McCormicks

Briefing

Christmas 2025

Praise for our lawyers

Yorkshire Young Achievers

Meet a client

McCormicks
SOLICITORS

Welcome to the Christmas edition of the Briefing, our regular newsletter.

Season's greetings

Peter McCormick OBE

This year seems to have flown by, which is no bad thing as it reflects how busy we have all been!

As always at this time of year it is a good opportunity to reflect on what 2025 has brought, both to the practice and to the wider community.

Our team has continued to win praise for their work from the leading guides to the legal profession and that is always pleasing. You can read more about what our clients have said in these pages.

Naturally, we were delighted when Leeds United won promotion to the Premier League and I am sure the ensuing celebrations will stay in our minds for many years. This year also saw a change of role for me personally when I left the Premier League to become Executive Vice Chairman of Leeds United so seeing the team reach this landmark soon after was particularly gratifying.

We also continue to support and work closely with a number of other teams, including, of course, our home team Harrogate Town.

Our reach into the community continues to expand every year. This year we again supported the Theakston Old Peculier Crime Writing Festival – which was as tremendous as ever – and Kathryn and I have recently pledged our support to an initiative to raise funds for Harrogate International Festivals as a whole. We have sponsored and taken part in two charity golf days, charity clay shooting events and, as you can also read in these pages, are backing Harrogate Women's Rugby. We also held the first in a series of Speaker Breakfasts and another successful McCormicks Quiz.

Last but not least, we recently celebrated the 31st annual Yorkshire Young Achievers Awards. It may be in danger of becoming a cliché, but the event continues to improve every year and we are hugely indebted to all those who support us in recognising Yorkshire's young talent and enabling us to make wide-ranging grants across the region.

I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and successful New Year!

Peter McCormick OBE

Property proposals

Claire Baker-Kemp

Amongst the Government's initiatives in the Autumn budget were changes affecting property owners. Our Head of Commercial Property, Senior Associate Claire Baker-Kemp, shares the details.

The principal proposals relating to property that were delivered in the Autumn Budget were as follows:

1. **Taxation of Property Income:** From April 2027, landlords' income from renting out property will be taxed at an additional higher rate that corresponds to a landlord's tax band. For example, a basic rate taxpayer will have rental profits taxed at 22%, a higher rate taxpayer will be taxed at 42% and an additional rate taxpayer will pay 47%.
2. **Annual Property Tax:** This is effectively a High Value Council Tax Surcharge (HVCTS). From April 2028, an annual charge of £2,500 will be levied on properties valued at more than £2 million, rising to £7,500 for properties valued above £5 million. This charge is in addition to council tax and will be collected by the Local Authorities. The HVCTS will be payable by the property owner, not the occupier.
3. **Business Rates:** From April 2026, there will be lower rates for retail, hospitality, and leisure properties as a result of a 5p lower business rates multiplier, which is expected to benefit 750,000 properties. This will be funded by properties with rateable values of £500,000 and above being charged an additional 2.8p on their rates multiplier. A 100 per cent business rates relief for eligible electric vehicle charging points and electric vehicle only forecourts will also be introduced.
4. **Stamp Duty Land Tax:** Despite changes to commercial stamp duty land tax being widely expected, no changes to the rates, thresholds or structures were made.

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Clubbing together

McCormicks has supported Harrogate Women's Rugby Union Club with a sponsorship deal this season.

The club is currently playing in the National Challenge 1 League (NC1) and working on promotion to the Championship League.

NC1 North is predominately played in the Lake District which involves many long coach trips up to the likes of Carlisle, Peterlee and Keswick.

McCormicks' support has enabled Harrogate to buy home and away kit for this season, pay for coach travel to away games and contribute to other expenses that allow the club to continue to offer competitive rugby to women in North Yorkshire.

Club Captain Emily Attwood said: *"Harrogate Women RUFC are very grateful to McCormicks for their generous support and sponsorship this season. Their commitment to our club plays a vital role in our development, enabling us to travel to fixtures and provide kit to our players. We are incredibly appreciative for McCormicks commitment to the women's game and look forward to a strong and successful partnership."*

New kit for Harrogate Women's Rugby.

Festival foundation

An initiative to underpin the future of Harrogate International Festivals (HIF) has won the support of Senior Partner Peter McCormick and his wife, Kathryn.

They have both agreed to be Vice Presidents for the HIF@60 campaign. This, marking the 60th anniversary of the Festivals, sets out to complete the £1m fundraising campaign that was launched with the Future 50 Appeal ten years ago which enabled the events to survive through the Covid pandemic.

McCormicks has a long association with HIF having been a major supporter and sponsor of the Theakston Old Peculier Crime Writing Festival and Solicitors to HIF for more than 20 years.

Peter McCormick said: *"I think all of our readers know about this practice's commitment to the world of sport but we are also firm believers in the value of the arts, both to this community and beyond, so we are delighted to be able to support this endeavour."*

HIF@60 has been launched to ensure HIF can continue to create access to the arts for the whole population of the Harrogate district. Its aims for the future include:

- Taking bold artistic risks.
- Creating new work and commissions.
- Allowing Guest Curators to fulfil their artistic vision.
- Developing a body of work to engage the community.
- Creating new programmes, with an artistic legacy, making a valuable contribution to Harrogate and beyond.

