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Legal Wales Conference 2025

Friday 10th October, Bangor University



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Welcome to the 23rd Legal Wales Conference

Delegate Pack Contents:

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- Programme in Brief (With Venue / Room Maps)
- Breakout Room Allocation
- Full Programme
- Speaker Biographies
- Sir Samuel Evans Prize 2025 Winner Biographies
- Dinner Speaker Biographies
- Legal Wales-LEDLET Residential Summer Scheme
- **SAVE THE DATE:** Legal Wales Conference 2026
- **Plus lots of useful information on our event partners!**

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We're Browne Jacobson.

The law firm for positive impact across business and society.

Our standing as trusted advisers to all aspects of government encompasses an enduring commitment to Wales.

We have had a well-established presence in the Welsh market for over twenty five years, now cemented by our Cardiff office. Having acted for Welsh Government for more than sixteen years, we have recently been reappointed to the Welsh Government Commercial Division Framework for the public sector in Wales for a further 4 year period.

As well as Welsh Government, we act for a number of other public bodies in Wales (Natural Resources Wales, Qualification Wales, Independent Monitoring Authority for the Citizens Rights Agreements, National Museum of Wales, Welsh Trunk Road Agency, MEDR and several others), as well as a number of local authorities (Carmarthenshire, Ynys Mon, Flintshire, Neath Port Talbot, and Pembrokeshire amongst others) and a corporate joint committee (Cardiff Capital Region).

We are therefore familiar with the ever growing body of Welsh law, as well as the unique political and societal landscape in Wales.

Wales and its laws are different.

We know this and understand what it means for you.

We are in Wales, for Wales.

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Case studies

Cardiff Council

Housing Development Partnership

We are acting for Cardiff Council on their procurement of a new housing development partnership which will see around 2,000 new high quality homes (including affordable homes) developed across a programme of sites in both Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

We have extensive experience of all types of regeneration and are delighted to be working on one of the biggest housing programmes in Wales.

Welsh Government

Advising on the reform of primary care in Wales

We have been supporting Welsh Government since 2019 in relation to the reform of primary care in Wales. We have worked directly with policy teams and the legal services team to amend relevant legislation, precedent contracts and other arrangements to facilitate significant changes in the operation of primary care contracts for GPs, and other primary care providers.

Neath Port Talbot and Pembrokeshire County Councils

Celtic Freeport

We are acting for the lead authorities of the recently approved Celtic Freeport. The Freeport will be one of the most important in the UK due to its size, location and its focus on green energy, and in particular floating offshore wind. We have extensive experience of advising on a number of Freeport projects across England and Wales.

Local Health Boards

Court of Protection

We have represented five out of seven of the LHBs in Wales, supporting them with a wide range of health advisory matters. In particular we have assisted with Court of Protection, Children Act and Inherent Jurisdiction proceedings as well as providing advice regarding the Mental Health Act 1983, information governance and policy drafting.

Natural Resources Wales

Landscape and protected sites designations

We are advising NRW in relation to sites of special scientific interest, areas of outstanding national beauty and the possibility of a new national park in Wales. We are advising on a range of issues including enforcement, consultation, licensing, order making and fairness of process.

Ynys Mon

Planning advice

We are advising Ynys Mon on all aspects of planning law, including advice on major applications, on 106 agreements, and including providing legal support in person within planning committee as required.

Our team



Laura Hughes
Partner, Executive Lead
for Wales

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Laura is an expert in public law, and is head of the insurance and public risk department at Browne Jacobson, as well as Executive Lead for Wales. Laura has advised Welsh Government, for whom she is client partner, for more than 16 years, as well as clients such as NRW, Qualification Wales and various local authorities



Tim Edds
Partner, Head of
Cardiff Office

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Tim regularly acts for local and central government, operating as an extension to in-house legal teams, advising on the development of various, nationally significant policies and drafting legislation implementing such policies.



Peter Ware
Partner

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Peter is an expert in public procurement, state aid and local authority law, advising both public and private sector clients. He has expertise in advising on regeneration projects and recently led advice for the Celtic Freeport.



Ben Standing
Partner

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Ben specialises in public, planning and environmental law for public bodies, corporate sector bodies and affordable housing providers. Key areas of work include large infrastructure projects and section 106 agreements. A key part of Ben's practice is advising on large mixed-use developments, this includes for public bodies such as local planning authorities, landowners and private developers. In addition, Ben advises on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and Developments of National Significance (Wales).



Bill Cordingley
Barrister (Senior
Associate)

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Bill advises public bodies on environmental litigation, drafting subordinate legislation, air quality, pollution, opencast mining, the Habitats Regulations, the Wildlife and Countryside Act, the Forestry Act, environmental aspects of planning law (including Environmental Impact Assessment for the Forestry sector and matters relating to onshore wind farms) and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.



Julia Tune
Associate

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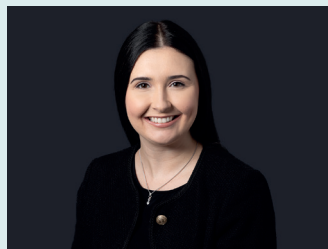
Julia has an in depth understanding of all aspects of litigation and has extensive experience in Criminal Courts, Civil Courts, the Employment Tribunal and in the High Court dealing with Judicial Review cases.



Eleri Griffiths
Associate

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Eleri advises on decision making and supports healthcare clients with judicial review, information law, statutory appeals and public law issues. She undertakes advisory work for public and private sector organisations in the health sector.



Megan Rogers
Associate

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Megan acts for Central and Local Government bodies, advising on powers and duties, development and implementation of policy and various planning matters.



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Programme in Brief

9:00	Registration
9:30	Conference Start
11:00 - 11:30	Mid-Morning Break
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch Kindly Sponsored by University of Wales Trinity St David
15:40 - 16:00	Afternoon Break
17:00	Conference Close
19:00	Drinks Reception & Conference Dinner Pritchard-Jones Hall, Bangor University, LL57 2AP (Dress Code: Business Attire)

Reichel Room Layout Map [HERE](#)

Campus Map [HERE](#)

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"30 Park Place Chambers is 'able to handle almost any matter irrespective of the complexity or nature of the case involved', and have a highly experienced and specialised administrative law team that is regularly instructed by the Welsh government and other large administrative bodies on complex human rights matters."

Legal 500 2025 - Administrative Law & Human Rights

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Public Law Team



30 Park Place is Wales's leading chambers for public and administrative law. We act in some of the most high-profile and constitutionally significant cases across the UK.

Our team is regularly instructed by the UK Government, the Welsh Government, the Senedd, local government, other public bodies, individual claimants and charities.

30 Park Place is consistently ranked as the only Tier 1 chambers in Wales for Administrative and Public Law by the Legal 500 directory. Our barristers appear at every level including the Supreme Court on a regular basis.

Our barristers are appointed to the Attorney General's panel and the Welsh Government's panel of advocates. Many are recognised as leading individuals in Chambers UK and Legal 500.

We appear in many of the leading devolution cases, and have extensive experience in the areas of local government, social care, health, education, public procurement, immigration, human rights, planning and environmental, regulatory, and coronial.

With a collaborative approach and a strong clerking team, we provide accessible, responsive legal support across Wales and beyond.

