtually, on the 24 of September at 12:00pm. This will be presented by Capsticks, and the topic is 'Presenting with Confidence'. Our speakers for this webinar are Chantal Davison (Associate) and Sophie-Ann Goodhind (Learning and Development Business Partner). We will be circulating more details on this event, as a well as a link to join in the coming weeks.

We are in the process of finalising arrangements for our Annual Training Day in October. The event will feature a presentation by Jill Travers, Director of Law and Corporate Services at Wirral Council, on the topic of 'Council Reports Demystified,' building upon her well-received junior lawyers webinar held in December. This talk will be discussing governance and effective report writing. Information on the training day will be circulated soon.

Connect with us on LinkedIn

We will be posting regular updates on our LinkedIn page, about future events, job vacancies and details on how to rewatch our past webinars, so please give our page (North West Legal Consortium) a like/follow to stay updated.

We would like to thank both Capsticks and Browne Jacobson for their continued support in providing excellent webinars and events for the junior lawyers.

In the meantime, if you are a junior lawyer and are not already a member of the Junior Lawyers Group and would like to sign up, or if you have any suggestions for the group, please email me at lydia.wright@warrington.gov.uk

We look forward to seeing you all soon!



Lydia

**Solicitor, Warrington
Borough Council**



NWAA's Charity Golf Day

- **West Lancashire Golf Club** •
- **Thursday 25th September 2025** •

Tee off at the West Lancashire Golf Club in support
of the North West Air Ambulance Charity!

Four ball entry £1,195 (plus VAT)

Register your team today at nwaa.info/golfday



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nwlegalconsortium.com