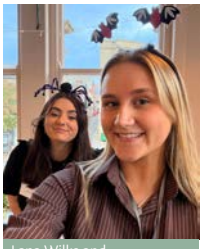
Fangtastic fun

Eight teams lined up to brave the ghosts and ghouls to take part in our spooktacular autumn McCormicks Quiz.

As well as answering the fiendish questions set by Managing Partner, Stephen Hopwood, the teams faced tasks such as decorating a pumpkin.

Held at the North Bar in Harrogate, attendees were treated to a free drink and pizza.

After a tough contest, the honours went to the team from Williams Investment Management.



Lana Wilks and Francesca Lowe

The St Paul's Chambers' team

The teams from Handelsbanken

Quiz under way

All set for a night of fun

We are delighted to have won 44 recommendations for our lawyers in the newly-published legal guide, the UK Legal 500, equalling the number of lawyer recommendations for a major Leeds practice.

Praise for our lawyers

The guide gave our team 44 individual recommendations for solicitors and 17 rankings for the firm in different areas of law.

Senior Partner Peter McCormick OBE won a place in both the London section and Yorkshire and Humber section of the Hall of Fame for his expertise in Sport.

The practice also won 17 rankings for different areas of law, namely: Corporate and Commercial; EU and Competition Law; General Crime and Fraud; Commercial Litigation; Employment; Insolvency and Corporate Recovery; Agriculture and Estates; Charities and Not-For-Profit; Contentious Trusts and Probate; Family; Personal Tax, Trusts and Probate; Property Litigation; and Sport; along with London rankings for Mediators; Professional Discipline; Sport; and Reputation Management.

The practice also fared well in the other leading UK guide, Chambers UK, which singled out our expertise in Sport, where we were the only North Yorkshire firm ranked nationally, and Agriculture and Rural Affairs. Peter McCormick is ranked as an Eminent Practitioner in both disciplines.

In addition to adjectives such as "tenacious", "efficient" and "effective", our team was also judged "approachable and amenable", "user-friendly" and "lovely" in client testimonials.

Peter McCormick said: *"It is gratifying to see the huge trust clients have in our relatively modest in numbers but hugely effective team, resulting in so many recommendations for individuals in the practice."*

Peter McCormick OBE

Elaine Lightfoot

James Towler

WHAT THE GUIDES SAY

Agriculture and Estates

"McCormicks is noted for its strength advising on the diversification of estates, with experience covering residential and commercial developments, and advising on matters relating to shoots. Peter McCormick co-leads the Harrogate-based team alongside Elaine Lightfoot, who also leads the private client team. James Towler is also a key name to note."

Clients say: *"Peter McCormick is excellent in his advice and understanding from the commencement of instructing him in his specialised fields of trust companies."*
"Elaine Lightfoot is one of the most pleasant partners you could ever hope to work with in a solicitors practice. From the commencement her expertise is brilliant and handling of people again excellent. Like Peter McCormick, she is quick and to the point, and you know exactly where you are, so decision-making is exceptional."
"Quick answers, very efficient."
"Peter McCormick, no nonsense replies." UK Legal 500

"McCormicks is a well-regarded agricultural practice based in Harrogate, providing clients with rural property and tax planning services. It acts for a number of large landed estates on a wide range of matters, including acquisition, disposal, voluntary registration, residential property development and diversification. The group also represents clients in disputes and in matters relating to shooting estates." Clients say: *"Everybody I deal with at McCormicks Solicitors is excellent. They are very responsive and quick."* Chambers UK

Charities and Not-For-Profit

"McCormicks has longstanding relationships with key clients in the heritage, sport, and agricultural sectors, in addition to advising private individuals on charitable projects. Name partner Peter McCormick leads the team from Harrogate, and is a trustee of multiple prominent charities and trusts. Elaine Lightfoot, who heads up the private client team, and James Towler, who leads the corporate department, both provide key support." UK Legal 500

Contentious Trusts and Probate

"McCormicks advises prominent families and businesspeople on a range of complex disputes, with experience handling multijurisdictional mandates. Elaine Lightfoot leads the team, and has experience in contentious matters relating to wills and trusts. Alongside Lightfoot in Harrogate is David Birks, who heads up the broader litigation team." UK Legal 500

Corporate and Commercial

"McCormicks offers a 'very personal service with excellent response times' and is well known for its corporate and commercial work in the sports and healthcare sectors. Peter McCormick is well regarded for his sports expertise, and leads the team commended for its 'great communication'. Also leading the practice is the 'extremely professional but also approachable' James Towler, with expertise advising on acquisitions, joint ventures, and group reorganisations. David Leuchars is key to the practice."

