

Mills & Reeve

RM6360 Legal Services Panel

Lot 1: Core Legal Services

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Government bodies need to respond to the nation's biggest challenges, often very quickly and under great pressure. We're here to help you deliver policy initiatives and time-critical projects in the best possible way.

Introduction

- ✓ 1,450+ people across seven (UK) offices
- ✓ 850 lawyers
- ✓ 90% of 760 clients surveyed would recommend us
- ✓ Awarded Platinum Investors In People status
- ✓ Named in *The Sunday Times* Best Places to Work as one of the Best Big Organisations



Working with us

- ✓ **Immersive** - Where appropriate, we dig into the areas many lawyers wouldn't, living and breathing your project alongside you. We don't limit ourselves to giving technical advice.
- ✓ **Collaborative** - We mobilise teams of specialist lawyers quickly, bringing your people along with us. This ensures we work together as one lean expert-led team from start to finish.
- ✓ **Bold** - We give you the key strategic advice you need at critical moments. We won't sit on the fence.
- ✓ **Accredited** - Our firm has Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation and a range of lawyers with security clearance.
- ✓ **Socially conscious** - We're in a fortunate position to be able to make a positive impact on society in line with our established ESG agenda. We can help you deliver on your social value objectives.
- ✓ **Risk aware** - We present risk in accordance with government risk assessment guidance, but always recognising your own priorities and objectives.

What else sets us apart?

- ✓ **Our culture** - Our strong firm culture, evidenced in the awards and accreditations above, helps us produce outstanding service, delighted clients, and committed and happy people.
- ✓ **Access to our networks** - Our clients span the full breadth of the public, private and third sectors; from charities to listed companies, and investors to small business owners. Whatever area you operate in, we can connect you to the groups affected by your policies.
- ✓ **Tailored added value offering** - We "mix and match" our value-added offering to meet each client's individual requirements. This allows us to work in partnership to drive efficiency and develop close working relationships.
- ✓ **Our procurement portal** - A host of free-to-use resources, including our Procurement Act Notices Flowchart Infographic, Procurement Act Notices Generator and our much-loved Standstill Calculator.
- ✓ **Relationship investment** - We invest time for free, getting to know your team, your systems, your requirements and your objectives. This enables us to deliver swift advice appropriately tailored to your organisation and your project.
- ✓ **Global reach** - Through our hand-picked international network of trusted independent firms, we can support you with your projects in Scotland, Northern Ireland and around the world.



Team structure

Data Protection Officer and Compliance Officer: [Tim Winn](#)
 Supplier Marketing Contact: [Emma Farmer](#)
 Commercial Manager: [Hanna Bowran-Pavey](#)

Supplier Relationship Manager: [Kevin Calder](#)
 Head of Sector: [Greg Gibson](#)
 Bid / tender opportunities: [Email](#)

		Key contact	Capacity
Mandatory specialisms	Assimilated law	Greg Gibson	4
	Commercial litigation and dispute resolution	Eric France	40
	Competition law	Kate Newman	6
	Construction law	Stuart Pemble	21
	Contracts	Greg Gibson	42
	Corporate law	Neil Burton	21
	Employment law	Stuart Craig	42
	Environmental law	Rob Biddlecombe	2
	Finance and investment	Frances Churchard	13
	Grants	Frances Churchard	13
	Information law including data protection law	Peter Wainman	24
	Information technology law	Sophie Burton-Jones	21
	Intellectual property law	Mark Pearce	36
	Outsourcing	Martin Priestley	20
	Pensions law	Laura Sayer	3
	Planning law	Peter Seaborn	7
	Projects/PFI/PPP	Jens Henniker Heaton	17
	Public inquiries – support to participants and inquests	Jill Mason	14
	Public law	Richard Sykes	16
	Public law litigation and dispute resolution	Richard Sykes	16
	Public procurement law	Shailee Howard	25
	Real estate and real estate finance	Christian Bull	55
	Restructuring/insolvency	Neil Smyth	9
	Tax law	Kevin Lowe	5
Optional Specialisms	Charities	Neil Burton	10
	Children and vulnerable adults	Jill Mason	6
	Education law	Richard Sykes	6
	Energy and natural resources	Nick Helm	17
	Financial services, market and competition regulation	Rachel McDonnell	8
	Food, rural and environmental affairs	Michael Aubrey	22
	Franchise law	Vyara Yordanova	8
	Health and safety	Duncan Astill	5
	Health, healthcare and social care	Jill Mason	21
	Housing law	Samuel Maw	10
	Immigration	Alex Russell	5
	Insurance and reinsurance	Neil Davis	30
	Life sciences	James Fry	16
	Media law	Richard Dawson-Gerrard	9
	Merger and acquisition activity	Neil Burton	20
	Partnership law	Neil Burton	20
	Private law litigation and dispute resolution	Helen Tringham	6
	Supporting public inquiries	Jill Mason	14
	Sustainable finance / green finance	Frances Churchard	13

Capacity listed relates to lawyers with experience of working with Government sector clients. In most specialisms, we're able to call upon additional resource from lawyers working within other sectors. We'd look to upskill any additional resource on the nuances of working within the Government sector quickly and **free of charge**. Other than where a restriction/limitation is identified on a specialism page, we can provide full service in all specialisms. Where required to work with subcontractors, we can work flexibly to meet client needs. We have experience in project managing and acting as the central point of contact for all advice and invoicing, as well as allowing clients to liaise and work directly with the approved subcontractor.

Social value

As a strategic priority for our team, we work hard to deliver social value in everything we do. Here's a snapshot of our activity in this area, revealing how we support our government clients and build a representative, motivated team.



Delivering social value for you

How can you be confident that social value is effectively delivered? We advise on what to consider when procuring services and then develop clauses and schedules with social and environmental requirements built in. Key to success is stipulating what to measure and report on, enabling departments to keep track of suppliers' social value commitments and put in place remediation steps where necessary.

In action: During a complex procurement process for a central government department, we drafted a schedule that ensures social value is delivered throughout the life of the contract, including clear reporting requirements and mechanisms for ongoing improvement and accountability.

Social value within Mills & Reeve

Our collaborative, innovative culture empowers our government team employees to set the agenda on social value. We work alongside members of our active firmwide taskforces for gender, LGBTQ+, race, disability and wider inclusion to co-create social value initiatives that increase representation, enhance staff wellbeing and ensure we make a positive impact on the wider world.

In action:

- We're steadily closing our gender pay gap and, in addition, report every year on our ethnicity and disability pay gaps.
- Recruitment processes are constantly developed to eliminate bias. We're rolling out anonymised CVs and use the Rare Contextual Recruitment System to boost social mobility.
- Our comprehensive wellbeing offering supports physical and mental health and promotes healthy living. It includes confidential mental health support, financial planning tools, resilience training and sports challenges.
- Our dedicated firmwide ESG and wellbeing leads have extensive expertise in their areas and drive change every day.
- Reverse mentoring enables our senior Government team to gain greater insight into the issues employees face and how to overcome them.
- As a member of the Legal Sustainability Alliance, we share lessons learnt across firms to collectively act as an industry on climate change.
- Members of the team are encouraged to undertake charity work and raise money for the local community, even being allocated time off to enable this.

Evidence of our achievements:

- **55% female, 45% male** - gender balance of the Government team
- **17%** - proportion of work performed by underrepresented groups in the Government team
- **95%** - percentage of staff that feel that our firm values people's differences
- **18%** - firmwide target for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation (above the Law Society recommendation of 12%)
- **0 tonnes** - None of our waste goes to landfill

However, we recognise that we can always do more. To continue to improve, we're currently undertaking an in-depth consultation with clients to hear directly how we can help them achieve their social value aims.

Spotlight on social value initiatives over the last 12 months

Equal opportunity:

- Hosting nine interns in partnership with the 10,000 Black Interns programme, who were on placement in July/August 2024 & 2025, a number of whom worked alongside members of our Government team during their internships. Interns were paid the national living wage, plus given financial support towards travel.
- Recognising the importance of encouraging different routes into the legal profession, we've introduced a solicitor degree apprenticeship scheme for school-leavers. We're delighted to have one of the solicitor apprentices, who joined in September 2025, working as part of our Government team.
- Our Reach into Schools programme works with secondary schools with a high population of students from racially minoritised backgrounds. Members of our Government team have led insight sessions for students in a number of schools including Xaverian College in Manchester.

Fighting climate change & stewardship of the environment:

Mills & Reeve is committed to achieving Net Zero emissions by 2050. Our Carbon Reduction Plan can be found here: [mills-and-reeve-carbon-reduction-plan-jan-2025.pdf](#).

In addition to this, we've recently launched the following two environmental initiatives:

Partnership with the Small Woods Association to invest in the restoration of woodlands and support biodiversity efforts

Modern woodlands face numerous challenges, many of which have been introduced through human activity. When managed, woodlands are vital to thriving local economies, wildlife, and the wellbeing of surrounding communities, as well as hugely valuable in the fight against climate change.

Small Woods offers new opportunities for the community, like the Build a Bench programme, a fully funded 12-week initiative offering weekly green wood craft sessions, which help volunteers learn skills and become reintroduced into society. Programmes like these preserve traditional green crafts during a skill shortage, where there is a risk of losing the UK's woodworking knowledge.

Mills & Reeve's investment will help fund a social forestry coordinator and cover transportation costs to participants at project sites.

Working with Make it Wild for nature recovery

In July 2025, we launched our partnership with Make it Wild.

Make It Wild looks after 11 nature reserves throughout North Yorkshire, and six other reserves across the UK. They have undertaken extensive conservation efforts, such as planting over 100,000 trees, creating ponds, restoring wildflower meadows and protecting ancient woodland. Mills & Reeve is contributing to these efforts by funding targeted projects that support habitat restoration and development.

Mills & Reeve has initially funded an invertebrate survey at the Low Woods site in Smelthouses, Harrogate. Once collected, the samples will be compared against a database of 13,000 records and analysed to produce a comprehensive standalone report. The study will investigate the variety of species present such as beetles, flies, bugs, spiders and other insects. As a firm, we're really excited to be involved in a project so close to our Leeds office, where a number of our Government team are based.

Mandatory specialisms

Assimilated law

Despite the UK's exit from the European Union, UK laws originating from and linked to our relationship with the EU will continue to remain significant, particularly those EU-derived laws specifically retained as a result of the UK's EU Withdrawal Act 2018.

In addition to our expertise in competition law and state subsidy, we've worked with a number of government departments to ensure their contracts correctly reflect the position in relation to retained EU law and EU law, including in relation to data protection and the rules relating to data exports. Given the international nature of our client base, understanding of and compliance with EU laws remains an important issue for our clients, particularly in relation to life sciences, intellectual property, environmental law and consumer protection.

Key strengths

Wide expertise | With our in-depth experience, we can support with whatever you might need when it comes to EU law – including dispute resolution and litigation, UK and EU compliance burdens, project planning to avoid litigation and delay, competition law, environmental law, public procurement law, and timelines and procedures.

Industry leaders | Our team has led major projects for UK government departments and regulators and we have extensive experience of drafting and negotiating a wide range of commercial, outsourcing and procurement agreements. We regularly advise on data protection, freedom of information, competition law and other regulatory issues.

Innovative thinking | Our free-to-access procurement law portal offers the very latest advice and insights on ever changing EU laws and their impact on the UK.

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Our work

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

| We provided advice on potential state aid issues relating to the proposed disposal of an asset to the private sector. We went on to develop a robust and EU law compliant supplier selection process.

UK Government

| We supported a series of procurements to deliver a major Government policy initiative, including advice on lotting strategy, evaluation methodologies and structuring to provide support for SMEs.

Technology research accelerators

| We provided state subsidy advice to accelerators across different scientific disciplines, and on a research collaboration involving multi-million-pound public funding and over 20 different participants in the transport sector.