Cardiff-based chambers 30 Park Place fields significant expertise in public law matters spanning a broad array of issues, including human rights, immigration, healthcare, education and commercial regulation. One source heralds the set as the "leading public law set in Wales", with "excellent" members. The set was recently involved in the R (Coal Action Network) v (1) Merthyr Tydfil CBC, (2) the Welsh Ministers, an environmental challenge related to ongoing coal extraction. Among its number the set counts members of both the Attorney General's and Welsh Government's panel of advocates. - Chambers UK, 2025

30parkplace.co.uk | publiclaw@30parkplace.co.uk | 02920398421



Our Public Law team offers barristers specialising in:

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Authorities
Local Government

Team Members

Lloyd Williams KC
*Richard Clayton KC
*Cathryn McGahey KC
*David Sharpe KC
David Hughes
Christian Jowett
Rebecca Harrington
Andrew Joseph
Luke Garrett
Mikhael Puar
*Sian Reeves
Christian J Howells
*Kirsten Heaven

Abla O'Callaghan
Nia Gowman
Laura Shepherd
Melissa Jones
Lowri Patterson
Hywel Evans
Lewis Harrison
Cat Jones
Dominie Patel
Jac Brown
Rose Glanville
Emma Meadows
Megan Eckley

Lead Clerk: Kayleigh Jefferies

'30 Park Place Chambers is able to handle almost any matter irrespective of the complexity or nature of the case involved, and have a highly experienced and specialised administrative law team that is regularly instructed by the Welsh Government and other large administrative bodies on complex human rights matters.' - Legal 500, 2026

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Reichel Room
Layout Map
[HERE](#)

Morning Breakout Rooms

PLEASE NOTE: Each breakout strand is one hour long.
You may choose to attend any of the one-hour sessions.

12:20 - 13:30

Strand 1 - Anniversaries Strand:

The Law Commission at 60 and law reform in Wales

Located in the Main Conference Room ('Y Brif Neuadd')

Strand 2 -

Behind the Scenes of Criminal Justice in Wales

Located in 'Penrhyn'

Strand 3 - Futures Strand:

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in the legal profession in Wales

Located in 'Dinorwig'

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OF THE YEAR
FOR TEACHING
QUALITY

Ysgol Y Gyfraith Abertawe

Rydym yn cynnig addysg ddeinamig a chynhwysfawr a gynlluniwyd i baratoi myfyrwyr ar gyfer gyrfaedd llwyddiannus mewn galwedigaethau cyfreithiol a chyfiawnder troseddol.

Rydym yn gweithio gyda mwy na 30 o wahanol gwmnïau cyfreithiol, ac mae ein cyrsiau, trwy brentisiaethau neu gyrsiau traddodiadol, yn cynnig addysg sy'n ffocysu ar ddiwydiant i fyfyrwyr er mwyn ennill neu adeiladu sgiliau ymarferol a byd go iawn sy'n berthnasol yn uniongyrchol i amgylcheddau proffesiynol.

Prentisiaethau Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol

(Lefel 3 a 5 wedi'u hariannu'n llawn. Lefel 6 hefyd ar gael)

[Dysgwch Ragor](#)

Y Gyfraith ac Arfer Cyfreithiol, LLM

[Dysgwch Ragor](#)



ynghymru, ac
yn 2il yn y DU am
Fodddhad Myfyrwyr
(NSS 2025)

in Wales and 2nd in
the UK for Student
Satisfaction
(NSS 2025)



yn fodlon ar y
Cymorth Academaidd
(NSS 2025 Y Gyfraith Lefel
Pwnc CAH3)

Satisfaction with
Academic Support
(NSS 2025 Law CAH3
Subject Level)



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Reichel Room
Layout Map
[HERE](#)

Afternoon Breakout Rooms

PLEASE NOTE: Each breakout strand is one hour long.
You may choose to attend any of the one-hour sessions.

14:30 - 15:40

Strand 1 - Collaboration Strand:

Collaboration & Partnership: How working together can overcome unmet legal need

Located in 'Penrhyn'

Strand 2 - Anniversaries Strand:

Deg mlynedd o Dribiwnlys y Gymraeg / Panel discussion to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Welsh Language Tribunal

Located in "Dinorwig"

Strand 3 - Futures Strand:

Transforming North Wales: Projects & Planning

Located in the Main Conference Room ('Y Brif Neuadd')

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Legal Wales Conference 2025

10 October 2025, Neuadd Reichel, Prifysgol Bangor University LL57 2TW

Conference Programme

09:00	REGISTRATION & REFRESHMENTS	09:30
09:30	Opening Address Jonathan Elystan Rees KC Chair of Legal Wales	09:45
09:45	Keynote address: Reflections on the Bicentennial of the Law Society Mark Evans President of the Law Society of England and Wales Chair: Robert Williams President of Cheshire and North Wales Law Society	10:25
10:25	Counsel General for Wales Julie James AS Chair: The Hon. Mrs. Justice Morgan	11:00
11:00	REFRESHMENT BREAK	11:30
11:30	Tim Eicke KC Judge of the European Court of Human Rights in respect of the United Kingdom (2016-2025) Chair: Jonathan Elystan Rees KC	12:15

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Legal Wales 2025 Conference Programme

All strands start: 12:20	MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS	All strands end: 13:30
Breakout: Behind the Scenes of Criminal Justice in Wales (Venue: Penrhyn) HH Judge Rhys Rowlands (Hon. Recorder of Caernarfon) Jenny Hopkins Chief Crown Prosecutor Wales Gareth Evans Assistant Chief Constable, North Wales Police Caroline Rees KC Michael Strain Michael Strain Solicitors	Anniversaries Strand The Law Commission at 60 and law reform in Wales (Venue: Main Plenary / Y Brif Neuadd) Speaker: Rt Hon Sir Peter Fraser Chair of the Law Commission of England and Wales Chair: Rt. Hon. Lord Lloyd-Jones JSC	Futures Strand Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in the legal profession in Wales (Venue: Dinorwig) Panel: Ewan McLeod Director of strategy, policy and insights, Bar Standards Board Joseff Morgan Wales and Chester Circuit EDI Committee Member & Barrister, 9 Park Place Laura Hughes Partner, & Executive Lead for Wales, Browne Jacobson Chair: Emma Waddingham Editor, Legal News Wales / Vice-President, Cardiff & District Law Society
13:30	LUNCH Kindly sponsored by:  Prifysgol Cymru Y Drindod Dewi Sant University of Wales Trinity Saint David	14:30

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Legal Wales 2025 Conference Programme

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

All strands start: 14:30	MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS	All strands end: 15:40
Collaboration Strand Collaboration & Partnership: How working together can overcome unmet legal need (Venue: Penrhyn) <u>Panel:</u> Sue James North Wales Community Law and Chief Executive of Legal Action Group Tracey Horton, Director of Bangor University Legal Advice Clinic with colleagues from NWCL and the Advice Clinic <u>Chair:</u> Ron Davison Gamlins Law	Anniversaries Strand Deg mlynedd o Dribiwnlys y Gymraeg Panel discussion to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Welsh Language Tribunal (Venue: Dinorwig) Session in Cymraeg with simultaneous translation Betsan Criddle CyB Llywydd y Tribiwnlys Osian Llywelyn Cyfarwyddwr Rheoleiddio a Dirprwy Gomisiynydd Keith Bush CyB (er anrhydedd) Keith Bush CyB (er anrhydedd) Daniel Taylor Blake Morgan <u>Cadair:</u> Rhodri Williams CyB	Futures Strand Transforming North Wales: Projects & Planning (Venue: Main Plenary Room / Y Brif Neuadd) Christian Branch Head of Service (Regulation & Economic) Anglesey County Council Joanne Clement KC 11 KBW Chambers With Laura Alliss & Enlli Williams <u>Chair:</u> Ben Standing Partner, Browne Jacobson