Clients say: *"Great communication." "Clear, honest and to the point approach." "They offered a very personal service with excellent response times to each of my queries during a round of fund raising." "James Towler and David Leuchars took on my brief. Extremely professional but also approachable and amenable in all of the calls and meetings we conducted together." "An excellent firm led by the incomparable Peter McCormick." "Peter McCormick is outstanding and unique. His CV is the best in the business and he also has great commercial common sense and understanding."* UK Legal 500

Legal500

David Birks

David Leuchars

Mark Fowler

Peter Minnikin

Iain Jenkins

Stephen Hopwood

Dispute Resolution/ Commercial Litigation

"McCormicks has a 'highly competent but approachable and user friendly' commercial litigation practice, often acting for high-profile clients on complex multi-party disputes, as well as intricate contractual and boundary disputes. Members of the practice work closely with regulators and sporting bodies. David Birks is a 'brilliant tactician and highly effective litigator' and has extensive experience handling disqualification and bankruptcy cases. The team is also noted for its 'particular expertise in sports disputes', with Peter McCormick particularly active in this field."

Clients say: *"David Birks is a brilliant and tenacious litigator with excellent client communication skills. The team has particular expertise in sports disputes." "David Birks is a brilliant tactician and highly effective litigator. He takes time to understand the client's objectives and rapidly shapes an excellent strategy for the case." "McCormicks are a user-friendly team, highly competent but approachable and user friendly." "David Birks - professionally highly competent, unique perspectives on problem solving and innovative in his approach -highly client focused and outstanding results."*
UK Legal 500

Employment

"McCormicks fields a well-regarded employment team with a distinctive specialism in sports sector matters. Led by senior partner Peter McCormick and Iain Jenkins, the team advises a high-profile client base that includes the Premier League, Leeds United FC, and Professional Game Match Officials. The team's expertise spans contentious and non-contentious work, with recent instructions covering disability discrimination claims, senior executive disputes, and TUPE-related matters."

Clients say: *"We primarily work with Iain Jenkins, who provides invaluable advice and guidance on employment law matters. He takes the time to listen, gathers relevant information, and carefully considers the best possible outcome for all parties before offering well-reasoned advice." "Exceptional team. Responsive, kind and hugely skilled. I always felt protected and listened to. At the top, Peter McCormick leads his team and curates experienced partners. I have felt protected during some very stressful situations and my mental health has been acknowledged with kindness and understanding, I feel very fortunate to have this firm as my lawyers. Exceptional." "Peter McCormick is a powerhouse. He has created a family atmosphere at his practice. The respect this firm has in Yorkshire is a major reason I chose them." "Iain Jenkins listens and gets under the skin of his client's needs. His advice is objective, trustworthy and robust, based on a wider knowledge of the business and sector that the business is part of." "Two things are especially appreciated: 1. Responsiveness, and a genuine and enthusiastic interest in understanding our quirky issues 2. Turning their hand to questions that some employment lawyers would look for excuses to push away as they are outside the main sphere of issues on which they advise."*
UK Legal 500

EU and Competition

"McCormicks has a wide range of competition experience, acting on high-profile, often novel cases that garner significant media attention. The team works closely with other departments of the firm, particularly the sports department. The firm has an impressive client roster, spanning leading construction companies and football teams. Peter McCormick leads the practice, with extensive experience handling high-profile investigations in front of the competition authorities."
UK Legal 500

Family

"Harrogate-based firm McCormicks fields a family law team adept in children issues, domestic abuse matters, and financial settlements. Managing partner Stephen Hopwood leads the department, and has strength in financial cases and private children matters."

Clients say: *"McCormicks are professional, caring and display the highest standards from the moment you arrange your first meeting to the completion of their services. They also displayed a high level of understanding for my personal circumstances." "I was so impressed by Stephen Hopwood from the start. He was able to put me at ease and explain the intricacies of my situation in a clear, uncluttered way. This allowed me to relax and deal with an extremely difficult situation with a more positive attitude." "The family law team at McCormicks are led by the managing partner Stephen Hopwood, his wealth of experience and knowledge is second to none." "McCormicks' team in general have been very good in my experience. They have undertaken a variety of work for me, which I am very pleased with. Everything has been done swiftly and professionally."*
UK Legal 500

Finance/Insolvency and Corporate Recovery

"McCormicks regularly acts on behalf of both debtors and creditors across a variety of insolvency matters at different stages, with particular expertise in the national sports sector. The Harrogate-based practice is led by David Birks, who handles matters related to defending directors in tax avoidance, fiduciary breach, and misfeasance claims. The 'exceptional' Peter McCormick is well-regarded for his football sector knowledge."

Clients say: *"From the first time I contacted them, the team had no hesitation in listening to our problems. From the outset they were conscious of the potentially high financial cost to us as individuals of pursuing our case and took steps to keep costs down by delegating proceedings to less senior members of the team wherever possible." "They were down to earth, friendly and approachable. Always welcoming, patient and supportive." "Peter McCormick's team are excellent and really lovely." "David Birks has an in-depth understanding of insolvency legislation and is able to provide practical commercial advice quickly to ensure the best outcomes in some very challenging situations." "Peter McCormick is exceptional. Knows the football space like few others."*
UK Legal 500

Legal500

General Crime and Fraud

"McCormicks has expertise across the full spectrum of criminal and regulatory matters, ranging from motoring offences to serious crimes such as murder and homicide. The firm has particular focus on cases involving historic sexual abuse, drug conspiracies, HMRC investigations, and corporate manslaughter. The Harrogate-based practice is led by the 'excellent' Peter Minnikin, who specialises in serious cases involving drugs, murder, and sexual offences. Mark Fowler, described as a 'standout lawyer', is noted for his work on large-scale HMRC, VAT, and income tax fraud cases."