British Council

| We worked with the British Council to help plan for the impact of Brexit on EU grant funded and similar projects, including Erasmus+.

Intellectual Property Office

| We have worked with the IPO to identify IP-specific Retained EU Law and advised on the potential impact of the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill. For this project, the IPO benefited from involvement of our expert research & information team (individuals who aren't lawyers but are trained in legal research techniques) and the results of our analysis were published on the IPO's website.

Commercial litigation and dispute resolution

Our market-leading litigation and dispute resolution team assists government departments, agencies, and public bodies in navigating and resolving disputes. We aim to help you avoid disputes, but when unavoidable, we strive for positive and cost-effective resolutions.

Our experienced team supports you at every stage, from early case assessment to negotiation, mediation, expert determination, adjudication, litigation, and arbitration. We provide strategic advice to avoid or mitigate claims. Our bench strength allows us to scale up quickly for complex litigation, including applying for and resisting injunctions. With the increasing use of arbitration for confidential projects, our dedicated arbitration lawyers are ready to assist. Our trained mediators understand the key pressure points in mediation, helping you achieve positive resolutions early on.

Key strengths

Collaboration | We pride ourselves on working collaboratively with clients to ensure that we understand their objectives and have a clear plan of action to achieve them.

Clarity | We provide clear visibility on project management and costs through M&R Collaborate.

Genuine expertise | We excel in procurement disputes, IT disputes, contract litigation and insolvency.

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Our work

EANI | We acted for Education Authority Northern Ireland to successfully resist an injunction on public interest grounds. The injunction would have prevented the use of software critical to the operation of NI schools and interfered with NI government policy on the procurement of ed-tech for NI schools.

Department for Work & Pensions | We successfully obtained an order lifting, as a result of a procurement challenge, the automatic suspension of a high value contract to provide Functional Assessment Services to support the new Health Assessment Service. The procurement challenge was subsequently settled, avoiding further litigation.

NHS Supply Chain dispute | We're acting for the defendant public body in a complex procurement dispute involving three claimants and concerning the award of a £4bn logistics contract to supply the NHS. We successfully applied to lift the automatic suspension, allowing our client to continue and award the contract to the winning bidder. We're advising on and managing a significant disclosure exercise, as well as assisting our client with preparing evidence for a four week trial.

Expert determination | We achieved a successful resolution for a Government department through expert determination of a pensions deficit claim by a supplier on termination of an outsourcing contract. Our tactic of using expert determination (rather than mediation as provided for in the contract) was successful and saved the public purse approximately £10 million.

Competition law

Our competition and state subsidy law experts work with a wide range of organisations, including central government departments, non-departmental public bodies, NHS trusts, universities and local enterprise partnerships, to ensure that critical contracts and programmes, grants and loans comply with the competition and state subsidy (and previously State aid) rules, and to defend any challenges that do arise.

While always flagging relevant risk levels (using the Government Legal Department risk matrix where appropriate), we never simply tell you what you can't do, but explore solutions with you to ensure you achieve your objectives in a way which is compliant with competition and state subsidy law. In the event of a challenge, we work pragmatically with you to achieve a resolution.

We enjoy working with our government clients to ensure they have the tools they need to recognise the risks and, where appropriate, take steps to ensure compliance. At the moment we're rolling out training programmes to a number of clients on the implications of the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024.

Key strengths

Expertise | We've worked with numerous government departments and public sector bodies on their most significant competition law issues, from the Department of Health and Social Care to the Department for Education.

Tailored advice | We get to know you, your objectives, and the issues you're facing so we can develop a plan and offer advice that's right for you.

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Our work

Market restructuring | We've advised several government departments on the competition law implications of procurements that have the potential to restructure markets, particularly those that shape private sector supply chains, or grant or require exclusivity in certain markets and sectors.

Market enquiries and investigations | We've supported organisations involved in two of the most high-profile Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) enquiries of recent years – bid-rigging in the construction industry and grocery supplies – and market investigations (including the investigation into the funeral market).

Compliance programmes | We've developed and implemented competition compliance programmes for a range of clients, including acting for them during CMA dawn raids.

Subsidy control | We've advised the Department for Education on the subsidy control aspects of its £7.2 million start-up grants for childminders program. We have followed that up with subsidy control training for that DfE team.

We're advising the MHCLG on the subsidy control/state aid elements of its £170m Housing Infrastructure Fund grant to the London Borough of Enfield to fund infrastructure works that will unlock housing development.

We've advised an arm's length body on the subsidy control aspects of a c £200 million of central government funding.

Healthcare sector | We worked with a major private hospital operator to ensure three new joint ventures with referring clinicians comply with the CMA Private Healthcare Market Investigation Order.

Construction law

Construction | A highly regarded department, offering a full spectrum of legal advice for the construction sector, including advice in relation to frameworks, outsourcing and procurement. Clients include government departments, healthcare bodies, local authorities, universities, contractors and energy companies. We also have a market-leading construction disputes practice.

Infrastructure | A nationally recognised practice advising on projects across a wide range of sectors including defence, healthcare, housing, highways, power generation and student accommodation.

Key strengths

In-depth expertise | We appreciate that it's a project (17 transactional lawyers) or dispute (6 litigation lawyers) and make sure that we deliver what you want and need.

Detailed | Our transactional lawyers are adept at drafting and negotiating all types of construction and infrastructure documents. Our disputes team are equally adept at advocacy, pleadings and settling disputes.

Training | NEC3 and 4 suites of contracts, ESG, building safety.

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Our work

Construction contracts | Working with the MoD's in-house legal and property teams to deliver NEC3 and NEC4 ECC contracts (with specific Z clauses to meet the client's needs) for its latest national and international construction frameworks.

Construction disputes | Advising and acting for an NHS trust on a series of high-value and complex adjudications arising out of ProCure 21+ framework.

ESG | Drafting ESG clauses generally including green clauses for DEFRA and social value model KPI's and principal obligations for MOD, DWP and DEFRA.

Facilities management (FM) | Working with DWP to develop its procurement contract strategy to deliver FM services using the NEC3, SE contract and the MCS / PSC contracts.

Frameworks | Working with DEFRA on setting up a construction framework for delivering critical works to its facilities across the UK.

Infrastructure projects | Working with DWP to put in place a series of contracts to enable the department to deliver infrastructure and high value capital works projects across the UK.

Contracts

We work hard to make sure we genuinely understand your requirements and develop clear, flexible and robust contracts to deliver your policy and commercial objectives.

Key strengths

Collaboration | Our lawyers enjoy working together with our government clients, their stakeholders and other advisers. We're happy to second our lawyers to form part of your project team and are skilled at facilitating workshops to develop and agree the approach to key commercial and policy issues. Our collaborative style means we work as an extension to your project team rather than simply as external lawyers.

Joined up teams | We can deploy expert lawyers to provide seamless advice on complex procurement, contract, competition law, TUPE and pensions law issues at short notice, which means that we can ensure the quick resolution of issues so that contracts can be developed at pace.

Can-do approach | As well as drafting the legal terms of a contract, we "roll up our sleeves" and help develop and document payment mechanisms, performance monitoring regimes and technical and operational schedules.

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Our work

Future operating model | We advised the Department of Health and Social Care on its high-profile restructuring of the NHS Supply Chain, successfully completing a network of 13 separate but inter-linking contracts to deliver significant cash-releasing savings from the predicted £5 billion NHS annual spend through the new Supply Chain model.

T Levels | Operating against a timeframe that the client described as "Herculean", we drafted and procured contracts for the appointment of Awarding Organisations to develop, implement and assess the Technical Qualification component of the government's ambitious T Levels programme.

Ventilator challenge | We mobilised a team of experts to work alongside the Cabinet Office, the Department of Health and Social Care and the Government Legal Department in the extremely urgent and high-profile effort to procure large numbers of ventilators in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The structure of your team for the project (providing us with senior lawyer support, whilst retaining overall strategic and supervisory control at partner level) has provided us a first-class legal service without breaking the bank."

Ministry of Defence

"[Your project lead] has been absolutely fantastic throughout - responsive, calm, collected, friendly - always keeps a cool head in negotiations, brilliant at taking the lead and steering the conversation..."

Cabinet Office

Corporate law

Our team of experienced lawyers help with all elements of corporate law and its impact on the public sector – from public and private company transactions to share acquisitions, disposals and capitalisations, government company selection and formation, and joint ventures and venture capital advice.

We also support on directors' duties, company secretarial services, operating and partnership agreements, mutuals, securities and governance matters, restructuring of ownership and complex and innovative legal structures and initiatives.

Key strengths

Innovative | We're known for delivering 'firsts' and have a record of developing unique and innovative structures which deliver your goals and reflect your risk tolerance.

Impact | We have a wealth of experience advising on social investments, joint ventures and funding arrangements, and understand the delicate balance required to protect public stakeholders and allow for commercial growth whilst achieving social objectives.

Bold | Our team excels at challenging and unusual projects, using our extensive experience to develop the right way ahead for you.

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Our work

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

| We worked on the sale of Constructionline, one of the UK's largest online procurement and supply chain management services which was set up initially by the government for public sector contracts. We supported BEIS on the deal to secure the future of Constructionline, ensuring customers retain access to a comprehensive and quality assured service, while achieving the highest price possible.

Nesta | We advised on the creation and close of a £20 million arts and culture investment debt fund. A mix of public, private, and philanthropic investors invested in the fund via loans and grants, including Arts Council England, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Big Society Capital, Bank of America, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Nesta itself.

Clean Technology Fund | We advised BEIS and the Department for International Development on the implications of a potential green bond issue backed by the Clean Technology Fund – an unincorporated trust fund providing emerging economies with scaled-up financing to support the rollout of low-carbon technologies.

Civil Service Live | We presented a workshop on social impact investing at Civil Service Live and have been providing input on the Reimagine Challenge.

Employment law

Due to their significant impact on an organisation and the rise in claims, employment law issues are often the most pressing concerns on your desk.

Our specialist team is here to help – whether you need support with non-contentious employment matters relating to TUPE, COSOP, redundancies, restructuring, outsourcing, changes in terms and conditions and reorganisations, or contentious employment law, including litigation and dispute resolution.

Our extensive expertise, team size and breadth of understanding ensure we can support all your employment law issues, whether contentious or non-contentious.

Key strengths

True partners | We're an extension of your legal and HR teams, genuinely collaborating and knowledge sharing. We identify where your team can be upskilled to take on tasks, so we spend our time on more complex and involved issues.

Clear communicators | We're easy to deal with and aim to bring you on the journey with us. With our market-leading technologies, like our automated settlement agreement and tribunal case management system, we streamline processes and keep you up to date on all aspects of the project.

Transparent pricing | We provide transparent, clear pricing that provides cost certainty. We offer a range of fixed and alternative pricing solutions, both for contentious disputes and non-contentious work such as TUPE/COSOP support.

Innovative | We've developed innovative and effective methods for dealing with employment litigation cases and for gathering and presenting evidence. This not only improves the success rate of our clients' defences to claims but minimises disruption to managers and others involved with such claims.

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Our work

Employment litigation | We have exceptional experience and strength in successfully managing employment litigation, in all its aspects. We consistently handle a high number of employment litigation cases for a wide range of government bodies, covering the full range of employment law claims.

Our experience is demonstrated by the fact that over the last twelve months we've acted on nearly 300 claims for government bodies and public sector organisations, including in the Supreme Court.

TUPE/COSOP | We've worked on numerous TUPE transfers for a range of different departments, such as the DWP and DHSC, as well as government sponsored agencies such as the FCA.

Our work has been extensive, from the point of tender to the drafting and negotiating of TUPE provisions. Often this has been time critical (when supporting COVID-related procurements) or complex (such as transfers involving overseas suppliers or significant potential redundancies).