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Legal Wales 2025 Conference Programme

15:40	AFTERNOON BREAK	16:00
	Due an issue that has arisen at short notice the Lady Chief Justice of Northern Ireland has, with regret, had to withdraw from the Conference this year.	
16:00	Presentation of the Sir Samuel Evans Prize 2025 for the best undergraduate result at a Welsh Law School The Prize-winner, Matilda Falchetta (Aberystwyth University) will be introduced by Huw Williams (Senedd Cymru) The Prize Certificate will be presented by the Lady Chief Justice.	16:15
16:15	The Lady Chief Justice of Wales and England Rt Hon. Baroness Carr of Walton-on-the-Hill DBE Chair: Huw Williams, Senedd Cymru	16:45
16:45	Close of Conference (To include the announcement of the Legal Wales Awards 2026 and the date of the Legal Wales Conference 2026) Jonathan Elystan Rees KC	17:00

Followed by the
Legal Wales Dinner 2025
(Information Overleaf)

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Legal Wales 2025 Dinner

19:00: Drinks Reception	Friday 10 October Pritchard-Jones Hall, Bangor University, LL57 2AP (Dress Code: Business Attire) Drinks Reception Welcome: Jonathan Elystan Rees KC - Three-Course Dinner - After Dinner Speaker: Helen Molyneaux Co-Founder of Monumental Welsh Women	Until late
19:45: Call for Dinner		

Fringe Events 2025

Saturday 11 October Timings 11:00- 13:00 Visit to Beaumaris Courthouse & Prison (by kind invitation of Beaumaris Town Council) to include a talk by Dr Richard Ireland (Welsh Legal History Society) Numbers are restricted, please contact Huw Williams at huw.williams133@outlook.com regarding availability.
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(second fringe event overleaf)



Fringe Events 2025

Saturday 11 October

Legal Runner x Parkrun

Castell Penrhyn Castle, Bangor, LL57 4HT

9:00am

The morning after the Legal Wales Conference and dinner there is an opportunity for any Legal Runners to join Mark Evans, the President of the Law Society and Founder of Legal Runner ([Home - Legal Runner](#)) for a 5k ParkRun - at whatever your pace - in the beautiful grounds of Castell Penrhyn, Bangor (and, more importantly, a coffee and a cake afterwards!)

Where?

Castell Penrhyn Castle, Bangor, LL57 4HT

(a 5 minute drive from the Conference venue). Further details at

www.parkrun.org.uk/penrhyn/

The route

Described as "a really good bucket list kind of Parkrun", the route consists of two big loops and two smaller loops around the castle.

The big loop heads off down the main drive then swings right along a track that runs up to the walled garden. From there, stay on the track which runs up past the brick stable and along to the main castle entrance.

The small loop swings right at the main castle entrance, down past the walled garden then up past the brick stable and along to the main castle entrance and the finish. Each loop is completed twice.

Refuel at the café

Post-run, you can reward yourself in the café and enjoy coffee and a cake or a bite of breakfast to refuel.

Book your spot

Please let **Tomos Lewis** (tomos.lewis@blakemorgan.co.uk) or **Mark Evans** (mark.evans@law.ac.uk) know if you intend taking part or require any further information.



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Legal Wales Conference Speaker Biographies

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Speaker Biographies



Jonathan Elystan Rees KC has been the Chair of Legal Wales since 2022.

Jonathan is a graduate of Jesus College, Cambridge and was called to the Bar by the Inner Temple in 2000, becoming a Bencher in 2020. Practicing from chambers in Cardiff, Chester, London and Manchester, Jonathan specialises in international criminal law, white collar fraud, serious crime and professional misconduct.

He has recently appeared before the Kosovo Specialist Chambers sitting in The Hague. Jonathan sits as a Recorder in the Crown Court.



Robert Williams is President of Cheshire and North Wales Law Society, and a Consultant Partner at GHP Legal, in the Civil Litigation, Personal Injury and Dispute Resolution teams. He heads up the Employment & Dispute Resolution team in the firm's Wrexham office and is a key member of the Management committee.

Drawing on his experience as a lawyer and as a partner managing the business Robert advises many other businesses' on the increasing number of day to day issues that they face. Robert deals with advice and cases relating to businesses including procurement issues, personal injury, employment and related litigation matters. A Senior Litigator accredited by the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers, Robert is also an accredited member of the Law Society Personal Injury Panel and a member of the Employment Lawyers Association.



Mark Evans is the President of the Law Society of England and Wales. He represents North Wales. He was inaugurated as president on the eve of this year's Legal Wales Conference, at Chancery Law on 8 October 2025.

Mark practised property and private client law for more than 28 years. He worked in North Wales and Chester. He is currently on a sabbatical from teaching various courses on real estate, private client and professional skills at the University of Law. Mark was a member of the Law Society Wales Committee for nine years and acted as chair for four of those years.

Mark founded Legal Runner, a community where people can run and have a space to talk openly about mental health topics. [Click here for more.](#)



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Speaker Biographies



The Hon Mrs Justice Morgan (Dame Sarah Morgan, DBE) was born in Wales, the daughter of a teacher and a civil engineer. She spent some of her early childhood living in the Caribbean before her family returned to the UK and settled in the Midlands, where she attended state schools. Dame Sarah was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn in 1988 and practised from 1GC Family Law chambers in London where she specialised in Family Law, particularly relating to children. She was appointed a Recorder sitting in the criminal and family courts on the South Eastern circuit in 2009 becoming Queen's Counsel in 2011. In 2019, Dame Sarah was appointed as a deputy High Court Judge and in 2022 she was appointed to the High Court and assigned to the Family Division. In 2023 she became Family Presiding Judge for Wales, in succession to Francis J.



Julie James MS, Counsel General for Wales & Minister for Delivery

Until she was elected as Member of the Senedd for Swansea West, Julie was a leading environmental and constitutional lawyer. Prior to this, she was Assistant Chief Executive at City and County Swansea Council. Julie spent most of her legal career in local government, working as a policy lawyer with the London Borough of Camden before returning to Swansea to work for West Glamorgan County Council and then the City and County of Swansea. Julie was appointed Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology in September 2014. In May 2016, Julie was appointed as Minister for Skills and Science. Julie was appointed Leader of the House and Chief Whip in 2017, Minister for Housing and Local Government in 2018, and Minister for Climate Change in 2021. In 2024, Julie was appointed Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning followed by her appointment as Counsel General Designate and Minister for Delivery on 11 September. She was appointed formally as Counsel General by His Majesty the King on 20 September 2024.



Tim Eicke KC was Judge of the European Court of Human Rights in respect of the United Kingdom from 2016 to 2025. Having completed his distinguished nine-year term as judge at the European Court of Human Rights elected in respect of the United Kingdom, Tim Eicke K.C. now returns to full-time practice. During his term at the Court, Tim was involved in a significant number of important cases and assumed different roles of responsibility. Tim has native/bi-lingual fluency in English and German and professional proficiency in French. Before he became a judge at the Court, Tim was considered one of the leading advocates in Public and Constitutional Law, European Union Law, International Human Rights Law and Public International Law who combined his advocacy with a broad advisory practice, advising the UK and foreign governments, government departments, companies and individuals. Tim has particular expertise in cases involving the inter-relationship and interaction between two or more of these (at times competing) systems or areas of law, exemplified by his work on economic sanctions in the context of UN, EU and ECHR obligations.