Clients say: *"Mark Fowler is a particular stand out lawyer for HMRC investigations. His approach is hands-on and is directly involved at every stage of a case. In matters of restraint and confiscation, he has had success in cases with values in eight figures. He seems to be involved in every big-ticket revenue case nationally." "Peter Minnikin leads a great team of experts in the field of crime and fraud. Peter is an excellent lawyer and as a group they get the best results for their clients. Their instructions to counsel are always helpful and well thought out." "McCormicks are a firm of excellent, driven and committed solicitors. McCormicks are steady, reliable and effective solicitors who are dependable and consistently go the extra mile for their clients. They are a solid set of individuals." "Peter Minnikin is an excellent lawyer who always goes the extra mile." "One of the top fraud and financial crime departments outside London. Regionally they are a crime and fraud powerhouse. Known for acting in the most important and complex trials each year.'' "Mark Fowler and Peter Minnikin are both excellent. Mark has an unrivalled knowledge of VAT frauds. He is a leading expert in this field. Peter is an extremely good all-round criminal lawyer. Peter has an excellent manner with clients."* UK Legal 500

Private Client: Personal Tax, Trusts and Probate

"McCormicks' Harrogate-based private client team, led by Peter McCormick and Elaine Lightfoot, provides a comprehensive range of services including advice on wills, estate administration, trusts, and Court of Protection matters. The team is noted for its expertise in advising trustees, beneficiaries, and deputies on complex estate and tax planning issues, including matters involving cross-border assets and HMRC negotiations." UK Legal 500

Professional Discipline

"McCormicks is particularly well known for handling disciplinary and regulatory work in the football industry, representing a range of clients throughout the sector. Further, the team is experienced in dealing with SRA investigations and Solicitors' Disciplinary Tribunal defence work. Peter McCormick, who is well known in the market for his sports regulatory and disciplinary work, co-heads the team alongside Peter Minnikin, who is noted for his expertise in handling work on behalf of medical practitioners."

Clients say: *"Peter McCormick is outstanding. Unparalleled experience in the field."* UK Legal 500

Property Litigation

"McCormicks handles various commercial property litigation matters, including property portfolio disputes, landlord-tenant issues, dilapidation claims, disclaimed property, and boundary matters. David Birks leads the practice from the Harrogate-based office. Birks specialises in commercial and agricultural property and insolvency-related work; while Peter McCormick handles sport-related contentious property matters."

Clients say: *"Having recently moved across to McCormicks, they really are a breath of fresh air. They are a forward-thinking group of individuals that come together as one team. The team offers experts certainly in all the fields that I have required thus far, to include residential and commercial property management, sales and litigation."* UK Legal 500

Reputation Management (London)

"McCormicks is known for its specialist expertise in media, entertainment and sports law, with capabilities across defamation, reputation and regulatory advisory roles. Dividing his time between Harrogate and London, Peter McCormick OBE regularly intervenes in reputational issues involving the tabloid press and social media, as well as defamatory matters for high-profile individuals. Operating out of Harrogate, David Birks brings expertise in breach of contract and false information issues."

Clients say: *"Sensible and pragmatic advice. Their social media analysis is thorough and focussed." "'Peter McCormick himself fully deserves his reputation as a problem solver. He provided calm and assured advice." "Peter Minnikin is excellent if matters demand litigation and injunctive relief."* UK Legal 500

Sport (London)

"McCormicks boasts a longstanding prominence in sports law, particularly football, under the leadership of senior partner Peter McCormick OBE. McCormick has held numerous high-profile governance positions, including Chairman of the Premier League, the FA, and the Premier League Stadium Fund, and serves on multiple disciplinary, governance, and regulatory panels across the sector. The firm is the Premier League's retained adviser on the Owners' and Directors' Test and also serves as lead legal adviser to clubs including Leeds United, Norwich City, and Harrogate Town, and represents the Isthmian League. David Birks heads the disputes and litigation branch of the team. James Towler and Peter Minnikin contribute to the practice."

Clients say: *"Peter McCormick. Unparalleled experience."* UK Legal 500

Sport (UK-wide)

"McCormicks houses a notable sporting practice that provides expertise in a range of matters including contentious and non-contentious football work, continuing to be a principal adviser to the Premier League as well as being involved in grassroots football development. It advises on a broad range of corporate and commercial issues, including sponsorship, governance issues and insolvency. Continued recent activity in shooting, advising shoot proprietors on regulatory and employment matters."

Clients say: *"I was happy with their commercial approach. They're very experienced in the football industry and they have knowledge that is unsurpassed." "They have in-depth knowledge of the sporting industry and they have handled our matters in an efficient manner." "(Peter McCormick is) an extraordinarily shrewd, likeable and experienced litigator." "Peter knows everyone in football and is also a very good, shrewd lawyer. He has all the experience in the world in football." "He is one of the most experienced lawyers in the football industry and has knowledge that is practically unsurpassed. He's very commercial and very good value for money."* Chambers UK

Sport (Yorkshire and the Humber)

"McCormicks stands out for its extensive expertise in the sports sector, advising a slew of leading football clubs and sporting bodies on a wide range of matters. Peter McCormick stands out in this area, with extensive experience working closely with football associations. McCormick leads the practice, that notably includes sports litigator David Birks and James Towler, who is well versed in handling the full range of corporate and commercial transactions. Peter Minnikin is also noted, specialising in game shooting matters, and Iain Jenkins is noted for his employment expertise."