Environmental law

Despite the best intentions, it can be a challenge to meet the strict nature of environmental regulations and live up to the public's increasingly high green expectations.

Our industry leading lawyers support public sector bodies on all aspects of environmental law, both contentious and non-contentious. Whether you need advice around legal developments and policy, compliance and permits or someone to step in during a crisis to negotiate on your behalf with the regulator or challenge the decision of a regulator, we have the skills and expertise.

Our environmental experience covers advice on contaminated land and site decommissioning / development, habitats, environmental permitting, chemicals, water and waste regulation, carbon reduction, mitigation and trading, transactional support as well as the representation of corporates and individuals in a variety of enforcement actions brought by environmental regulators, be that the EA, NRW, Natural England, or the Police.

Key strengths

Understanding | Even when facing environmental sanctions, you still have options. We'll support your decision-making, helping you map out a way ahead. We can, for instance, help you consider alternatives to prosecution, challenge a regulators' decision or civil penalty, or present a compelling defence or persuasive mitigation, ensuring that the relationship with the regulator is maintained.

Relationship-led | Not only are we intent on building strong working relationships with our clients, but also with regulators so that we understand their perspective and how to develop a solution.

Broad experience | We offer environmental advice across many different sectors, furnishing us with an all-round understanding of the process and public law principles that the regulators follow.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Advisory | Advising clients in the development sector and working with their consultants on the management and remediation of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances ("PFAS").

Enforcement | Acting on behalf of a waste operator in a successful appeal against an Environment Agency permit revocation notice that would have forced the client to cease trading. This was one of only three cases where a revocation notice had been overturned.

We have significant experience in dealing with all manners of enforcement actions as well as civil penalties (enforcement undertakings).

Transactional | Working with the Ministry of Defence, negotiating complex environmental provisions in development management agreements between the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and residential developers, including St Modwen Properties and Bovis Homes.

Contaminated Land | Acting for a developer on a successful appeal against a remediation notice served under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 involving a two-week public inquiry that was called in by the Secretary of State. We have, therefore, one of only a handful of lawyers in the UK with first-hand experience of dealing with litigation under the statutory contaminated land regime.

Finance and investment

Our innovative, market-leading team is highly experienced in producing bespoke finance documents for government, non-departmental public bodies, local authorities, universities, NHS bodies and charities. Key to our approach is working with you to strike a balance between achieving policy objectives and protecting your commercial position.

We can help with grants, bonds and private placements, domestic and overseas banking, financial litigation, guarantees and bonding, loan and security agreements, trade finance and a wide variety of other finance arrangements. Our transactional and portfolio management support is complemented by robust but practical advice on the application of the public procurement regulations and state aid rules.

Key strengths

Break new ground | We're known for developing the first university bond and our team continues to be at the forefront of developments in finance. We specialise in new, innovative and complex transactions and have carried out hundreds of deals in this space.

Guide you through the maze | Finance documents can be long, full of jargon and often it will be the first time you've ever worked on a cutting-edge finance issue of this type. We guide you through the process, making every step more straightforward and less stressful.

Demonstrate tenacity | We work to ensure we get to the bottom of deals and truly understand what needs to be achieved. This means asking difficult questions, spotting risks and developing solutions that will work for you. We go well beyond doing what is directly asked of us and help you make informed decisions with all the facts to hand.

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Our work

Homes England | We're advising on complex funding matters, including infrastructure & development loans, major grants and on-going portfolio management (including dealing with defaults and waivers).

MHCLG | Advising on loans and payment plans (including distress scenarios), grant queries (including subsidy control, infrastructure grants and remedie) and guarantee programmes (eg the Private Rented Sector Guarantees Scheme).

National Wealth Fund | We're advising the National Wealth Fund on a guarantee transaction (confidential).

British Council | We support BC on its emergency funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Nesta | We advised on the creation and close of a £20 million arts and culture investment debt fund. A mix of public, private, and philanthropic investors invested in the fund via loans and grants.

Innovate UK Loans | Sole legal adviser on their lending programme, including revisions to template loan and security documents, negotiating security and guarantee packages and dealing with distressed situations.

Grants

We advise government departments, non-government, non-departmental public bodies, local authorities and charities on all aspects of grant law, from scheme design to documentation and negotiation. We can help with the full range of grant transactions, from large infrastructure grants of £100m+ to smaller community grant schemes.

Public law & grant award | We assist clients who are designing and running grant competitions, analysing distinctions between grants and contracts for services and ensuring subsidy control compliance.

Drafting templates | We prepare templates for grant funding agreements, determination letters, and MOUs.

Content & negotiation | We advise on and negotiate grant agreements (including on the Cabinet Office model form), arrangements with intermediaries and related documents including security and clawback documents.

Amendments | We guide clients on amending grant agreements and dealing with breaches, addressing all public law considerations including Managing Public Money.

Key strengths

True partners | We work as an extension of your legal and project teams, sharing knowledge and upskilling your staff.

Lived experience | We advise clients on every stage of the grant lifecycle; when we draft templates, we incorporate our knowledge of what's needed when things go wrong.

Outcomes focussed | We focus on achieving the grants objective as well as protecting tax payer funds and we help our clients find the right balance.

Context sensitive | Our wide sector expertise means we understand the different specific provisions needed for grants to charities, education institutions and others.

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Our work

Homes England | M5 Junction 10. We have advised on this project for 5+ years, starting with the initial £250m grant agreement through numerous fundamental variations and waivers to address challenges to delivery.

Medical Research Council | We updated the Council's template grant funding documentation to reflect a fundamental reform of the funding model for research centres and best practice.

MHCLG | Advising on portfolio management matters for the Waking Watch Relief Fund and Building Safety Fund including dealing with queries regarding non-performance, breaches and new applications. We also held a joint seminar with their grants legal team to share best practice and knowledge on grants.

DHSC | Advising on a number of government grants relating to the development and supply of life sciences products and services. This has included input on grants relating to Covid-19 testing laboratories, and UK-based research projects around the causes and detection of Covid-19.

The School of Oriental and African Studies | SOAS, UCL and the University of London are collaborating on a green energy grid for their campuses. DESNZ has provided grant funding which is being granted onwards to the project company. We advise SOAS on all aspects including the grant funding arrangements.

British Council | Advising BC as delivery body on the agreement with the Department for Education, for the Turing scheme (the replacement for ERASMUS) and on the onward form of grant to be used by the British Council when making grants to recipient education institutions.

Information law including data protection law

Information law, data protection and privacy involve a delicate balancing act of competing organisational and individual rights and obligations. In this fast-changing area of law, we help you to meet both your objectives and the requirements of legislation.

Our team is highly experienced in advising on the use and control of information, international data transfers, data protection in the context of AI usage, Data Protection Act/UK GDPR, data processing, privacy notices and impact assessments, data sharing agreements, freedom of information and subject access requests.

We can spring into action to deal with the aftermath of data breaches and have done so for a number of government organisations.

Key strengths

Experts | With some of our market leading lawyers also having specialist data protection qualifications, we can understand data flows within complex technology systems, as well as Cloud based environments, to effectively advise on data protection implications.

Expertise | Our data protection specialists have undertaken global, European and UK GDPR compliance projects. They have also negotiated against some of the largest IT service providers in the world on complex data protection matters, so they bring that associated expertise to client matters.

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Our work

Requests for information | We advised a public authority on the application of exemptions under the FOIA to refuse a request for information about research contracts with companies involved in the defence industry. Our advice was tested before the Information Commissioner and the exemption upheld.

Data breaches | We supported a public sector body on its inadvertent disclosure of 12,000 people's personal data, helping prioritise actions, manage communications and create strategies for the short and long term, including liaising with data subjects and the ICO.

Data sharing | We advised on the data sharing consortium arrangements for UK Research and Innovation digital hubs involving Imperial College Health Partners, Google and IBM.

ICO | We've advised the ICO on information law matters relating to the Telephone Preference Service. Being trusted by the Regulator is a resounding endorsement of our expertise in this area.*

**NOTE: We do not advise the ICO on enforcement issues to avoid conflicts of interest arising.*

“High calibre individuals and highly responsive.”

Information technology law

We're one of the UK's leading information technology practices, trusted by government and the wider public sector to advise on major and high-profile IT projects, from using a full procurement process to calling off under a framework.

Whether you need support with major IT procurements or infrastructure projects, IT managed services, outsourcing migration/transition, software and cloud contracting, adoption of AI, hardware purchasing, cyber security, social media or e-commerce – we've done it all, enabling us to spot the risks and take action.

Key strengths

Experienced | Having worked together for many years, our core team is a well-oiled machine, communicating closely and often so you never have to repeat yourself. As well as our extensive government work, we also advise major IT suppliers, so we understand both sides of the table and reasonable negotiating positions.

Collaborative | Throughout the project and at handover, we'll do everything we can to enable your team. We share knowledge and upskill people to own the contracts once we're no longer retained. We produce detailed playbooks, deliverables tables and calendars so you know what needs to be done and when.

Flexible | However you want to work, we can adapt to you – working closely alongside your team, acting as an overflow when work escalates or fully taking the lead throughout.

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Our work

Department of Health and Social Care | We supported throughout the Future Operating Model project – a comprehensive overhaul of the existing NHS national logistics supply chain. Our work included procurements for back-end systems and for solutions to interface between suppliers to the programme.

HM Land Registry | We advised on the procurement of a supplier panel for the migration of all current local land charges registers held by local authorities nationwide onto a central HMLR register.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency | We worked on the critical project to replace the national radio network infrastructure enabling shore to ship communications around the UK's coastline.

Ministry of Defence | We supported on a new four-year, multi-lot, Digital IT Professional Services CCS Framework (DIPS). This complex groundbreaking procurement was designed to break MOD's external resourcing paradigm, and involved Defence-wide, coordination and collaboration between MOD and CCS, conversations with Cabinet Office and Treasury, as well as extensive market engagement with over 200 potential digital and IT businesses.

“The support and guidance you have extended...has been exemplary. I believe that collaboratively we have worked really well together as part of an extended team.”

ICT Infrastructure Programme Manager, MCA

Intellectual property law

We can help you protect and make the most of your intellectual property. We'll ensure you have an effective IP strategy, the right protection, prevent infringers benefitting from your creation and help you fully exploit your intellectual property.

As a leading intellectual property team, we're ideally placed to support government departments on the IP aspects of projects. With our patent and trade mark attorney, we can also advise in-depth on complex patent issues, trademarks and branding.

We have particular expertise in establishing arrangements for complex, multi-party, IP collaborations.

Having worked with numerous government sector clients to achieve their aims, we have the experience to help you – whether you need support with assignment and licensing, commercialisation, copyright, database rights, design rights, patents or trade secrets.

Key strengths

Practical | We strive to make the complex understandable so that you can make decisions on the best ways forward.

Tailored advice | We're committed to providing focussed advice by getting to know your organisation and understanding the restraints within which you operate.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Ministry of Defence | We provided advice on complex intellectual property issues around preventing long term "lock-in" to a particular supplier.

Department of Health and Social Care | We work on intellectual property issues relating to vaccine supply.

Department for Education | Our team advises on trade mark protection and branding issues in relation to new policy initiatives.

IELTS Partners | We acted for the British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and Cambridge Assessment English on the registration and protection of the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) brand globally.

Brexit preparations | Richard Plaistowe, one of our principal associates, is an active member of the International Trademark Association (INTA) Brexit Taskforce. The taskforce advises on the impact of Brexit on trade marks and designs, obtains information from relevant bodies (such as the UK and EU Intellectual Property Offices) and makes recommendations on issues of particular concern to INTA.

"Straight-talking...understand the technology and helps us strategise."

Outsourcing

With extensive public sector experience and an understanding of your mirror markets such as IT, we'll be your guide through complex outsourcing projects.