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Speaker Biographies



Caroline Rees KC is a criminal Silk at 30 Park Place chambers and is the current Leader of the Wales and Chester Circuit (the first woman elected to that role). She also sits as a Recorder of the Crown Court and as Legal Chair of the Mental Health Review Tribunal Wales. Caroline is a longstanding advocate for equality and social mobility within the profession.

Caroline has a distinguished practice spanning serious sexual offences, homicide, and organised crime. She leads the criminal team at 30 Park Place. Since taking Silk in 2018, she has appeared in some of the most high-profile and harrowing homicide cases in Wales, including the nationally reported prosecutions arising from the deaths of Logan Mwangi, Lola James, and Kaylea Titford.

Caroline acts for both the Prosecution and Defence and is regularly instructed in large-scale cases involving modern slavery, drugs supply, and serious organised crime.



HHJ Rhys Rowlands was appointed as Senior Judge for North Wales in 2014. Educated at University College London and Cardiff University, he is a former prosecuting solicitor for North Wales Police.

He was called to the bar in 1986, practising from Chester chambers.

Judge Rowlands was appointed a recorder in 2000, and became a circuit judge in 2010, based at Cardiff Crown Court.

He has also conducted trials in north Wales, sitting at Mold and Caernarfon Crown Courts.



Jenny Hopkins is the Chief Crown Prosecutor for Wales. Jenny grew up in Wales and was a solicitor in private practice before joining CPS London in 1998 as a Senior Crown Prosecutor. She became a Legal Manager in CPS London before spending 5 years as a Unit Head in the Organised Crime Division. She returned to CPS London as the Head of Homicide and in 2011 was appointed the Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutor with responsibility for the Complex Casework Unit.

Between 2014 and 2018 Jenny was the Chief Crown Prosecutor for the CPS East of England Area before taking up her post as the Head of the Special Crime and Counter Terrorism Division. Jenny was appointed as the Chief Crown Prosecutor for Wales in May 2021.

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Mae cyfreithwyr arbenigol Blake Morgan LLP yn gweithio gyda ystod eang o sefydliadau, busnesau ac unigolion yn y sector gyhoeddus a'r sector gyhoeddus ac yn darparu datrysiadau perthnasol a realistig i faterion cyfreithiol.

Mae gennym gysylltiadau a gwreiddiau dwfn yn Nghymru dros 150 mlynedd. Mae ein cleientiaid yn dweud wrthym mai ein dull cyffyrddiad personol o weithio ynghyd â'n profiad masnachol go iawn sy'n ein gwneud ni'n wahanol.

P'un a ydych yn gleient corfforaethol neu'n chwilio am gyngor ar faterion personol, fel cynghorydd dibynadwy rydym yn canolbwyntio ar yr hyn rydych chi am ei gyflawni i wneud yn siŵr bod gennych chi'r gefnogaeth gyfreithiol gywir yn ei le, nawr ac yn y dyfodol.

Rydym yn darparu ystod lawn o wasanaethau cyfreithiol i enwau cyfarwydd Cymru yn o gystal a chorfforaethau byd-eang, gan rymuso busnesau Cymru i dyfu, ehangu'n fyd-eang a llywio fframweithiau cyfreithiol cymhleth er mwyn llwyddiant hirdymor.

At Blake Morgan LLP, our expert lawyers work with a range of public and private sector organisations, businesses and individuals to help find relevant, realistic solutions to complex professional and personal legal issues.

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Helpu twf Cymru fel cenedl hyderus, deg a chystadleuol.

Mae Blake Morgan yn falch o fod wrth wraidd cymuned gyfreithiol Cymru. Gyda phresenoldeb cryf ledled Cymru, rydym yn cyfuno gwybodaeth leol drylwyr gydag adnoddau cwmni cyfreithiol gwasanaeth lawn, er mwyn cynnig cyngor eithriadol i fusnesau, cyrff cyhoeddus ac unigolion.

Mae ein cyfreithwyr yn gynghorwyr dibynadwy ar rai o'r materion mwyaf cymhleth ac uchel eu proffil yng Nghymru, gan gwmpasu gwaith masnachol, sector gyhoeddus, meysydd rheoleiddiol a chleientiaid preifat. Rydym yn ymrwymedig i gefnogi datblygiadau cyfreithiol Cymru, gan weithio gyda chyfreithwyr mewnol, y llywodraeth, rheoleiddwyr a'r proffesiwn ehangach i lunio datrysiadau sy'n gwneud gwahaniaeth gwirioneddol.

Rydym yn gyfreithwyr dibynadwy i nifer blaenllaw o'r meysydd yr ydym yn arbenigo ynddynt. Mae hyn yn cynnwys sefydliadau corfforaethol rhyngwladol a chenedlaethol, 20 awdurdod lleol, adrannau llywodraeth ganolog yn ogystal â llywodraeth ranbarthol ddatganoledig, pedwar banc stryd fawr, banciau corfforaethol mawr, archfarchnadoedd blaenllaw, ac adeiladwyr tai. Rydym hefyd yn cynghori dros 100 o ysgolion, academiâu a phrifysgolion ar ystod eang o faterion cyfreithiol.

Yn Blake Morgan, nid ydym yn darparu cyngor cyfreithiol yn unig, rydym yn meithrin partneriaethau parhaol. Mae ein hymglymiad â Chymru'r Gyfraith yn adlewyrchu ein hymroddiad i gydweithio ac arloesi, a chyfrannu at ddyfodol y proffesiwn yng Nghymru.

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Our lawyers are trusted advisers on some of the most complex and high-profile matters in Wales, spanning commercial, public sector, regulatory, and private client work. We are committed to supporting the development of the Welsh legal landscape, working with in-house counsel, government, regulators, and the wider profession to shape solutions that make a real difference.

We are trusted by many of the leading players within the areas in which we specialise. This includes international and national corporate organisations, 20 local authorities, central government departments as well as devolved regional government, four major high street and corporate banks, leading supermarkets, and four of the top 10 house builders. We also advise over 100 schools, academies and universities on a wide range of legal issues.

At Blake Morgan, we don't just provide legal advice, we build lasting partnerships. Our involvement in Legal Wales reflects our dedication to collaboration, innovation, and the future of the profession in Wales.

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Speaker Biographies



Assistant Chief Constable Gareth Evans. Gareth is a Welsh speaker having grown up in Brecon in Mid Wales. He started his career in Devon & Cornwall Police in 1998 before transferring to North Wales in 2001 as a constable on response in Ynys Mon. He has since served in nearly every rank in uniform and as a detective across Western, Central and Crime Services culminating as Head of PVPU and Head of Crime Services. As a PIP 3 and PIP 4 Senior Investigating Officer he has led many complex enquiries but particularly in the areas of public protection and child abuse. In 2016 he graduated from the FBI National Academy in Quantico USA following three months of studying violent crime investigative strategy, crisis negotiation and media management including visits to the Philadelphia Police Department and the NYPD. In his current post as Temporary Assistant Chief Constable he has responsibility for Crime and Local Policing and is a Strategic Firearms Commander and Gold Commander for the force.



Michael Strain, is a Partner and Founder, Michael Strain Solicitors. He qualified in 1992, and obtained Higher Rights qualifications in 2003, allowing him to appear in the Higher Courts. Michael specialises in criminal and personal injury litigation having dealt with the whole range of criminal cases from minor motoring matters to major murder enquiries. He also deals with personal injury matters including standard whiplash injuries and major catastrophic injuries exceeding £1,000,000.00 in value. He is a Court Duty Solicitor and a fluent Welsh speaker who can deal with cases entirely through the medium of Welsh if desired.