Clients say: *"Peter McCormick's team are fantastic. Really lovely and super across the issue." "Peter McCormick is as networked and knowledgeable as any other." "Peter McCormick is a legend." "Peter McCormick. Outstanding CV. Great commercial sense also."* UK Legal 500

Legal500

Terrific talent at awards

The Awards celebrate the achievements of young people aged 35 and under from across the region and an audience of 400 gathered at Leeds United's Centenary Pavilion to hear the stories of what made the winners so special.

The Chairman of the Yorkshire Young Achievers Foundation and the Awards, Peter McCormick OBE, said: *"It is always heart warming to hear about how Yorkshire's young people continue to shine and overcome challenges and this year was no exception.*

"This recognition for their achievements would not be possible without the support of our sponsors and our guests, and I am very proud that with their help, not only can we reward these young people but we can continue our grants programme which helps other young people across Yorkshire to reach their full potential."

Unsung Hero William Renton is handed his Award by Matthew Stamford

THE FULL LINE UP OF WINNERS WAS:

Personality of the Year, sponsored by Rudding Park

Leeds United Football Club Captain Ethan Ampadu, aged 25

Ethan led Leeds United to the EFL Championship title 2024/25, leading to promotion to the Premier League. He also won the 2024/25 PFA Community Champion Award for his community service work and has played for his country, Wales, continuously since 2017, making many international appearances.

Youngster of the Year, sponsored by Nabarro McAllister

Matilda Firth, aged 10, of Cleckheaton

Matilda has no fewer than 25 film and TV credits to her name and has worked with leading actors, including Dame Helen Mirren, Jodie Whittaker, and Kiefer Sutherland.

She has appeared in a wide range of productions at home and abroad, including Netflix's Subservience alongside Megan Fox, a regular role as Grace in Channel Four's Yorkshire-based comedy, Hullraisers, Nancy O'Riordan in Jimmy McGovern's prison drama Time and as Millie-Jo Castleton in Mr Bates versus the Post Office. She had a leading role in hit horror Wolf Man and starred in Nine Perfect Strangers with Nicola Kidman.

Her latest film where she plays Kiefer Sutherland's daughter in Tinsel Town, filmed in Yorkshire, has just been released.

Achievement in Management and Enterprise, sponsored by CHR Estates

James Owen Thomas, aged 24, of Leeds

James Owen Thomas has achieved recognition as an artist by creating distinctive and unusual works from other people's rubbish, such as out-of-date tickets, used scratch cards and crisp packets, all of which would have been destined for the bin.

His clever and colourful collages are put together on second-hand canvases for truly sustainable artworks.

His first book, By My Nature, which tells his story and features his artwork was published this year.

Achievement in Education, sponsored by Harrogate Town Football Club

Robert Ives, aged 28, living in Cambridgeshire but from Howden, East Yorkshire

Robert was the first person from his family to attend university, completing a degree in chemistry, focusing on organic molecular materials, at the University of York.

In his third year, he was awarded a grant to undertake an eight-week research stay at the Czech Academy of the Sciences in Prague. He then moved on to a four-year course at Durham to gain his PHD in organic chemistry.

On completion of his PHD last year he took up a role as Postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of Cambridge.

Achievement in Management and Enterprise Award winner James Owen Thomas was presented with his Award by Jan Fletcher OBE.

Stacey Burrows presented the Achievement in the Arts Award to Eleanor Shenderey

Amber Jacobs, Leah Serr, Jemima Land, Abbie Stone and Adina Lee

Anthony Blundell, Kathryn McCormick, Virginia and Clive Lloyd

Duncan Wood, Jack Marshall and Christine Talbot

Gill Arnold, Manoj Joshi, Bhavna Joshi and Vicky Reynolds

Viki Seithel, Gemma Ibbotson, Emily Harrison, Emily High and Joe Dickson, with Rufus and Buster the Support Dogs

Suzie Godden, Elyssia Godden, Fiona and James Towler

Youngster of the Year Matilda Firth receives her Award from Simon Nabarro

Achievement in Sport, sponsored by Leeds United Football Club

Ellie Kildunne, aged 26, of Keighley

Ellie Kildunne was a driving force behind the England Women's Rugby team's triumph in the World Cup this autumn. She was a key player in the Red Roses' success, scoring five tries in the tournament and earning the place as the team's top carrier. Her speed and lightning footwork made her a firm favourite with the home crowds.

She was in the Red Roses side for the Six Nations Championship this Spring and was named Player of the Match in a 67–12 win over Wales. When not on international duty, she plays for Harlequins.

Unsung Hero, sponsored by Jamboree Entertainment

William Renton, aged 16, of Kirkby Malzeard

William achieved an outstanding set of GCSE results in the summer, despite his role as a carer for his younger sister who has Spinal Muscular Atrophy.