We're here for you from when you start scoping out requirements, through running the competition, developing contracts, undergoing renegotiations to even exiting from troublesome relationships.

We help deliver outsourcings of IT, business processes, laboratory testing services, back office functions, facilities management, logistics and warehousing, archiving, print services, claims handling, call centres and catering.

We also advise on shared service models, start-to-finish contract management, open book contract management provisions, incentivisation and reward mechanisms, KPI and service credit regimes and specialist support (such as employment law, intellectual property law, real estate, tax and public procurement).

Key strengths

Collaborative | We become part of your team, there by your side to make sure the process runs as smoothly as possible.

Focused | We know the value of defining KPIs and ensuring they're measurable and reported on regularly. We navigate the way ahead when projects don't progress as expected.

Clear | While outsourcing issues are complex, we prepare agreements in plain English and advise without legalese.

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Our work

Ministry of Defence | We work extensively with the MoD, including helping to outsource Defence Business Services to Serco. The four-year contract included corporate, HR, finance, information and vetting services with a performance-related payment mechanism. Another example of our work together is on the TUPE and pensions aspects of a ten-year contract for the entire recruitment needs of the Army and ICT for the Navy/Air Force valued at £440 million, with around £300 million benefits for the MoD.

Defence Infrastructure Organisation | We supported on Project Hestia - the outsourcing of the entire soft facilities management service for most of DIO's estate.

Department of Health and Social Care | We advised on the renegotiation of one of the UK's largest outsourced logistics contracts, with an annual spend under the relevant frameworks of several billion pounds.

"[Your project lead] has been absolutely fantastic throughout - responsive, calm, collected, friendly - always keeps a cool head in negotiations, brilliant at taking the lead and steering the conversation..."

Cabinet Office

"The Mills & Reeve team guided us through the complex negotiation of a major national outsourcing contract. Their expertise and pragmatic advice enabled us to see the discussions through to a successful outcome."

Central government department client

Pensions law

High profile and hugely important to employees, pensions need to be dealt with both sensitively and robustly.

We can help, whether you need support setting up or updating a public, private or Civil Service pension scheme, or support with policies and guidance such as Fair Deal, New Fair Deal and its successors.

Our dedicated team of pensions lawyers provide in-depth expertise on public sector pensions issues based on their day-to-day experience in advising on all of the public sector schemes. Our clients include central and local government, the NHS, sponsoring employers across all sectors and contractors who are bidding for contracts within the public sector.

Key strengths

Clear | We work with you to determine your needs and requirements so we can provide recommendations that are practical, understandable and commercial.

Enthusiasm | We have total commitment to the work we do, with a genuine enthusiasm and passion for helping our clients achieve their objectives.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Department of Health and Social Care | Our team played an important role in negotiating and documenting the complex pensions aspects of a transaction for the department. This involved arrangements with the NHS Pension Scheme and the application of New Fair Deal.

Public sector pensions | We advise on the pensions aspects of contractual arrangements with public sector bodies and the requirements and options of future service benefit provision. Our clients in this area include the NHS Property Service, employers participating in the Teachers' Pension Scheme, the Civil Service Pension Scheme and Local Government Pension Scheme. We help set up the process by which the client will become a participating employer and what liabilities might arise in the future and on termination of the contract.

Disputes | We advised a public sector organisation on a Pensions Ombudsman dispute with a member. This arose out of a voluntary redundancy programme which resulted in the member being provided with incorrect information on their pension benefits.

Planning law

The planning system is complex and ever-evolving, combining legislative requirements, competing priorities and political input. Our specialist team is well versed in advising on even the most challenging development proposals. We're involved in promoting some of the largest planning projects in the country.

We offer a dedicated team of specialist planning solicitors, and have extensive experience and a national reputation, particularly in large scale strategic land projects.

We can help with everything from planning strategy, EIA, CIL, historic buildings and heritage, highways, compulsory purchase, and section 106 agreements, to inquiries and appeals, judicial review and managing planning risk.

We advise on nationally significant and other major infrastructure projects, including development consent orders and transport and works act order schemes, typically from a statutory objector (landowner) perspective. We also have hybrid bill experience, advising clients affected by HS2, including undertaking petitioning work on their behalf.

Key strengths

Strategic land | We're experienced in acting on some of the largest strategic land projects in the country and are recognised for our problem-solving expertise in this area.

Holistic | We work for promoters, developers, landowners, and local planning authorities so understand the planning system from all perspectives.

Clear and commercial | We receive regular feedback highlighting our ability to find effective solutions and provide pragmatic advice.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Defence Infrastructure Organisation | We advised the DIO as landowner and promoter of Prince Philip Barracks in Bordon on the redevelopment of the barracks for 2,400 homes, a relief road and town centre.

Homes England | We're advising Homes England on a number of schemes, including the promotion of Northstowe (a 10,000 home new town in Cambridgeshire) and Sandymoor South and Wharford Farm (a major planning application submission for 750 new homes on a greenfield site in Halton).

Urban&Civic | We advise Urban&Civic in its role as master developer in connection with its major new settlements and communities at Alconbury Weald, Houlton, Corby, Waterbeach and St Neots.

Dunsfold Aerodrome | We advised on the redevelopment of Dunsfold Aerodrome for a new mixed-use community and business park. We advised on the application, call-in process, a judicial review challenge, draft Local Plan and CIL charging schedule.

University of Cambridge | We advised the University in its capacity as a statutory objector to the Cambridge South Infrastructure Enhancements Transport and Works Act Order. We advised on the objection, statement of case, the preparation of proofs of evidence and supported Leading Counsel at inquiry, as well as providing strategic advice and leading negotiations with Network Rail outside of the inquiry.

Projects/PFI/PPP

Our projects practice has an excellent reputation within government for delivering complex projects to time and to budget.

We've advised on over 100 PPP projects acting for both public bodies and industry partners. Our expertise spans defence, aerospace (including RPAS), health, waste, transport, social services, blue light, prisons and education.

Our role often includes advising on extensions, and variations such as those required following LIBOR transition. We help our government clients address relationship and performance issues under their existing contracts and navigate their way around the myriad of issues which arise as existing contracts approach their expiry dates.

We also resolve issues when PFI contracts are expiring, including helping with early strategic planning for handback.

Key strengths

Adaptable | Different clients like to work in different ways. Some want us to take charge and do everything; others want to retain control of discrete elements of the project depending on in-house expertise; others like to collaborate and workshop issues. We're completely adaptable and will work to your requirements.

Technical detail | When appropriate, we'll get into the technical detail underpinning the main contract. This way we can ensure that the whole contract (and not just the T&Cs) reflects the parties' intentions and that there are no conflicting provisions.

Approachable | We're an extension to your project team, thinking carefully about how we can support you and where we can bring the most value. We don't sit on the fence but give straightforward advice. Many of our lawyers are SC cleared.

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Our work

Ministry of Defence | We regularly work with the MoD and Defence Infrastructure Organisation including on:

- The MORPHEUS project, a £ multi-billion programme which opened up the existing BOWMAN battlefield tactical and communications information system. We also worked on the subsequent procurement of multiple contracts to support and enhance the system.
- The TIQUILA and FTUAS RPAS procurements to deliver vital intelligence and surveillance capabilities to the Army and Navy.
- The Long Term Training and Support Service contract for Apache and the UK Chinook Through Life Customer Support contract. We're currently supporting MOD with the successor "Rotary Wing Enterprise" programme.
- The New Medium Helicopter (NMH) programme which is a military initiative to replace several helicopter platforms with a single, modern fleet of aircraft. The programme aims to improve efficiency and flexibility, and to strengthen the UK's defence industrial base.

Department for Work and Pensions | We advised on all operational aspects of the contracts forming the Estates Target Operating Model project, an integrator model of contracting for DWP's accommodation needs across its estate. This included hard and soft FM, security and new capital works. We're currently providing support on the procurement of the follow-up contract, Integrator 2, advising on both procurement and contractual issues.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency | We advised on all legal aspects of the procurement of a major aerial surveillance service contract and the operational aspects of existing and replacement contracts. We supported on the Radio Network Infrastructure Replacement Programme, based on the Crown Commercial Service's Model Services Contract. We advised on the recent £1.6 billion procurement for UK search and rescue and aerial surveillance services (UKSAR2G).

PFI Expiry | Currently advising an NHS Trust on its preparations for handback and expiry, featuring complex real estate arrangements and early market handback mechanisms.

Project Aquatrine | being the group of PFI contracts for the supply of water and sewerage services to military bases across the UK.

Public inquiries – support to participants and inquests

Public Inquiries: Public inquiries are often high profile and sensitive, involving significant media attention. Being involved can impose a heavy burden on the organisation and the individuals within them. We've worked on high profile public Inquiries in recent years, with huge reputational risks for our clients.

Inquests: How an organisation responds to a death has a huge impact for families, employees and your organisation. It affects how regulators, coroners and media respond. We help you get it right. We've supported clients through over 1,200 inquests in the last ten years across healthcare, prisons, fire service, charities, government bodies and universities.

In addition, our inquests team can assist you with public inquiries, criminal consequences/manslaughter/HSE prosecutions, your exposure to risk, the right response to families and public assurance, conducting Serious Incident Investigations, ensuring witnesses give best evidence.

Key strengths

Collaboration | Working with Inquiry teams and a range of core participants to build strong, positive working relationships.

Sector expertise | Our extensive expertise in Public Inquiries matched with our lawyers' expertise in public law, health and social care, and healthcare regulation, means we can help to navigate challenges and mitigate risks to your reputation and interests.

Proactive risk and cost management | We anticipate risks early in Inquests to reduce their impact and keep costs low for your organisation.

Comprehensive and reassuring crisis response | We manage every aspect of the inquest process with competence, protecting your reputation and demonstrating clear action to prevent future issues.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Public Inquiry | UK Covid - 19 | We acted for Supply Chain Coordination Limited and UKHSA.

Public Inquiry | Lampard | We're acting for the three ICBs named as core participants in the Inquiry. The Inquiry, chaired by Baroness Kate Lampard CBE, is investigating the deaths of mental health inpatients in Essex between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2023.

Public Inquiry | Thirlwall | Established to investigate the events at the Countess of Chester Hospital and their implications following the trial, and subsequent convictions, of former neonatal nurse Lucy Letby of murder and attempted murder of babies at the hospital. We supported the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB Chief Executive and his team in their detailed liaison with the Inquiry.

Inquests | We supported Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust through a series of high-profile inquests into the deaths of five women with eating disorders, including the nationally reported case of Averil Hart, which prompted a Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman investigation and a national report into NHS eating disorder services. These inquests placed the Trust's services under intense scrutiny due to both the coroner's approach and the level of media interest. The inquests highlighted national issues around the lack of formally commissioned services for eating disorder patients.

"You've been great supporting us – often with very little notice – over the last year."

Black County Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Public law

With private bodies increasingly undertaking public functions, this is a highly charged area of law where challenges are often made.

We know the common law principles, statutes and regulatory frameworks, as well as the practical and commercial issues that need to be considered when setting an appropriate course. We'll help you make robust, considered decisions and be rigorous in responding to challenges.

We support with everything from central government and devolved powers to decision making processes, equalities and human rights law, public procurement law and competition law.

Key strengths

Broad experience | From government departments to Clinical Commissioning Groups and universities, our breadth of expertise means we know how to help you achieve your objectives within the public law framework.

Multi-disciplinary team | Our large, multi-disciplinary team of expert lawyers understand the policy, regulatory and commercial context in which you operate, enabling us to offer focused, practical advice.

Judicial review expertise | Each year we help avoid and resist up to 50 threatened judicial reviews.