Lord Lloyd-Jones JSC is the President of the Law Council of Wales. David Lloyd-Jones was educated at Pontypridd Boys' Grammar School. He was a Fellow of Downing College Cambridge from 1975 to 1991 before entering full time practice at the Bar. He took silk in 1999 and was appointed to the High Court in 2005, serving as a Presiding Judge of the Wales Circuit. Appointed to the Court of Appeal in 2012, also served as Chair of the Law Commission of England and Wales. His tenure at the Law Commission, saw the publication of an important report on the "The Form and Accessibility of the Law Applicable in Wales" (2017), which pointed the way to subsequent consolidation and codification initiatives. In 2017, he was appointed the first Justice of the Supreme Court of the UK to come from Wales. Lord Lloyd-Jones is currently the Treasurer of the Middle Temple.



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Speaker Biographies



The Rt Hon Sir Peter Fraser was appointed as Chair of the Law Commission on 1 December 2023.

Sir Peter was educated at Harrogate Grammar School in Yorkshire and St John's College at the University of Cambridge (where he took both an MA in Law and a LL.M). He was called to the Bar in 1989 by Middle Temple and practised from Atkin Chambers between 1990 and 2015 when he was appointed to the King's Bench Division. As a barrister he specialised in international arbitration, technology, engineering and construction disputes.

He was appointed a Recorder of the Crown Court in 2002 and QC in 2009. He sits both as a judge of the Technology and Construction Court (being judge in Charge from 2017 to 2020) and the Commercial Court.



Emma Waddingham, Founder and Editor, Legal News Wales.

Emma has 17 years' worth of experience as a legal sector journalist and founded Legal News Wales in 2020 - now the largest independent news, insight, events and cross-sector network for the legal profession in Wales.

In November 2025, Emma will become the first non-lawyer President of Cardiff & District Law Society - the largest regional law society in Wales, and the 9th female leader in its 140 year history. In a speech given at the Legal Wales Conference 2023, Emma was dubbed the 'glue that holds the legal sector in Wales together' by the then Counsel General of Wales, Mick Antoniw MS. In June 2025, Emma joined a panel representing the legal profession in Wales at the Global Empowerment and Inclusion Summit, hosted at the United Nations in Geneva. She also co-founded the Equity Forum for Wales and the Resilient Legal Leaders network with Chambers Wales SESWM.



Ewen MacLeod is the Director of Strategy and Policy at the Bar Standards Board (BSB). Ewen is responsible for ensuring the BSB properly understands the risks in the market that it regulates and that appropriate outcomes are achieved by the BSB's regulatory arrangements to address these risks, drawing on appropriate evidence and stakeholder views to meet the regulatory objectives (particularly in the BSB Handbook and related guidance).

He is also responsible for ensuring the BSB sets appropriate rules to support equality and diversity at the Bar and it also complies with its equality and diversity reporting duties and assess the impact of new policies on different groups. Ewen joined the BSB in 2011.

Before that, he undertook a variety of regulatory roles at the Scottish Water Commission and the General Dental Council, before working in central Government (Department of Work and Pensions) briefing ministers, developing policy and drafting legislation. He has a degree in Scots Law and a Master of Business Administration.

Eich Partner Cyfreithiol Dibynadwy ar gyfer Sector Cyhoeddus Cymru

Gyda hanes sydd wedi'i wreiddio'n ddwfn yng Nghymru, mae Geldards wedi sefydlu ei hun fel cynghorydd cyfreithiol blaenllaw i awdurdodau lleol ledled y wlad. Mae ein harbenigedd yn amlwg a ninnau wedi cael ein penodi i holl brif fframweithiau cyfreithiol awdurdodau lleol.

Mae ein hymarfer yn y sector cyhoeddus yn cwmpasu ystod eang o wasanaethau cyfreithiol, gan gynnwys: eiddo ac adfywio, cynllunio ac amgylcheddol, adeiladu, caffael a rheoli cymorthdaliadau, cyfraith gyhoeddus a vires, ymglyfreitha sifil a throseddol, cyflogaeth, contractau masnachol, contractau ac anghydfodau TGCh a data, partneriaethau cyhoeddus-preifat, cwmnïau ac ymddiriedolaethau, elusennau a chwmnïau nid-er-elw, mentrau ar y cyd a chyfraith addysg.

Gyda chyfoeth o brofiad a mewnwelediad i'r heriau cyfreithiol y mae sefydliadau'r sector cyhoeddus yn eu hwynebu, cysylltwch â ni heddiw i ddysgu mwy am sut y gall **Geldards** ddiwallu eich anghenion cyfreithiol.

"Arbenigedd heb ei ail mewn lleoliad rhanbarthol. Yr un mor gymwys yn awdurdodaethau cyfraith gyhoeddus a gweinyddol Cymru a Lloegr, sy'n unigryw. Mae eu hanes o weithio i gleientiaid ledled y sector yn unigryw ac yn drawiadol."

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Mae'n bleser i Geldards noddi Cynhadledd Cymru'r Gyfraith unwaith eto eleni. Mae Geldards yn gwerthfawrogi ein cysylltiad hirhoedlog â Chymru'r Gyfraith yn fawr ac rydym yn estyn ein llongyfarchiadau i Gymru'r Gyfraith am drefnu digwyddiad mor wych eto eleni. Mae Geldards wedi ymfalchïo yn gweld datblygiad a thwrf y digwyddiad blynyddol arloesol hwn. Rydym yn ystyried ei fod yn chwarae rhan bwysig mewn cydnabod ein treftadaeth gyfreithiol gyffredin a hyrwyddo rôl unigryw Cymru o fewn tirwedd gyfreithiol ehangach y DU. Mae Geldards yn gwerthfawrogi'n fawr y cyfle y mae'r Gynhadledd yn ei ddarparu i'r rhai ohonom ar draws y proffesiwn cyfreithiol, y byd academiaidd, llunwyr polisi a'r farnwriaeth i ddod ynghyd i gymryd rhan mewn sgwrs a thrafodaeth ar y materion sy'n llunio'r dirwedd gyfreithiol yng Nghymru.

Mae Geldards yn arbennig o falch o fod yn noddi'r Gynhadledd yng Ngogledd Cymru, darparu fel y mae'n gwneud, llwyfan i sicrhau bod Llais Gogledd Cymru yn cael ei amlygrwydd dyledus wrth lunio datblygiad hunaniaeth gyfreithiol Gymreig gynhwysol a chynrychioliadol.

Rydym ni yn nhîm y sector cyhoeddus yn Geldards yn gweithio ar y cyd â llawer o gyrff cyhoeddus a chydweithwyr cyfreithiol ledled Gogledd Cymru ac wedi bod yn gwneud hynny ers blynyddoedd lawer. I ni, mae'r Gynhadledd hefyd felly yn rhoi cyfle gwerthfawr inni, fel y mae bob amser, i gwrdd â hen ffrindiau.



Helen Snow

Pennaeth Sector Cyhoeddus Geldards



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Proud Sponsors of the Legal Wales Conference

It is a pleasure for Geldards to once again be sponsoring the Legal Wales Conference this year. Geldards values highly its long running association with Legal Wales and we extend our congratulations to Legal Wales for organising such a splendid event once again this year. Geldards has taken pride in seeing the development and growth of this now seminal annual event, which we consider plays such an important role in recognising our shared legal heritage and advancing the distinct role of Wales within the wider UK legal landscape. Geldards highly values the opportunity the Conference provides for those of us across the legal profession, academia, policy makers and the judiciary to come together to engage in conversation and discussion on the issues which shape the legal landscape in Wales.