He combined working hard at school with making sure she has everything she needs at home, lending a helping hand at school when necessary and being there for her when she is admitted into hospital. Being with her for hospital treatment has helped to fuel his dream of joining the medical profession.

He is a talented musician, winning numerous awards at Harrogate Music Festival, is working toward his gold Duke of Edinburgh award, is a young leader with his local Scout group and a qualified wheelchair football association referee, a sport in which his sister excels.

Achievement in the Arts, sponsored by Articulate Drama School and Agency

Eleanor Shenderey, aged 18, of Leeds

Eleanor is a talented seamstress who reproduces historically accurate costumes.

She was taught to sew by her grandmother who was an art and textiles teacher and she has combined that skill with her love of history to create an amazing array of historical garments, jewellery and head gear.

Her hobby requires meticulous research into different historical periods and the materials available and styles of the time. She creates her own patterns for the clothing.

The Martin Gerrard Award, sponsored by GMI Property

Eddie Gray MBE of Harrogate.

This Award has no age limit and is presented to someone who has shown support for the Yorkshire Young Achievers Foundation and the Awards over an extended period.

The title went to Leeds United legend Eddie Gray who, together with his wife Linda, has attended the awards almost from the beginning. Eddie will always step in to help, either by presenting or receiving Awards when sponsors or recipients are unable to attend, helping to fundraise and adding some celebrity to the proceedings.

YORKSHIRE young ACHIEVERS awards 2025

David Leuchars and Laura Warburton

Will, Isabella, Chris, Rachel and Amelia Flannigan, Hayden, Donna, Lewis and John Connett

Rewarded for Achievement in Education, Robert Ives receives his Award from Sarah Barry and Dave Riley

The Martin Gerrard Award was presented to Eddie Gray MBE by Gary McAllister

James Taylor and Lana Wilks

John and Judy Thompson, Jo Francisco and Ben Chatburn

Jaimie, Jack and Linda Marshall

Dan Cohen Lord Mayor of Leeds, Elayna Cohen, Ed Anderson Lord Lieutenant of West Yorks, Denise and Richard Stroud MBE

Fiona Movley and Scott Armitage

Nigel and Alison Kildunne

Gary Nash, Ellen Hryszkok and Ryan Jagt

Chairman Peter McCormick OBE welcomes guests

A new act, named in shortform as the Arbitration Act 2025, was enacted on 1 August 2025, and amends the arbitration act 1996.

Ready, Set, Arbitrate! The New Era of Dispute Resolution

What is Arbitration?

Arbitration is a form of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) used in place of court litigation. Courts increasingly expect parties to engage with ADR before issuing proceedings, and recent authorities have been critical of unreasonable refusals to attempt ADR, with costs consequences even for otherwise successful parties.

Key ADR mechanisms include:

- Mediation
- Arbitration
- Conciliation
- Adjudication
- Expert determination

Arbitration and mediation are the most prevalent mechanisms. Unlike mediators or conciliators, who facilitate negotiations and propose nonbinding outcomes, arbitrators issue binding awards. Arbitration is typically private, offers greater procedural autonomy, and can be faster and more cost-effective than court proceedings. While some arbitrations resemble litigation in scope and complexity, the confidentiality of the process and party control over procedure are distinguishing features.

Arbitration Process

Contractual framework

Commercial contracts frequently specify arbitration as the forum for dispute resolution, including the seat, rules, number and method of appointment of arbitrators, and governing procedural framework. Parties may also conclude a standalone arbitration agreement after a dispute arises.

Commencement

The claimant usually serves a notice of arbitration or a request for arbitration. The respondent must reply within any stipulated timeframe and, depending on the agreement or applicable rules, the parties may participate in appointing a sole arbitrator or a three-member tribunal.

Issues for determination

The tribunal will identify the issues – fact, law, and/or quantum – to be determined.

Lana Wilks is a Trainee Solicitor in the Commercial Litigation Department and was recently made an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

She works closely with Partner David Birks on a broad range of dispute resolution and sports litigation matters and is a published legal writer, contributing articles on a range of emerging and topical legal issues.

Procedure

The process commonly includes written submissions, disclosure, witness statements, expert reports, oral advocacy, and cross-examination, subject to the parties' agreement and the tribunal's procedural directions.

Award and challenges

The tribunal issues a binding award. Challenges are limited and depend on the Act and any institutional rules. Findings of fact are rarely disturbed. Errors of law or serious procedural irregularity may justify applications to set aside, remit, or otherwise challenge the award in the courts within strict statutory limits.

While similar to a court hearing in evidential and adversarial aspects, the conduct of an arbitration ultimately depends on the parties' agreement, the applicable rules, and the tribunal's case management powers.

The Arbitration Agreement

The arbitration agreement determines key aspects of the process such as: tribunal composition, appointment mechanisms, seat of arbitration, governing rules and venue.

What has been amended?