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Our work

Department of Health and Social Care | We advised on the Future Operating Model for the NHS supply chain, which brings together the procurement and delivery of the requirements of the NHS for goods and services (over £10 billion annually). This work included functions/powers, procurement, governance, arms-length bodies and state aid.

University of Cambridge | We established the power of the university to issue a 40-year £350 million security bond – an industry first.

Ministry of Defence | We provide support and advice on functions, powers and procurement for large-scale contracts, including vires for outsourcing of activities to independent sector providers and suppliers.

NHS clinical commissioning groups | We acted for CCGs in the North East and Cumbria in successfully defending judicial review proceedings by Bayer and Novartis. The challenge concerned NHS policy regarding the prescription of certain drugs.

“Whatever the issue, Mills & Reeve will have the expertise on hand to advise.”

Public law client

Public law litigation and dispute resolution

Our public law litigation team is dedicated to providing expert legal support to public bodies and agencies. We have decades of experience in this area and understand the unique challenges and responsibilities that come with public sector work. We're committed to helping you navigate complex legal landscapes with confidence and clarity.

Our team has extensive experience in handling a wide range of public law disputes, including judicial reviews and investigations. We work closely with our clients to develop tailored strategies that align with their objectives and ensure the best possible outcomes. We pride ourselves on working collaboratively with clients to ensure that we understand their objectives and have a clear plan of action to achieve them. By working closely with our clients, we gain a deep understanding of their needs and priorities. This allows us to provide practical and effective legal solutions that are both cost-efficient and aligned with your goals.

Key strengths

Expertise in dispute resolution | Our team is skilled in negotiation, mediation, and alternative dispute resolution, ensuring that we explore all avenues for resolving disputes amicably before resorting to litigation. When litigation is unavoidable, our team is prepared to represent you with tenacity and expertise.

Proven track record | We have a proven track record of success in high-profile cases and are adept at managing complex legal issues, especially where private law and public law obligations intersect.

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Our work

Responsible Actors Scheme | We provided strategic and risk-based advice on the operation of the Responsible Actors Scheme operated by MHCLG to improve the safety and standard of residential buildings following the Grenfell fire.

Secondment to government department | In order to assist them with defending a substantial judicial review concerning the fairness and lawfulness of the government department's decision. The claim was worth over £72 million to the claimant. We were involved in all aspects of the case, from the permission stage to the final hearing, including undertaking a substantial disclosure exercise, instructing the counsel team, and managing the detailed assessment procedure. We developed direct relationships with the internal client and upskilled the in-house team for future litigation.

Judicial review claim relating to the largest proposed forest in the UK | We act for the defendant in a judicial review claim concerning the largest proposed newly planted forest in the UK. The claimant seeks to challenge the lawfulness of the Forestry Commission environmental impact assessment. The claim seeks to test the boundaries of EIA screening decisions and may serve as an important precedent for future projects of this size and nature.

Judicial review claim concerning apparent bias | We acted for the claimant in successfully challenging the Care and Quality Commission's decision to refuse to review historic inspection and enforcement decisions which were tainted by apparent bias.

Public procurement law

To achieve the best procurement outcome, authorities often have to move quickly and design robust, resilient tender processes with documents ready before the competition begins. From the first step, our team will guide you, helping ensure compliance with the supplier selection rules, while meeting challenging timescales.

Our highly experienced team supports strategically and tactically at every stage of the procurement lifecycle, from formulation of procurement strategies to preparing tender documentation, supporting with dialogue and bidder interactions, tender evaluation, standstill and award. We also step in where procurement processes have led to challenges and disputes, helping resolve them quickly and without fuss.

Key strengths

Expert advisers | Constantly on the pulse of developments, our online [Procurement Portal](#) - the UK's leading free resource on public procurement rules and impending reform - complements our service by responding to the big questions of the day. We're the firm behind the popular [5 in 25](#) series of webinars which provides training in an easily digestible format.

Industry innovators | We push the boundaries, making it easier for public bodies to stay out of trouble. Our digital tool to support authorities in meeting their Regulation 84 reporting requirements exemplifies innovation, enabling the easy creation of compliant procurement reports.

Close collaborators | We work collaboratively with clients in helping them prepare specifications, evaluation criteria, and scoring methodologies. We have experience of observing moderation meetings to give you an additional layer of assurance of your process. It's important to us to work alongside you to deliver a procurement that works smoothly and effectively.

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Our work

Department for Education | We worked on a series of interconnected procurements to appoint suppliers to deliver the flagship T Levels programme of new technical qualifications.

Ministry of Defence | We supported the MoD on the competitive procurement of four industry partners to provide Maritime Support Services to Type 45 Destroyers and the new Queen Elizabeth Aircraft carrier (the largest British warship ever built).

Department of Health and Social Care | We advised on contracts related to the Government's response to the pandemic. This work involved providing template and guidance documents that remain in use within the Department.

Department for Work and Pensions | We've been advising on the procurement aspects of business-critical arrangements for facilities management services as part of the DWP's Estates Target Operating Model Programme.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency | We're advising on the procurement of the UK second-generation search and rescue aviation programme. We supported the authority through the competitive procedure with negotiation, including the provision of training to evaluators at key junctures of the process.

Health Procurement Portal | This pioneering new resource centre includes over 90 document templates and guidance notes designed to make health-related procurement straightforward and helping avoid the need to reinvent the wheel each time.

Real estate and real estate finance

With 140 lawyers on the team, including specialist property finance experts, Mills & Reeve is known for its full-service real estate experience.

We support government departments and non-departmental public bodies with acquisitions, disposals, estate rationalisations, Crown, commercial and residential real estate, development and construction law, dispute resolution and litigation, freehold, leasehold and licences, investment, management, non-complex finance and investment, tax, landlord and tenant issues, planning law and environmental law.

Key strengths

Bespoke | We take the time to understand your aims and adapt our approach to your circumstances.

Innovative | We use the latest technology to make sure we deliver this bespoke service effectively.

Experienced | Our team has worked with numerous government departments on complex and high-profile real estate projects, helping them achieve successful outcomes.

Restrictions | Compulsory purchase, social housing, heavy infrastructure.

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Our work

Homes England | We support Homes England in its role investing in supply and intervening in the market to help placemake and deliver 300,000 homes a year by the middle of the next decade.

Defence Infrastructure Organisation | We played a vital role in the largest ever urban regeneration project to take place on DIO-procured surplus Ministry of Defence land. The project involved three separate competitive dialogue procurements for the appointment of a joint venture partner to lead the preparation for sale and development of each surplus site for new housing settlements, associated employment, retail uses and major infrastructure. The projects are expected to deliver 8,300 residential units over 1,000 acres.

Department for Work and Pensions | We advise on all operational aspects of the contracts forming its Estates Target Operating Model project, an integrator model of contracting for DWP's accommodation needs across its estate including hard and soft FM, security and new capital works.

Natural History Museum | We're advising on real estate, procurement and construction matters in connection with a new state of the art facility for the Natural History Museum out of London.

Department for Education/LocatED | We're providing full-service advice to the Department and LocatED on their capital and estate management programmes covering the delivery of building and maintenance projects for a range of schools and sixth-form colleges across England.

Restructuring / insolvency

We know that the knock-on effects of restructuring and insolvency aren't to be taken lightly. We have extensive experience of advising robustly on both non-contentious and contentious restructuring and insolvency matters.

We see the issues from all sides, supporting government departments, companies, creditors, debtors, lenders, counterparties and insolvency practitioners alike on issues arising from financial distress, including restructurings and debt refinancings.

We can help with:

- Recovering money for government departments and agencies where counterparties are in or facing insolvency processes
- Assisting government departments and agencies on defeating claims against them arising out of counterparty insolvency processes
- Advising government departments and agencies on improving recovery in insolvency processes
- Debt refinancings in financially distressed situations for both lenders and borrowers
- Advising lenders and borrowers on the enforcement of security and recovery loans
- Supplier, partner and supply-chain distress including insolvencies and restructuring
- Mitigating risk, protecting your position and maximising recovery on a counterparty's financial distress and/or insolvency process
- Solvent re-organisations and restructuring
- Credit, legal, insolvency and counterparty risk
- Administrations
- Receiverships
- Liquidations and provisional liquidations
- Claims for misfeasance, breach of fiduciary duty, transactions defrauding creditors, wrongful trading and fraudulent trading
- VAT and excise duty frauds
- Disqualification proceedings

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Our work

OFGEM | We drafted internal guidance for the industry regulator in the event of an energy supply company being in financial distress and OFGEM needing to ensure continuity of energy supplies. This included invoking the use of the special administration regime (SAR) available for energy supply companies introduced in the Energy Act 2011, which amended the Energy Act 2004.

Department of Energy, Security & Net Zero | We're on the panel advising DESNZ on insolvency and other issues arising out of energy providers in the market.

Insolvency Service | We're one of only five firms on the Insolvency Service panel and the only non-incumbent provider to be appointed. We provide litigation and case related advice to the Insolvency Service on all aspects of their work from investigations, company disqualifications and public interest winding up to recovery actions on behalf of Official Receivers.

Department for Education | We've also been re-appointed to the Department for Education's panel advising on the financial distress of both higher and further education providers and are meeting with the DfE on a regular basis to update them on developments and market updates.

OFGEM | We have recently had a secondeed working with OFGEM on the special administration of an energy supplier and supplier of last resort transfers and are acting for OFGEM on a distressed energy supplier and potential Special Administration Regime.

Regulator of Social Housing | We're appointed to the regulator's panel and advise that team on issues arising in respect of insolvent providers and its own special administration regime.

Tax law

Whatever the tax issue you face, we have more than likely seen it before and can help you solve it. Our experienced corporate tax lawyers identify tax issues before they happen and explain and resolve inevitable tax questions that arise in transactions. Our tax advice to Government matches the diverse requirements we know arise for you during major projects and when implementing new policies.

We provide tax advisory services including guidance on how to achieve your commercial objectives while minimising avoidable tax charges; and implementation and transaction support services to ensure that your tax strategy is properly carried out.

Our key services include VAT, corporate, property and charity tax, as well as employee incentives and social finance.

Key strengths

Practical | Offering theoretically correct legal advice is one thing, but we believe the key to a successful partnership is ensuring that what we recommend works, not just on paper, but on the ground too.

Experienced | We regularly give tax advice on projects, reorganisations, investments, transactions, structuring joint ventures and outsourcing, working with clients and their accountants in both the public, private and charitable sector.

Our work

Government outsourcing | We provided tax structuring advice on the options for an IT and other outsourcing projects government department and public sector bodies.

Developments | We offer structuring assistance on high value residential and commercial property developments and transactions for central and local government. This includes advice on VAT, SDLT and the tax structuring implications of using commercial trading entities and joint venture vehicles.

IR35 | We've advised a number of public sector bodies on IR35 and its impact on the way in which they engage consultants and other non-permanent workers.

Lead contacts



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Optional specialisms charities

Our charity lawyers help organisations thrive in a changing world.

We have considerable understanding of charity law structuring within government constraints, and match this with expertise in procurement, property, commercial advice and tax structuring.

Key strengths

Holistic | Our team pulls expertise from across the firm to ensure we can look at our clients' issues from every angle and offer the appropriate support and advice.

Commercial | We regularly help large charities make the transition from being a government or publicly-funded entity to self-standing through generating their own commercial revenue, such as the British Council.

Knowledge | We work extensively with many household-name, government-funded charities including the Wellcome Trust, the British Medical Association and Royal Society of Chemistry.

Lead contacts



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Our work

English Heritage | We're helping the charity transition from central funding to self-funding, working as an extension to the in-house team, dealing with complex matters or where capacity is an issue. We're advising on the terms of a legacy, a variety of properties and preparing fundraising template documents for commercial partnerships.