Geldards are particularly pleased to be sponsoring the Conference in North Wales, providing as it does a platform to ensure the voice of North Wales is given its due prominence in shaping the development of an inclusive and representative Welsh legal identity. We in the public sector team at Geldards work collaboratively with many public bodies and legal colleagues across North Wales and have for many years. For us, the Conference also therefore provides us with a valuable opportunity, as it always does, to meet up with old friends.



Helen Snow
Head of Public Sector Geldards



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Speaker Biographies



Joseff Morgan (Call: 2017) is a specialist family barrister, at 9 Park Place chambers and Head of the Wales and Chester Circuit's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Joseff regularly appears at all levels of the Family Court. Joseff frequently appears for the Local Authority, parents, interveners and guardians in all aspects of public care and emergency applications.

Joseff has extensive experience in the full range of private children matters. He is frequently instructed to represent parents in complex and acrimonious applications, including cases involving allegations of sexual assault, domestic violence and parental alienation.

Joseff has also written several articles on the merits of remote working for the profession and is a conversational Welsh speaker.



Laura Hughes is a Partner at Browne Jacobson. She heads up the public law team, as well as being the head of the insurance and public risk department, and the executive lead for Wales.

Laura is an experienced public law expert who advises her clients on their most important and high-profile matters. She acts across the public sector advising clients in government, local government, education, health, audit, sports and natural resources. Laura was named in the Lawyer's Hot 100 for 2025, and was named Law Firm Lead of the Year at a National/Regional Firm at the Women and Diversity in Law Awards 2025.

In June 2025, Laura joined a panel representing the legal profession at the Global Empowerment and Inclusion Summit, hosted at the United Nations in Geneva. Laura is happiest when she is sat around a client's Board or Executive table helping them through their trickiest issues to a decision which is defensible, lawful and made in the public interest.



Ron Davison is the Managing Director of North Wales' largest law firm, Gamlins Law and a Trustee of North Wales Community Law. He is a passionate advocate in the realms of social justice. Ron qualified as a Solicitor in 2003. His legal practice covers the common law, with a particular emphasis on employment matters.

Ron also has an extensive Commercial Litigation practice and has represented numerous companies in the High Court. Ron also provides hands-on Corporate HR advice, including drafting Contracts of Employment and Handbooks and advising on disciplinary and capability procedures.

Ron was President of the Cheshire and North Wales Law Society in 2017 and also holds a number of non-executive Director roles.

Outside of the office Ron is an avid follower of rugby, having been forced to hang-up his boots many years ago.



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Speaker Biographies



Sue James is the Chief Executive of Legal Action Group (LAG) and a Trustee of North Wales Community Law. Prior to joining LAG she was director and solicitor of Hammersmith & Fulham Law Centre and a founding trustee of Ealing Law Centre. She has been a housing lawyer for 30 years. In 2017, Sue won the outstanding achievement award at the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards. She is a respected legal author and co-editor of Housing Possession Duty Desk, and co-editor of Justice Matters and the Legal Aid Handbook. She also writes and campaigns on access to justice issues.



Tracey Horton is the Director of Bangor University Legal Advice Clinic. She is a solicitor and senior lecturer and joined Bangor University in December 2023. After leaving private practice as a civil litigation solicitor in 2018, Tracey was recruited by Staffordshire University to set up and manage Staffordshire University Legal Advice Clinic. I was Director of SULAC until she joined Bangor University in December 2023.

Tracey's role at Bangor includes creating and managing Bangor University Legal Advice Clinic. This will be run as a module at level 6 and involves the students providing free legal advice to members of the public, under her supervision. BULAC will be launched at the start of the 24/25 academic year. In addition to her role as Director of BULAC, Tracey also teaches on the Professional Practical Skills Module, the SQE facing module -Wills and Trusts, and also on the employability team for Law and run the work placement module.



Rhodri Williams KC is a barrister at Keating Chambers and a committee member of Public Law Wales.

Rhodri is recommended in the legal directories for public procurement, local government, and public and administrative law where he is described as a "very shrewd tactician" and an "advocate with strong powers of persuasion". He was called to the UK Bar in 1987 and to the Bar of Northern Ireland in 2009, and he took silk in 2010.

Rhodri specialises in public procurement cases and clients report that he is "very good on really difficult complex cases and very strong on his feet." A longstanding expert in the field, his experience includes representing the successful appellants in the first ever case concerning public procurement to be heard before the Supreme Court in *Brent LBC v Risk Management Partners Ltd & London Authorities Mutual Ltd & Harrow LBC* [2011] UKSC 7. More recently he was instructed in a claim for breach of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, concerning provision of orthodontic services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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Speaker Biographies



Betsan Criddle KC was appointed as President of the Welsh Language Tribunal by the First Minister of Wales in 2024.

Betsan was appointed following an open competition administered by the Judicial Appointments Commission.

She is a barrister at Old Square Chambers, with a wide range of experience in the employment and discrimination and professional discipline fields, both in the Employment Tribunals and the civil courts. Betsan's term commenced on the 24 October 2024 and will last until the 23 October 2029. She will continue to practise alongside her judicial role. Betsan is a fluent Welsh speaker.



Osian Llywelyn is the Director of Regulation and Deputy Commissioner at the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Osian is the Director responsible for setting a strategic direction for the Welsh Language Commissioner's regulatory work. The job includes setting and enforcing duties on organisations to use the Welsh language.

Originally from Pontypridd, he had his secondary education at Ysgol Gyfun Rhydfelen before moving to study Law at Aberystwyth University. He enjoyed travelling around South America but has now settled in Cardiff for almost fifteen years. Osian worked for the Welsh Language Board and the Welsh Language Commissioner where he was responsible for setting the first Welsh language standards for public bodies back in 2015. Osian has also worked as Head of Regulatory Policy for Qualifications Wales, the regulator of qualifications that are offered by recognised awarding bodies in Wales.



Keith Bush KC (Hon) LLM is a Lecturer in Law at Cardiff University, Senior Fellow in Welsh Law at the Wales Governance Centre and former Honorary Professor of Law at Swansea University. A barrister with over 20 years' practice in Cardiff, he later joined the Welsh Government's legal service, where he led the drafting of key Welsh legislation, including the Government of Wales Act 2006. From 2007 to 2012, he served as Chief Legal Adviser to the National Assembly for Wales.

Keith has held roles as President of the Welsh Language Tribunal, Recorder in the County Court, and member of the Law Commission's Advisory Committee for Wales, and was a co-founder of the Legal Wales Foundation and conference. A published author and frequent commentator on public law in both English and Welsh, his research focuses on constitutional structures, devolution, and the legal rights of linguistic and cultural groups. In 2014, he was appointed Queen's Counsel (Honoris Causa) for his contribution to advancing public understanding of Welsh law.



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Speaker Biographies



Daniel Taylor is a Senior Associate in Blake Morgan's Litigation & Dispute Resolution team in Cardiff specialising in commercial disputes, and public law matters. Daniel is a fluent Welsh speaker and is placed to advise bilingually.

Daniel advises clients on a broad range of commercial and civil claims. He has significant experience of contractual claims, debt recovery, negligence cases and partnership disputes.

Daniel also undertakes public law work, to include judicial review, procurement challenges, education, safeguarding, mental health and mental capacity law. He also has experience in dealing with public inquiries work. Daniel joined Blake Morgan during 2021. Prior to joining Blake Morgan, Daniel worked for both national and global firms in London and Cardiff, specialising in Litigation and Dispute Resolution.