- Law applicable to arbitration agreement
- Impartiality: duty of disclosure
- Immunity of arbitrator: application for removal
- Immunity of arbitrator: resignation
- Court determination of jurisdiction of tribunal
- Power to award costs despite no substantive jurisdiction
- Power to make award on summary basis
- Emergency arbitrators
- Court powers exercisable in support of arbitral proceedings in respect of third parties
- Challenging the award: remedies available to the court
- Procedure on challenge under the Arbitration Act 1996, s67
- Challenging the award: time limit
- Appeals to Court of Appeal from High Court decisions
- Requirements to be met for court to consider applications
- Repeal of provisions relating to domestic arbitration agreements

Practical Effect of the Reform

In short, the Act modernises aspects of the 1996 Act and places express statutory duties on arbitrators and tribunals, including a clear duty of disclosure regarding potential conflicts, and provides explicit powers for summary disposal and emergency relief.

Further, the Act brings certainty to precedent cases such as Enka v Chubb, and confirms a default rule that, absent an express agreement on the law of the arbitration agreement, the law of the seat governs. References to the governing law of the underlying contract do not, without more, constitute an express choice for the arbitration agreement. This amendment is particularly significant in international arbitration.

Additionally, the Act strengthens arbitrator immunity in defined scenarios, streamlines jurisdictional challenges (including s.67 procedure), clarifies costs powers even where jurisdiction is ultimately found lacking, and confirms court powers in support of arbitration, including against third parties where appropriate. Newly added summary awards and emergency arbitrator provisions promote early resolution of dispositive issues and urgent interim relief, improving efficiency while preserving due process.

McCormicks Solicitors can advise on all arbitration related matters such as amendments or creation of arbitration agreements, advice and representation at arbitration or individuals can be instructed as an arbitrator in your dispute.

CLIENT PROFILE

Stonegate Medical

Located in the York city centre, Stonegate Medical is a private GP and medical clinic, offering a range of services including clinic and virtual consultations, minor procedures, fittings and surgery, vaccinations, mental wellbeing support and children's services.

Tell us about your business in 40 words

Stonegate Medical Practice is a private GP practice in York that delivers gold-standard care with same day access and a team you can build a relationship with. Rated "Outstanding" by the CQC, and 4.9 stars by our patients – Stonegate Medical Clinic provides expert healthcare when you need it most.

What has been your biggest business success?

Our biggest success is the quality of service we can provide to patients. Being unwell is scary and managing to get an appointment fast with someone you know is the best things we can do for our customers and patients.

Where is your business going now and how are you going to get there?

Now more than ever people want gold standard treatment on their terms and we can provide that. Our biggest success is we are now launching membership packages so people can get access to our gold standard care even cheaper.

How long have you worked with McCormicks?

We hired McCormicks back in 2024 to help facilitate the sale of the business to ourselves.

What do we do for you?

McCormicks helped action the sale and set our shareholder agreement.

Who do you work with from our team?

We work with David Leuchars and find it to be a brilliant relationship.

What do you like most about working with us?

McCormicks are like us – about the people. Being able to form a relationship and know you can trust them to represent you is the same between medicine and law.

Stonegate Medical

Dr Will Robertson

Dr Romesh Sarvanandan

With the festive season upon us, police patrols are out in force. Max Marsden from our Criminal Law department takes a look at what happens if you are pulled over on suspicion of drink/drug driving.

Don't drive!

North Yorkshire Police have published new statistics highlighting the scale of drink and drug driving across the region. In December last year, officers made 94 arrests related to drink driving.

The force also revealed figures from its 2025 summer drink and drug drive campaign, which ran throughout July. During that single month, 129 arrests were made for drink or drug driving offences, underscoring the ongoing challenge of tackling drink driving on North Yorkshire's roads.

Under section 163 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 Police can require a vehicle on the roads to pull over. The police have the authority to request a breath test if they reasonably suspect you have been drinking, committed a traffic offence, or been involved in a collision. Refusing without a valid medical reason can lead to arrest and prosecution and can be a separate and more serious offence.

Knowing your limits

The legal limit in England and Wales remains 35 micrograms per 100ml of breath, but proposals are underway to reduce this to 22 micrograms, in line with Scotland.

What to do if signalled to stop and pull over

If you are signalled to stop, do so safely and promptly. Stay in your vehicle unless asked to exit.

Legal representation matters

If you are arrested or asked to attend a voluntary interview at a police station, you are entitled to free legal advice while the matter is under investigation. It is essential that you do not agree to a recorded interview without first speaking to a solicitor. This step can be critical in safeguarding your position and ensuring you receive fair treatment.

At McCormicks, our dedicated criminal law team operates 24/7 and brings extensive experience in handling road traffic offences. We are available to attend, assist, and represent individuals who are under investigation or have been charged with drink driving offences.

Consequences of conviction

The penalties may be serious. Penalties include:

- Driving bans (minimum 12 months)
- Fines
- Imprisonment
- Long-term impacts on insurance, employment, and travel

The best advice remains simple: don't drive if you have consumed alcohol or drugs. But, if you are stopped, staying calm, knowing your rights, and seeking legal advice can make a significant difference.

Max Marsden is a Trainee Solicitor in our Criminal Department.

Yorkshire born and bred, Max spent two years at one of the country's leading specialist criminal defence practices before joining McCormicks. He has handled a wide range of cases at the police station, advising clients on offences including robbery, burglary, drug-related charges, serious assaults, and sexual offences. His expertise extends to supporting solicitors as these cases progress through both the Magistrates' and Crown Courts, ensuring meticulous preparation and advocacy.