UK Research and Innovation | We advised on the creation of the new National Centre for Digital Innovation, including mapping the principles for collaboration, identifying how new intellectual property may be created through use of different datasets, and confirming how IBM's quantum technology would keep data secure. We also advised on the purchase of a supercomputer, including carrying out procurement and contracting.

NESTA | When the foundation was seeking an exit from its HQ lease and to relocate to a new building, we helped assess a number of properties, identified a new build development with the opportunity for growth, interim commercialisation (via sub-letting) and conferencing. We handled due diligence involving our real estate, planning, environmental, construction and property tax teams, and negotiated a raft of complex documents.

Children and vulnerable adults

Our national, award-winning healthcare team regularly deals with sensitive cases involving children and vulnerable adults. Clearly, these can be some of the highest profile, highly sensitive issues and the team are alive to this in every individual case.

We have a genuine understanding of the skills needed to deal effectively with best interests applications relating to children (in the High Court) and vulnerable adults (in the Court of Protection), as well as care proceedings, child protection, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and children's continuing care. The team have a detailed knowledge of key pieces of legislation including the Children Act, Mental Capacity Act, Mental Health Act and Care Act.

We offer policy and operational advice on the child death review process, advise on the set up and operation of children's safeguarding panels/safeguarding adult reviews, work on information governance and disclosure, parental responsibility matters, social work and Special Educational Needs Tribunals.

We often support clients with inquests. We also support medical professionals and healthcare workers with child grooming and sexual exploitation investigations relating to children and vulnerable people under their care, for example, Operation Satchel. We offer advice on Protect and when children are referred to police with safeguarding and security concerns.

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Our work

Capacity | Advice on patients lacking capacity to make decisions about care and contact.

Acting for the ICB in a s.16 Mental Capacity Act 2005 welfare matter concerning P who has a diagnosis of Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) following a reported history of severe and sustained childhood abuse and trauma. Some of P's identities are children, while others are adults. It's the first reported English case considering DID and capacity, although the expert instructed by the parties in the case proffered a diagnosis of Complex PTSD with dissociative characteristics. The case centred on whether P has capacity to make decisions about where she lives and the care and support she receives.

Jehovah's Witness | Advised on a High Court life support ruling for a child.

A serious medical treatment application was needed relating to a 15-year-old patient who required lifesaving surgery but, as a Jehovah Witness, refused to consent to the use of blood products. An urgent application was made on the same day as receipt of instructions to the judge who made a declaration that it was in the patient's best interests to have blood products. Surgery subsequently proceeded, but, in the event, no blood products were required. This is one example of the many urgent and literally life and death serious medical treatment cases our healthcare teams work on.

Mental Health | Advice relating to the Lampard Inquiry.

We're acting for the three ICBs (NHS Mid and South Essex, Hertfordshire and West Essex and Suffolk and North East Essex) named as core participants in the Inquiry. The Inquiry, chaired by Baroness Kate Lampard CBE, is investigating the deaths of mental health inpatients in Essex between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2023. It'll also consider serious failings relating to the delivery of safe and therapeutic inpatient care and treatment, including the interaction between the Trust(s) and other bodies such as commissioners.

Information Governance | Advised on information sharing obligations between statutory agencies as part of ASRs and/ or CSRs to facilitate those reviews.

Education law

We're widely recognised as one of the UK's leading education law firms, with a substantial practice advising further and higher education institutions, the UK's largest Multi Academy Trust, awarding bodies, as well as national regulatory bodies and the Department for Education.

The firm acts for over 120 universities, colleges, national agencies, academies, educational businesses and charities.

Our in-depth understanding of the sector makes us an ideal partner for projects involving education law issues.

We can help with:

- Early years to higher education
- School workforce
- Pupil/student related litigation (including admissions, exclusions and equalities)
- Governance and reorganisation issues
- Inspection and regulation
- Finance, funding and student finance
- Related charity, contract and property issues

Lead contacts



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Our work

Qualifications bodies | Our advice to awarding bodies in connection with the extraordinary examination arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic served to ensure the qualifications regulators made practicable decisions over the operation of the special regulations imposed for the June 2020 and 2021 examination seasons.

Litigation | We worked to help an academy resolve a complex, intractable pupil exclusion issue without the expense and publicity of a legal challenge.

Education funding | We supported the Department for Education on a project to establish a new form of funding arrangement to expand the provision of nursery places in the UK.

T Levels | We advised the Department for Education and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education on the development and introduction of T Levels.

“It has been comforting to know that the team at Mills & Reeve were on top of the brief and giving us clear advice.”

Energy and natural resources

We know the sector and the energy market. Our team advises institutional and private landowners, businesses operating in and around the energy sector, master developers, government, businesses, investors, IDNOs, on all manner of energy projects and issues, including clean tech, renewables and oil and gas. Increasingly our work is in the Net Zero space.

We support on all aspects, from planning law including for nationally significant infrastructure projects (DCOs), and procurement law through to contracts and dispute resolution and litigation, with specialist support available in other key areas, such as finance and investment, corporate, construction, tax, competition law and environmental law.

Our areas of expertise include:

- Coal mining and power
- Energy efficiency measures
- Funding and planning
- Nuclear, including disposal issues
- Oil and gas (upstream, downstream, natural gas and LNG)
- Onshore and offshore infrastructure and facilities
- Renewables and clean technology (wind, tidal, solar photovoltaic and anaerobic digestion)
- ESG
- Water, air and land use, including emissions and pollution
- Grid connection arrangements and PPAs
- Heat networks
- Clean Air Zones and air quality

Key strengths

Pragmatic | The energy industry is a complex, fast-moving and high-risk environment. We provide pragmatic advice to facilitate your energy projects and resolve disputes.

Experienced | As well as government departments, we act for a variety of entities that operate in the energy sector including developers, owners, co-venturers, engineers, suppliers and funders/investors. This gives us a view of each situation from every angle.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy | We've advised the Department on the Get FIT Uganda rollout programme, to support the development and completion of small-scale on-grid renewable energy projects in Uganda, and on the funding, alongside KfW, of the REDD+ (Reduction of Emissions caused by Deforestation and forest Degradation) programme in Colombia.

Energy centres | We advised several NHS trusts and universities on procuring energy centres (including PPP and build-only models). We helped to deliver, through competitive procurements, guaranteed energy saving commitments from the private sector. This enabled the public sector procurer to both deliver savings year-on-year and enhance the resilience of their future energy supplies.

Green energy | We advised a leisure organisation on the procurement of an energy centre to deliver "green energy" to assist it to deliver top quartile sustainability targets. The energy centre was delivered on time and on budget and the Mills & Reeve advisory team received a "Delivering Excellent Service" award from the client for its work in supporting this sustainability initiative.

Drafting laws | One of our team was seconded to the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy in the heat, energy and climate change legal division. While there, she advised on legislation surrounding the EU Emissions Trading System and drafted a statutory instrument to amend domestic legislation and retain EU laws pertaining to the EU ETS in preparation for withdrawal of the UK from the EU.

Clean air zones | one of our team has advised on a number of clean air zones including the ambitious Greater Manchester CAZ and associated clean air interventions.

Financial services, market and competition regulation

We provide comprehensive support across regulatory compliance and advisory, competition and markets law, subsidy control, sector-specific regulation, transactional support, governance and risk management and dispute resolution. Our multidisciplinary teams and innovative technology solutions enable us to deliver strategic, practical advice to government and public sector bodies.

In financial services, we guide clients through regulatory implications, self-reporting obligations, investigations, and enforcement proceedings, with expertise in confidentiality, legal privilege and document management.

We advise listed companies on the Listing Rules, AIM Rules, Disclosure Rules, Prospectus Regulation Rules, Takeover Code and Market Abuse Regulation. Our clients range from FTSE 100 multinationals to AIM and overseas-listed companies.

Our competition specialists offer full-service support, including merger control, trading practices, investigations (dawn raids, cartels, market reviews), and subsidy control. We flag risk levels and explore pragmatic, compliant solutions to help clients meet their objectives within the framework of competition law.

Key strengths

Integrated expertise | We bring together regulatory, competition, commercial and sector-specific knowledge to deliver a seamless and comprehensive service.

Proactive support | When issues arise, we respond swiftly to provide clear guidance and reassurance during the critical early stages.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Insurance broker | We advised in connection with business-critical concerns raised by the FCA that the broker was acting in breach of the general prohibition. Through strategic engagement, we successfully resolved the matter to the FCA's satisfaction without the need for formal enforcement action.

Government departments | We provided advice on compliance with the Market Abuse Regulation where they are interfacing with publicly listed companies.

Eckoh plc | We advised on its £169 million recommended takeover offer by Bridgepoint, one of the world's leading quoted private asset growth investors, which was implemented by a Takeover Code compliant scheme of arrangement under Part 26 of the Companies Act 2006.

Department of Education | We advised on subsidy control aspects of its policies for supporting new child minders and school breakfast clubs.

A consortium | We advised on EU and UK competition aspects of a joint venture, ensuring compliance with public sector procurement and competition rules.

Food, rural and environmental affairs

We have a long-established agricultural team and our expertise in food, rural and environmental affairs comes from decades of experience advising on relevant issues on the ground.

The team can address issues ranging from ground water access, through to pollution control, and on the legal aspects of every element of the food supply chain.

We support government organisations with animal and plant health and animal welfare, farming, fisheries and marine, and wildlife. We advise on flooding, emissions and pollution issues, waste and recycling, water services and quality, and water, air and land use. We also specialise in food supply chain and regulation.

Key strengths

Deep expertise | We have one of the largest teams of food and agricultural lawyers in the country, with experts specialising in every legal element of the food supply chain.

Action based on understanding | We understand the issues you face and can deal with the legal technicalities, providing robust, practical advice to guide you when you need it.

Close industry knowledge | One of our food safety and labelling experts is on the board of the Food Law Group. We advise food business operators on a daily basis on labelling and marketing issues, product development and product names, health and nutrition claims, allergens and product recall and liability.

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Our work

Farm estates | When the Wellcome Trust purchased the farming business of the Co-operative Group, we advised on this, one of the UK's largest ever acquisitions of agricultural land.

Food chain safety | We supported a global food business during a contamination event at a multi-national level, including on the application of the Food Safety Requirements.

Portfolio management | We work with Trinity College, Cambridge on the management of its agricultural land portfolio, including tenancy restructuring, acquisitions and disposals.

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust | We provided advice on registration requirements, risk assessment and liability implications for a food business.

Royal Northern College of Music | We advised on allergen warnings and labelling and liability implications between the college and its external caterers and reviewed and updated relevant internal policies.

Environmental | We advised a consortium of 20+ landowners on a nationally significant bio-diversity scheme in North Norfolk. It involved collaborating and pooling land tax efficiently to enter into a 30-year scheme to enhance the natural habitat.

"If I want something done right, I will go to Mills & Reeve."

Franchise law

When you decide to set up a franchise operation to help roll out your service across the country, we can help you decide the best approach and design, support you to implement a pilot franchise, and establish the right legal arrangements to protect your intellectual property and maintain quality.

We advise both government franchisors and franchisees on all aspects of their franchise arrangements, including drafting appropriate agreements and protecting the intellectual property and goodwill in the franchise operation. We can advise on the protection and exploitation of trade marks in the UK and beyond.

Good communication and network management is key to the success of both franchisors and franchisees and we can advise you on maintaining a strong network and other non-contentious aspects of franchising. We can also advise you in relation to the contentious aspects of franchise agreements.

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Our work

Awards scheme branding | We advised a government department on the potential to exploit and licence the brand of an existing awards scheme. We provided strategic input and guidance on the appropriate model to both maximise the future success of the scheme while achieving value for money for the department's investment.

Education concession | We worked with the Department for Education, advising on the use of branding restrictions to manage the roll out of its T Levels education programme to be run by independent licensees.