The Hon. Mr Justice Griffiths (Sir Martin Griffiths) is the senior Presiding Judge of Wales, following two years as junior Presiding Judge. His family is originally from Swansea and his great-grandfather played rugby for Wales. He graduated in History and Modern Languages from Oxford and then studied law at City University and the Inns of Court School of Law in London. He is a Bencher of the Inner Temple and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2006, practising from Essex Court Chambers.

He was appointed as a Recorder of the Crown Court in 2009, a Deputy High Court Judge in 2016 and Deputy Chancellor of the Diocese of Peterborough in 2017. He was appointed a full time High Court judge assigned to what is now the King's Bench Division in 2019. He sits in the Crown Court, the King's Bench Division, the Administrative Court, the Employment Appeal Tribunal, on the Media and Communications List and in the Court of Appeal Criminal Division. He is a member of the Judicial Communications Committee and a board member of the Judicial College. He was appointed as a Presiding Judge of Wales with effect from 1 January 2022. He is Chairman of the Wales Training Committee, with responsibility for the training of Courts and Tribunals judiciary in Wales. He is a member of the Judges' Council Committee for Wales and on the Executive Committee of the Law Council of Wales. He is the Chairman of the Lord Chancellor's Standing Committee for the Welsh Language.



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Sir Samuel Evans Prize Winner 2025 Matilda Falchetta LLB

Matilda graduated from Aberystwyth University in 2025 with an LLB Hons Degree in Law and International Relations. She is this year's winner of the Sir Samuel Evans Prize 2025 for the best undergraduate result at a Welsh Law School.

Her interest in law began whilst studying the International Baccalaureate at college where she learnt about and became interested in human rights law in particular. Alongside her studies at university, to further her practical understanding of the law Matilda undertook a voluntary role as part of Care4Calais public law team, assisting asylum seekers housed in inadequate accommodation such as the Wethersfield RAF base in the early stages of their judicial review cases.

Having been the secretary of Aberystwyth mooting society she was also given the opportunity to compete in the Jessup International Law Moot 2025 as part of a team with fellow students. She has been provisionally accepted to study a Masters degree in Diversity and Migration law LLM at Leiden University commencing in September next year. After completing her masters Matilda aims to pursue a career in either immigration or human rights law.



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Speaker Biographies



Huw Williams originated the idea of a Legal Wales Conference over twenty years ago and is the chair of the Programme Sub-Committee for Legal Wales 2025.

After sending his early career in local government, Huw was a partner in the firm of Geldards LLP for over thirty years, where he was the Lead Partner – Public Law and Senior Partner in the firm's Cardiff office. Since 2019 Huw has been the Chief Legal Adviser to the Senedd.

Huw is a past Chair of Legal Wales and of Public Law Wales. He was a longstanding member of the Law Society's Planning and Environment Law Committee and the Wales Committee and was an inaugural member of the Law Society National Board for Wales.

Huw's other external roles have included serving as a Trustee of both the National Museum of Wales and of the National Library of Wales and for over 20 years as the Company Secretary of the Wales Millennium Centre.



The Right Honourable Baroness Carr of Walton-on-the-Hill DBE was called to the Bar by the Inner Temple in 1987. She was educated at Wycombe Abbey, Buckinghamshire and Trinity College, Cambridge, where she read Modern Languages. She speaks French and German. As a barrister she specialised in general commercial law and took silk in 2003. She became chair of the Education and Training Committee of the Inner Temple, where she became a Governing Bencher in 2006; and head of chambers.

In 2007 she became Chair of the Professional Negligence Bar Association, Chair of the Bar Standards Board Conduct Committee in 2008, and was appointed as the Complaints Commissioner to the International Criminal Court in the Hague in 2011.

Her judicial career began in 2009 in crime, when she became a Recorder. She was appointed to the High Court, Queen's Bench Division in 2013, and became the second female High Court Judge to sit in the Commercial Court and the first female High Court Judge to sit in the Technology and Construction Court in 2014. In the same year she became a member of the Investigatory Powers Tribunal a role she held until 2016. She became a Presider of the Midland Circuit from 2016 until 2020, when she was appointed as a Lady Justice of Appeal. She was also appointed as the senior Judicial Commissioner and Vice Chair of the Judicial Appointments Commission, a position held until January 2023. She became Lady Chief Justice of England and Wales on 1 October 2023.

Legal News

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Legal News Wales is the only independent network dedicated to the entire legal profession in Wales — your go-to source for legal news, expert analysis, events, specialist forums, and career support.

We're also proud hosts of the Legal News Wales Awards (nominations for 2026 open 1 November 2025) and the annual LegalTech Wales Roadshows, spotlighting innovation and excellence in our sector.

Our mission? To elevate, champion and empower the legal profession in Wales.

We help practitioners, legal practices and in-house legal teams build resilience, drive growth and attract the best talent.

Thanks to strong partnerships — such as our work with Chambers Wales and Businessin Wales — we offer free content and events that bridge the gap between the legal and wider business communities across our nation, and beyond.

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Legal Wales Dinner 2025

Drinks Reception: 7pm

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Speaker Biographies

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Legal Wales After Dinner Speaker 2025



Helen Molyneux Co-Founder, Monumental Welsh Women

Helen Molyneux is one of the co-founders of Monumental Welsh Women, the campaign responsible for creating the first public statues in Wales celebrating named Welsh Women.

A lawyer by training, Helen began her career at Eversheds, before setting up NewLaw Solicitors Ltd in 2004., which subsequently became one of the first ABSs. Having grown the business to over 400 colleagues, Helen exited through a sale to Redde PLC, since when she has focussed on a non - executive career joining the boards of Hodge Bank in 2014 and EUI Ltd, the Admiral UK Insurance business in 2017.

Helen is a member of the Women Angels of Wales Investment Syndicate, which aims to invest in women led, Welsh businesses. Helen was previously Chair of the Institute of Welsh Affairs and a member of the Silk Commission on Devolution in Wales.

Helen was named as one of the BBC's 100 Women of 2004.



Support aspiring lawyers

Your donation can ensure the **Legal Wales – LEDLET** (Lord Edmund-Davies Legal Education Trust) Access to Law Summer Scheme continues to widen opportunities.

Every July, the Legal Wales Foundation and the Lord-Edmund Davies Legal Education Trust (LEDLET) run a week's residential Summer Scheme for pupils from Wales (or with a strong connection to Wales) who aspire to a career in the Law, but have no connections in that world to help them.

The Scheme takes place simultaneously in Cardiff and London and is open to pupils who will be at the end of Year 12 (Lower Sixth) at the time. In 2025, 24 young people from every corner of Wales were selected from around 130 applicants, with 14 coming to Cardiff and 10 to London.

Our aim is to give an opportunity to young people who are unlikely to have a similar one.

With this in mind, we look positively on applications from pupils who are facing or have faced particular barriers, such as being first in their family to aspire to higher education or to a profession; receiving free school meals; coming from an economically disadvantaged or particularly rural area; disrupted education; having a disability; being care experienced; or caring for others.

Importantly, the Scheme is completely free to the young people, including accommodation, travel and meals, and we offer discretionary bursaries to help with office-appropriate clothing and footwear. We also offer mentoring to all applicants to whom we cannot offer a residential place, given the limited number of these.

For more, visit legalwales.org or ledlet.org.uk



During the Scheme, the students shadow Solicitors, Chartered Legal Executives and Barristers; observe court hearings and have the opportunity to talk to a judge and other court staff; practise advocacy in mock hearings; and attend sessions on the different routes into Law, different legal careers, different areas of Law, as well as legal skills, including networking and the safe use of social media.