Out of hours

Max putting on the Ritz when he's out of the office.

Max Marsden is a Trainee Solicitor in our Criminal Department. Yorkshire born and bred, Max brings valuable experience to the firm, having spent two years at one of the country's leading specialist criminal defence practices. When he's not hard at work, you'll find him on his feet, walking in the Dales or with his son and dog or clay pigeon shooting.

Other than the law, what would your dream career be?

Had I not wanted to be a criminal defence lawyer, I believe I would have chosen to become a surgeon or something else in medicine as I like to help others during their most difficult times.

If you could win any sporting trophy or title, what would it be and why?

Probably in clay pigeon shooting – it is, after all, the only sport I am good at.

Where is your favourite place in Yorkshire and why?

Ingleton. Simply because it combines stunning walks with cosy, characterful pubs.

If you could choose your last meal in advance, what would it be?

Chateaubriand cooked to a perfect medium-rare, served with peppercorn and blue cheese sauces, served by chunky chips

What is the best piece of advice you have ever been given?

The best piece of advice I have received is simple yet brilliant. In criminal law, you can only do one thing at a time, calmly, with confidence and considered precision.

If you suddenly came into a significant amount of money, what would your first five purchases be?

I'd love a new car, ideally big enough to accommodate a child and all the gear that comes with them now that I am a new dad.

A home renovation is definitely on the list, along with a getaway to Gleneagles Hotel in Scotland.

I'd also appreciate a lifetime supply of Red Bull to power through those post-night-shift mornings at the police station.

And finally, a cottage hidden away in Scotland to disappear to for needed breaks.

What do you do to wind down after a busy day in the office?

After a busy day in the office, I like to wind down by going for a walk with my dog, Rupert, and my son, Sebastian who will be fast asleep in his pram. It's a great way to relax, get some fresh air, and also give my wife a well-deserved break after looking after them during the day.

What is your favourite season of the year and why?

Autumn – the crisp air, cosy comfort food and colours are just great.

A Cyber Crime seminar held at the Police Treatment Centre in Harrogate gave our Accounts Manager Hayley Firth plenty to think about and she shares her thoughts here.

Don't get conned at Christmas!

Hayley Firth

It is easy to think you know the tricks that fraudsters may play on you, but do you really know the difference between AI and reality?

As scams are ever evolving and changing to catch even the canniest of people, one that is extremely difficult and tests even the keenest of eyes is the use of Artificial Intelligence. Fraudsters can now put together fake photographs with the use of AI to look like a genuine photo. These fake generated images can be used to impersonate people, and they may create fake documents or identities.

Although it can be very hard to tell if a photo has been AI generated, we can look for signs to show if the photos look overly perfect or airbrushed in appearance. There may also be signs of malformation in their physical details, such as hands or little details that aren't quite right and give it away.

Furthermore, scammers can now use voice cloning technology to replicate the sounds of people's voices. This makes it extremely difficult to know who you are speaking to on the other end of the phone. It is often used to trick the victim into sending them money, with the victim believing that they are sending it to someone they know. They may create a sense of urgency and show signs of distress to trigger the recipient into quick action.

To protect yourself, it is recommended that you have a "safe word or a safe phrase" that only the real person would know, in order to verify the identity of the person you believe you are speaking to.

It is also a good idea to hang up and call them back using the number that you know is theirs, even if they still insist it is time critical. The more pressure applied, the more this can be seen as a red flag.

If in doubt, don't do it! Stay alert, stay vigilant, stay protected.

OUR EXPERTISE

McCormicks offers the full portfolio of legal services to all forms of organisation including businesses, charities and sporting bodies, together with private individuals. The firm offers expertise in all areas of corporate and commercial work whilst maintaining a commitment to the personal client in areas such as rural property, tax, Trusts, probate, family matters and crime.

Charities & Community
- Charities
- Not For Profit

Corporate & Commercial
- Acquisitions and Disposals
- Banking and Finance
- Commercial Agreements
- Competition and EU Law
- Corporate Crime, Fraud and Risk
- IT and Data Protection
- Insolvency and Bankruptcy
- Intellectual Property
- Partnership and Company Law
- Regulatory and Disciplinary

Crime
- General Crime
- Corporate Crime, Fraud and Risk

Dispute Resolution and Litigation
- Commercial Disputes
- Mediation and Arbitration
- Partner/Shareholder Disputes
- Property and Construction
- Reputation Management

Employment

Insolvency & Bankruptcy

Mediation & Arbitration

Property
- Agriculture and Estates
- Commercial Property
- Development and Regeneration
- Residental Property

Sport, Media & Entertainment
- Employment
- IT and Data Protection
- Insolvency and Bankruptcy
- Intellectual Property
- Media and Entertainment
- Mediation and Arbitration
- Regulatory and Disciplinary
- Reputation Management
- Sponsorship
- Sport

Tax, Trusts, Wills & Estates
- Agriculture & Estates
- Care of the Elderly
- Tax and Trusts Disputes
- Trust and Tax Planning
- Wills and Probate

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