Acquisitions | We've acted on multiple deals for the acquisition and disposal of hotel franchises and motor dealerships, including providing corporate and real estate (site acquisition) advice, and advice on funding and the franchise agreement.

Network management | We have experience in assisting franchisors with managing their networks, including advising prospective franchisees on the suitability of a franchise model, supporting a prospective franchisor with its pilot franchise, managing the franchisee renewal process and assisting franchisors with managing the sales process when their franchisees sell the franchisee's business.

Health and safety

Our expert lawyers can proactively manage risks and jump into action to provide expert advice following an incident.

If you unexpectedly need to deal with a fatal accident or serious injury, our specialist team of lawyers can provide you with the expertise required to minimise the risks to your business. We'll support you every step of the way.

We have over 30 years' experience helping all types of clients with their health and safety law issues. Our team advise on all aspects of this important area of law, from health and safety legislation compliance and regulatory processes, through to dealing with investigations and inquests.

We can also help with criminal investigations, public inquests, employers' and public liability, personal injury claims defence, health and safety at work, and food and fire safety.

Key strengths

Inquest-ready | We attend over 100 inquests a year on behalf of clients, making us a firm of choice where experience in handling inquests and advising on the outcome is required.

Highly experienced | We offer health and safety advice extensively to government and NHS departments as well as organisations across the health, education, insurance, agribusiness and real estate sectors.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Death of employees | We provided advice to a UK regulator and government agency from when an employee drowned until the matter had been concluded in court. This work included comprehensive written responses following requests for a PACE interview and very detailed mitigation. The result was a much-reduced financial penalty.

Fire safety and asbestos | We advise a number of public bodies on fire safety and asbestos issues, including investigations, disputes over responsibility and provision of information to the Health and Safety Executive.

Liability | We've provided advice at the heart of government in respect of potential criminal and civil liabilities arising out of Covid-19 response measures, which included guidance on how certain issues could be managed using existing liability schemes.

Prosecution | The team are presently advising a large food and agriculture business who are being prosecuted by the HSE following a serious chemical incident at their plant.

Investigations | We've been acting on behalf of one of the country's leading research institutions on a Health and Safety Executive investigation into a serious incident in the workplace involving unguarded machinery.

“Considering what it could have been, I was over the moon with the result.”

Health, healthcare and social care

Our extensive experience in the health and care sector means there's not much we haven't seen. Our work with the Department of Health and Social Care, providers in both the public and private sector, NHS England, and the Integrated Care Boards means we can expertly help with commissioning, transactional work, litigation, regulatory issues, delivering care, risk management, people, real estate, projects and much, much more.

Key strengths

Deep sector knowledge | Our depth and breadth of experience enables us to understand every part of the complex health and care ecosystem and so offer you the advice to meet your goals. As one of the leading healthcare teams in the UK, our work includes everything from M&A to major contracts, service redesigns, governance, regulator relationships, workforce and patient issues.

Offer 24/7 access | We know that healthcare can be a matter of life and death, and decisions may need to be made urgently. Our team is passionate about supporting our clients, whenever they need us. We even have a 24-hour healthcare phone line so you can be confident of immediate, easy access to our advice.

Help inform decisions | We don't sit on the fence but actively help you make informed decisions on projects both big and small. We work alongside you as an extension of your team, offering training and guidance to upskill and enable, and help us achieve more, together.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Public Inquiries

UK Covid-19 Inquiry | We supported **Supply Chain Coordination** Limited, in particular, with Module 5 of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry in relation to the procurement of Personal Protective Equipment during the pandemic. SSCL undertakes the procurement, storage and distribution of products for the NHS gave evidence during March 2025.

Thirlwall | Established to investigate the events at the Countess of Chester Hospital and their implications following the trial, and subsequent convictions, of former neonatal nurse Lucy Letby of murder and attempted murder of babies at the hospital. We supported the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB's Chief Executive and his team in their detailed liaison with the Inquiry.

Digital | Advising Synnovis, a joint venture pathology provider owned by Guy's and St Thomas' and King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trusts and SYNLAB UK & Ireland, when they were the victim of a ransomware attack in the Summer of 2024. Specialists from across the firm's data, commercial and disputes teams worked closely with the client to determine the extent of the attack, what, if any, patient data had been compromised, and how the attacker had gained access. This was believed to be the biggest ever cyber-attack on the NHS thought to have been instigated by the Russian operation known as Qilin.

Judicial Review | Acting for NHS Mid and South Essex ICB in a judicial review challenge concerning the legal adequacy of NHS Continuing Healthcare provision. The High Court dismissed the judicial review challenge. The reported decision offers valuable insights into the Administrative Court's approach to evaluative decisions made by NHS bodies when assessing health and care needs.

Housing law

We offer comprehensive legal support across all aspects of housing law, with a proven track record of advising central government departments on complex and high-value matters.

Our expertise spans landlord and tenant law, social housing regulation, leasehold and commonhold issues, housing fitness and quality, eviction and homelessness and social housing regulation and development.

We are trusted advisers to government bodies (including MHCLG and Homes England) and social housing providers navigating the legal intricacies of housing provision, regulation and reform.

Key strengths

Deep sector knowledge | We're recognised nationally for our work in residential property law, including leasehold enfranchisement and right to manage claims under the Leasehold Reform Acts. We've advised the Government on key pieces of housing legislation, including the RRB, LFRA, Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 and the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023.

Strategic estate management | Our team has advised on strategic estate management for the Government Property Agency, supported Homes England on development and disposals, and contributed to policy discussions around the Renters' Rights Bill and its impact on student housing, homelessness and wider issues.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Landlord and tenant | We work across the full range of landlord and tenant issues, including acting for private residential landlords and charity and higher education sector clients. We've advised on matters as diverse as housing disrepair claims, injunction and possession claims, rent arrears and enfranchisement.

We've also worked closely with the GLD and policy colleagues to advise MHCLG on key aspects of the Renters' Rights Bill and previously DLUHC on the Renters' Reform Bill and the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024.

Affordable housing | We've advised on a range of matters, including registration requirements under the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), as well as ongoing compliance and reporting obligations for registered providers. We've also supported clients in interpreting and applying the RSH's Direction on the notification of disposals of social housing, including advice on specific asset disposals. We also stay informed about new legislation and its impact on our clients, such as the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.

Immigration

When recruiting international staff, managing immigration requirements is a critical and increasingly complex process. Brexit and the ending of EU freedom of movement mean that many more employers and individuals are now required to navigate the UK's complex immigration rules. We can help you manage immigration compliance issues, enabling you to build the team you need.

We can provide advice and support on the full spectrum of immigration issues – from preparing sponsor licence applications, drafting immigration policies and procedures, assisting with right to work scenarios, to supporting individual visa applications, conducting immigration audits, or delivering bespoke training for HR teams and managers.

Key strengths

Knowledge | We're members of the Home Office Business Users' Forum, meaning we can help our clients keep up to date on the latest operational and policy developments.

Comprehensive | Our team has deep and wide ranging experience, from supporting individuals with 'personal' immigration applications through to helping employers manage dynamic compliance obligations. Whatever the immigration issue, our team of experts should be able to help.

Integrated | Many of our immigration lawyers are also experienced employment lawyers, meaning we can provide joined-up end-to-end support when recruiting and retaining international staff.

International | We've built a network of contacts with our 'best friend' international firms meaning our clients can get on-the-ground country-specific advice where staff are seconded or relocated to work abroad.

Risk aware | Our audit services help to identify and fix areas of risk, helping to ensure you have the necessary protections in place to safeguard your workforce, finances and reputation.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Non-departmental government body | We delivered a bespoke training session on the new points based immigration system, managing sponsor compliance obligations, and right to work issues.

NHS Trusts | We've advised numerous NHS Trusts on recruiting skilled international staff. This has included assessing the eligibility of roles for Skilled Worker visas, advising on sponsor compliance duties, making effective use of the EU Settlement Scheme, and assisting in the preparation of visa applications.

UK university | We conducted an immigration audit for a UK university in preparation for a Home Office compliance audit. This included interviewing staff, analysing systems policies and procedures, reviewing sponsored employee files, advising on how to proactively address matters with Home Office auditors, amending policies and procedures, and preparing a detailed audit report identifying key risk areas and actions necessary to achieve compliance.

Public sector employer | We drafted a strategic immigration advice report for a large employer with over 20,000 employees and 700 sponsored workers. This addressed the implications of Brexit and cessation of EU freedom of movement and the introduction of a new points based immigration system.

"The [immigration] team is led....by Alex Russell, who 'provides a fantastic service'"

Insurance and reinsurance

Our insurance and reinsurance practice is known for comprehensive, sector-focused legal services, supporting a wide range of clients including many of the world's leading insurers and reinsurers, Lloyd's syndicates, brokers, and other intermediaries.

Insurance claims & disputes | Expertise across most classes of business including accident & health, cyber, construction risks, directors & officers, medical malpractice, property damage, terrorism, and professional indemnity.

Trade credit, political risk and political violence | Our specialist team advises insurers on all aspects of political risk, credit and trade finance, including disputes. Our insurance lawyers collaborate with trade, surety and banking experts to provide a comprehensive service. We're market leaders in the insurance and reinsurance of war, terrorism and political violence worldwide.

Reinsurance | We advise on all types of reinsurance policies and disputes internationally, including quota share, excess of loss, facultative and treaty arrangements.

Corporate and commercial services | We advise insurers, reinsurers, brokers and intermediaries on M&A, regulatory capital, restructuring, and technology-related matters. We support insurtech startups and other growing insurance businesses.

Regulatory | We help UK and international insurance businesses navigate regulations and overcome barriers to trade. Our regulatory investigations team advises on FCA investigations, due diligence, and compliance matters affecting insurers, brokers, MGAs, and financial professionals. We also advise on regulatory capital, restructuring, and governance improvements.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Political violence | Successfully defended facultative political violence reinsurers in New York and London proceedings in *Hamilton v Afghan Global, Anham* (2024), value \$41m, risk was NATO warehouse in Afghanistan.

Political violence | Advising political violence re/insurers on claims arising from Gaza, French New Caledonia, Mozambique.

Reinsurance | Advising on multiple reinsurance/retrocession issues arising from COVID business interruption claims worldwide.

Reinsurance | Advising on reinsurance issues related to multi-billion dollar Russia/Ukraine aviation losses.

Corporate/ M&A support | Extensive corporate/M&A work for leading international broker.

Life sciences

We have a nationally renowned full-service life sciences practice focussed on supporting organisations in all life sciences fields – pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, medical devices, diagnostics, med tech and tech bio.

We can help wherever you need support, whether that is to acquire or dispose of new products and services, protect innovations, negotiate a complex technology or IP contract or deal with regulatory compliance issues. We provide solutions and risk analysis to enable you to seize the opportunities open to you.

Our specialisms include corporate and commercial, regulatory (including clinical trials and related data privacy issues), and patents and other IP.

Key strengths

Understanding beyond the law | Our life sciences team includes lawyers with scientific backgrounds and experience of working in-house at life sciences organisations, enabling us to really understand complex technical background to life sciences issues and how other organisations approach matters.

Understanding beyond Government | Our life sciences advice to the government and public sector benefits from our work for a broad industry client base including global pharmaceutical, biotech and med tech businesses as well as medical research and academic institutions. We also regularly support regulatory bodies.

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Our work

Vaccines and clinical trials | We advised UKRI on its funding of a number of accelerated late-stage clinical trials for medicinal products for the possible treatment of Covid-19. We also supported the UK Government's Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Programme, including putting in place contracts for the supplier of influenza vaccine in the event of a pandemic – rated as the UK's most significant civil emergency risk.

MHRA | We advised the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (a centre of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, the MHRA) on a range of IP and contractual matters, including material transfer agreements, grant funding, research collaborations and cell line licensing arrangements. Members of our team have undertaken secondments into the MHRA, giving us an in-depth understanding of industry regulation.

Ventilator challenge | We supported the Cabinet Office on its ventilator challenge programme including a range of contracts, public law and regulatory issues.

Health data | We advised Health Data Research UK on its scale-up activities including establishment of its research hubs and a range of IP and licensing issues.

Licensing | We provided licensing and IP advice on setting up the UK's first Academic Healthcare Centre, one of the UK's 11 Biomedical Research Centres with five years guaranteed research funding.

“A huge thanks to the team at Mills & Reeve for their hard work and support which was critical in enabling us to achieve this deal – their transactional and sector knowledge proved invaluable.”

Client testimonial

Media law

As recognised experts in reputation and brand management and media litigation work, our team protects public bodies from reputational harm from intrusive media in print, online and on social media.

In these often highly sensitive situations, you can trust our team to jump into action to offer informed, insightful advice.

We act on defamation, data breaches, privacy and breach of confidence, misuse of private information, harassment, disclosure orders and intellectual property and copyright issues. We also advise organisations when developing media contracts.

Key strengths

Reactive | Understanding that speed is often of the essence, we always aim to achieve quick results to minimise reputational harm, adverse publicity, and exposure.

Proactive | We work with communications officers to provide pre-publication advice and lawyer clearance when issuing statements to the public, mitigating the risk of reputational harm and legal claims.

Holistic | We advise a wide range of organisations and individuals who face sensitive allegations, including public bodies, the government, ministers and MPs.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Household name institution | When an individual made potentially harmful comments on social media, which were picked up by news media, we defended the allegations and prevented High Court proceedings with timely, strong pre-action correspondence.

West Midlands Ambulance Service | When a claim arose out of statements made to the BBC, we represented the public body by defending libel proceedings – which were successfully struck out.

Leading media & communication cases | We defended libel and malicious falsehood proceedings in the Royal Courts of Justice when our clients were accused of libel and malicious falsehood by a former healthcare employee. We defended the claim and had it successfully struck out, avoiding a costly and public final trial. The case of *Parris v Ajayi* is a reported judgment and leading authority on these legal issues [[2021] EWHC 285 (QB)].

Journalistic and broadcast enquiries | We regularly help high-profile organisations develop robust pre-publication rights of reply, often where there are public interest considerations.

Social media | We handle novel cases in this developing area, including obtaining disclosure orders to gain user details from platforms.

"Excellent...had in depth knowledge of the relevant law and drilled down to the central facts of the case that mattered."

Merger and acquisition activity

We offer deep expertise in merger and acquisition activity, including in the restructuring and divestment of public interests. We can support government clients through the establishment, restructuring, and privatisation of government-owned companies and assets, as well as joint ventures and strategic collaborations.

We're known for delivering 'firsts' and have a record of developing unique/innovative structures which deliver our client's goals within their risk tolerance. Our 50+ corporate lawyers advise GovCos and not-for-profits and public companies on the full range of merger and acquisition activity.

Key strengths

Impact | We have a wealth of experience advising on social investments, joint ventures and funding arrangements, and understand the delicate balance required to protect public stakeholders and allow for commercial growth whilst achieving social objectives.

Bold | Our team excels at challenging and unusual projects, using our extensive experience to develop the right way ahead for you.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Department of Health and Social Care | We supported a Limited Liability Partnership and the department (which was a shareholder in a joint venture company), on the sale of healthcare data analytics group, Dr. Foster Intelligence Limited, to a UK Subsidiary of ASX-listed, Telstra Health.

UK Research and Innovation | We supported with the acquisition of Knowledge Transfer Network Limited.

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy | We worked on the sale of Constructionline, one of the UK's largest online procurement and supply chain management services which was set up initially by the government for public sector contracts. We supported BEIS on the deal to secure the future of Constructionline, ensuring customers retain access to a comprehensive and quality assured service, while achieving the highest price possible.

British Council | We advised on a major joint venture with Blenheim Chalcot to develop, launch, operate and market a digital app under the name of "EnglishScore" which allows people to improve their English language skills.

MHCLG | We advised on the structuring, incorporation, management and funding of a GovCo (including the public classification issues).

Partnership law

Our team is a recognised leader in this dynamic and complex area of law, regularly advising on ground-breaking national initiatives. We design and create partnerships that lead to success and mitigate regulatory and other risks.

Our diverse client base means that we advise on a variety of corporate structures, including on the establishment of traditional partnerships under the 1890 Act, limited partnerships under the 1907 Act (including private fund limited partnerships under the 2017 Order), and limited liability partnerships under the 2000 Act. We've also supported government departments on the implications of partnership law, for example in disputes.

Key strengths

Delivery focused | We have in-depth experience of project managing innovative, complex and high priority projects with numerous stakeholders in the private and public sectors.

Impact | We're at the forefront of the developing market for social impact investing. We structure funds to meet your legal requirements and achieve your impact objectives.

Experienced | We act for government, public sector and corporate clients on a wide variety of corporate and commercial issues, giving us a strong understanding of all elements of partnerships.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Department for Education | We advised on the implications of a number of different structures, including a limited partnership, on a proposed fund vehicle. We also supported the department in analysing the resulting risks and liabilities.

Department of Health and Social Care | We supported a Limited Liability Partnership and the department (which was a shareholder in a joint venture company), on a sale to a subsidiary of an Australian listed company.

Urban developments | We advise property developers and landowners on limited liability partnership structures for strategic urban development projects.

Private law litigation and dispute resolution

Our team is composed of highly skilled and experienced professionals who specialise in private law civil litigation and dispute resolution. We have a proven track record of successfully defending and upholding the rights of clients in a wide range of cases. Our team members possess deep knowledge and expertise in private law litigation and dispute resolution, and we're well-aware of the challenges such claims sometimes bring, especially for public authorities in striking the right balance between individual rights and freedoms and the need for public bodies to be able to perform their functions unimpeded.

We believe that collaboration and working closely with our clients are key to achieving the best outcomes. By maintaining open lines of communication and fostering a strong partnership, we ensure that our clients are fully informed and involved in every step of the process. This collaborative approach allows us to tailor our strategies to meet the unique needs and goals of each client, ultimately leading to more effective and satisfactory resolutions.

Key strengths

Genuine expertise | We have particular expertise in claims related to data protection and GDPR, nuisance/undue and substantial interference with the enjoyment of land and employee/employer injury claims.

Collaboration | We pride ourselves on working collaboratively with clients to ensure that we understand their objectives and have a clear plan of action to achieve them.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Cyber-attack | We acted for a health client in relation to the biggest cyber-attack affecting the NHS in 2024, impacting around 4 million data subjects. We advised on the payment of ransom and matters related to reporting the attack to the ICO. We also obtained a High Court injunction to protect affected personal data and confidential information.

False imprisonment | We represent a health body in relation to a false imprisonment and Human Rights Act/breach of Article 5 ECHR claim made by a patient detained under the Mental Health Act.

Injunctive relief against persons unknown | we acted on behalf of a university client in applying for injunctive relief to stop protestors who had hindered staff from working in administrative buildings and stopped graduations from going ahead. These applications concerned a close examination of the rights of protestors (including their rights under Articles 10 and 11 ECHR) and the owner/occupier's property rights.

Misuse of private information | we represented a public sector client in a threatened claim for misuse of private information and breach of data protection legislation concerning a potential data breach involving disability data of over 400 data subjects. The claim was successfully settled.

Civil defence service training provider | we defended and resolved a claim for serious and prolonged psychiatric injury. The claim arose from exposure to unmanaged "workplace trauma" in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Investigating relative risk management strategies deployed by similar organisations, implications for liability and then complex personal and medical background to claimant enabling candid assessment of multifactorial causation issue, and resolution.

Supporting public inquiries

Public inquiries are often high profile and sensitive, involving significant media attention. Being involved can impose a heavy burden on the organisation and the individuals within them. We've worked on a number of high profile public inquiries in recent years, with huge reputational risks for our clients.

Key strengths

Collaboration | Working with Inquiry teams and a range of core participants to build strong, positive working relationships.

Sector expertise | Our extensive expertise in Public Inquiries matched with our lawyers' expertise in public law, health and social care, and healthcare regulation, means we can help to navigate challenges and mitigate risks to your reputation and interests.

Capacity | We can build teams quickly and at very short notice to deal with large disclosure exercises using varied case management systems. We have an ability to work with large volumes of evidence, make arrangements with large numbers of witnesses and handle long running hearings, over a period of months.

Lead contacts



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Our work

UK Covid 19 | We acted for Supply Chain Coordination Limited and UKHSA.

Lampard | We're acting for the three ICBs named as core participants in the Inquiry. The Inquiry, chaired by Baroness Kate Lampard CBE, is investigating the deaths of mental health inpatients in Essex between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2023.

Thirlwall | Established to investigate the events at the Countess of Chester Hospital and their implications following the trial, and subsequent convictions, of former neonatal nurse Lucy Letby of murder and attempted murder of babies at the hospital. We supported the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB Chief Executive and his team in their detailed liaison with the Inquiry.

Infected Blood Inquiry | Advised an independent healthcare organisation with matters concerning the Infected Blood Inquiry.

Manchester Arena Bombing Inquiry | Advised an education provider client. This included assisting them with witness evidence, advice on core participant status and disclosure / management of documents.

Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry | We advised Professor Sir Ian Kennedy and Anna Walker, the former Chair and Chief Executive of the Healthcare Commission in this high profile inquiry. Our work included drafting witness statements, reviewing statements, assessing evidence, dealing with disclosure of over 8,000 documents, selecting counsel and preparing questions.

Sustainable finance / green finance

We enable organisations to achieve green, social, sustainable and sustainability-linked bonds and financing. We're experts on the integration of environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations into banking and finance arrangements.

We help government clients navigate the evolving ESG landscape by structuring finance transactions that align with policy goals and ensure regulatory compliance. Whether you're initiating ESG-linked funding or enhancing existing frameworks, we provide practical, forward-thinking legal solutions. Under the banner of ESG Ignite, we produced a series of reports aimed at helping organisations to take a proactive and positive approach to environmental, social and governance issues. All five reports, available on our website, look at how leading organisations are embracing the move to more sustainable ways of operating, investigate opportunities in the supply chain and leadership and finish with a view of the future.

Key strengths

Specialist knowledge | We can help you to develop indicators that hit green or social criteria, while ensuring that your legal documents reflect your indicators and margin ratchets.

Clear communicators | Our strategic approach means we're able to explain complex, cutting-edge options to the multiple stakeholders involved.

Deep expertise | Decade-long leadership in sustainable finance, including £4.5bn in fundraising for non-profits.

Innovative | Our methods for managing grant arrangements and resolving disputes minimise disruption and maximise success.

Lead contacts



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Our work

Natural Cambridgeshire | Designed a bespoke template loan agreement for the "Doubling Nature Fund" with a unique prepayment mechanism linked to biodiversity net gain credits.

University of Hull | Advised the university on its sustainability linked revolving credit facility and green private placement, raising £86million to support the university's ambition to become carbon neutral.

Wells Fargo Bank NA | Advised on one of the first sustainability linked revolving credit facilities using the Loan Market Association's recommended provisions for sustainability linked loans (released May 2023). The borrower was a FTSE 100 company.

University of Derby | Advised the university on its £30million sustainability linked facility with key performance metrics linked to carbon emissions, the attainment gap between students from different backgrounds and the percentage of staff from different backgrounds in leadership positions.

Wain Estates | Advised a residential developer on a loan from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's Brownfield fund to remediate environmental contamination on a development site. The remediation involved testing new methods for the removal of PFAS.

Flagship Group | To help raise funds for social and environmental projects, we supported the social housing group with its debut £250 million sustainable bond, acting as issuer and helping navigate the process