The Scheme in Cardiff

Law firms, Chambers, Universities and other legal organisations in Cardiff have embraced the Scheme with an enthusiasm and generosity that is truly inspiring. In 2025, work-shadowing placements were provided by Acuity Law, Blake Morgan, Browne Jacobson LLP, Capital Law, Geldards LLP, HCR Law, Hugh James, Lewis Silkin LLP, Apex Chambers, Civitas Chambers, 9 Park Place, 30 Park Place and the Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament Legal Service.

Evening receptions were kindly hosted by Capital Law and Geldards LLP and the students attended a talk at Senedd Cymru about the making of law for Wales, working in the public sector and being an in-house lawyer.

Cardiff Crown Court hosted the whole group for a day and Legal Wales is extremely grateful to the judges and all the other HMCTS staff members who made it a memorable day for our students alongside all their other important duties. Employment Judge Claire Sharp presided over our mock hearings with her peerless blend of confidence-building and constructive learning points and we cannot thank her enough, or the Employment Tribunal in Cardiff and Regional Employment Judge Sian Davies, for facilitating this.





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The Universities of Cardiff and South Wales generously partnered with us, hosting our opening and closing sessions, including group-bonding exercises and talks on applying to university, managing student workload and finance and building a CV.

In addition, Legal Wales is most grateful for financial support from Browne Jacobson, Eversheds Sutherland, Geldards LLP, Lewis Silkin LLP, and BrightLink Learning Ltd, an education institution with a particular focus on law and legal careers. Both the London and Cardiff Schemes benefited from a grant from the Siôn Mullane Foundation www.sionmullanefoundation.com, a charity that encourages and supports aspiration amongst children and young people in Wales.

Since LEDLET set up the Scheme in 2014, almost 200 young people have benefited, including through online Schemes in 2020 and 2021. Many of our alumni are now qualified or in training, including at Magic Circle firms and highly regarded Chambers, while more recent attendees are studying Law (or other subjects with a view to taking legal examinations later) or have secured legal apprenticeships.

Alumni can keep in touch via a Facebook group and so create their own professional network.

A number “pay it forward”, notably by chaperoning the residential Schemes. Our chaperones this year, Alexandra Nia Hughes (2nd Year Law, Bristol University) and Jaime Kahlen Clemett (1st Year Law, Oxford University) , were the bedrock of the Week, receiving wonderful feedback from the students for their empathy and support. I cannot recommend them highly enough to future firms and Chambers.

Help us support aspiring lawyers

If you or your organisation would like to support the Scheme with a donation, please contact the **Cardiff Programme Co-ordinator, Elisabeth Velina Jones**: legalwales@gmail.com.

We also be interested in hearing from you if you would like to offer a work-shadowing placement in 2026 or if you would like to discuss ideas about expanding the Scheme in some form to other locations within Wales.

Testimonials

"This week has absolutely blown me away and was better than I could ever have anticipated!"

2025 student, North East Wales

"I would describe this week as extremely useful, best way to give people access to a Law career."

2025 student, South West Wales

"I particularly enjoyed [...] the day in Crown Court."

2025 student, South West Wales

"The most useful session of the Week for me was the mooting activity; [it was] was extremely useful to gain feedback on advocacy skills."

2025 student, North Wales



Can you help us maintain these outstanding opportunities delivered by the Legal Wales – LEDLET scheme?

Email us to make a donation: legalwales@gmail.com



"The networking events were amazing. So insightful."

- 2025 student, South Wales Central region.

"[My law firm placement] was organised with conscientious planning and preparation to ensure I was engaged at all times and able to speak to those with different roles in the Firm. Most of all, what shone ... was the dedication and commitment to provide opportunity for aspiring lawyers."

2025 Student, North Wales

"[My placement] law firm, were so accommodating and made me feel so accepted and acknowledged from the very moment I had entered the building."

2025 Student, South Wales Central region.

"The most important thing I learned is that everything is achievable; no matter your background."

2025 Student, North Wales West.



Can you help us maintain these outstanding opportunities delivered by the Legal Wales – LEDLET scheme?

Email us to make a donation: legalwales@gmail.com





About JUSTICE

Learn more at justice.org.uk

Our Mission

We strive for a fair UK justice system within everyone's reach, targeting the justice issues that most deeply shape people's lives. Fair justice strengthens democracy, builds trust, and enables us all to thrive. We advocate for better laws, policies, and practices, and we promote the rule of law and people's rights.

Who We Are

JUSTICE is the UK's legal reform charity. Building our expertise since 1957, we are a trusted, independent voice for UK-wide Governments, Parliamentarians, Judges and the many other decisionmakers we work with.

We conduct research, form policy and shape laws through evidence-led work. We know democracy is strengthened when people trust the justice system. When rights are made real - accessible to everyone regardless of background - equality becomes more than just a promise.

We work on issues affecting justice systems across the UK, with a dedicated JUSTICE Scotland branch and our new JUSTICE North initiative. We also plan to expand further with branches in Northern Ireland and Wales

Our Values

To achieve our goals, we engage with lawmakers, policy makers, civil society and communities and individuals affected by poor justice processes, across the UK. All our work is guided by four core principles:

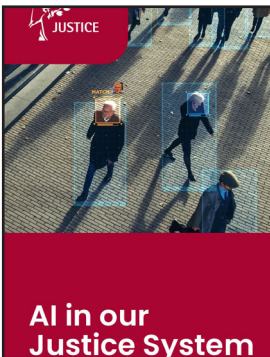
- Independence - maintaining objectivity, free from political bias.
- Innovation - being forward looking, willing to challenge the status quo.
- Integrity - working with rigorous evidence, transparency and honesty.
- Inclusivity - making sure all voices are heard, especially those with lived experience of injustice.

Recent JUSTICE Reports



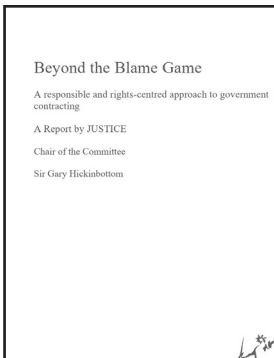
People need legal help: The value of legal representation in the Windrush Compensation Scheme

Survivors of the Home Office Windrush Scandal are receiving drastically less compensation than they deserve. Giving them access to free legal advice can change this.



AI in our Justice System

This report proposes the first rights-based framework to guide AI use across the UK justice system, to help us harness AI's power while guarding against its risks.



Beyond the blame game: A responsible and rights-centred approach to government contracting

Outsourced public services lack oversight, accountability and transparency risking people's rights, finds this new report.

THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to read about JUSTICE and the vital work we do.

If you would like to discuss any way in which you might support JUSTICE, please email Jane Collier at jcollier@justice.org.uk.

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Legal Wales Conference 2025 & After Dinner Speeches

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Speech: President of The Law Society of England & Wales

Delivered by Mark Evans at the Legal Wales
Conference, Friday 10 October 2025
(at Bangor university)



Speaking notes: President Mark Evans - Legal Wales Conference

Audience: Wales based members, solicitors, local leaders

Date 10 October 2025 09:45 – 10:25

Duration: 30-minute keynote speech

INTRODUCTION

Bore da pawb, and good morning everyone.

I'm Mark Evans, the President of the Law Society of England and Wales as of just two days ago!

I want to say thank you very much to Legal Wales for having me today. I'm really looking forward to speaking with you all about the Law Society's Bicentennial year, as well as the developments that we've seen in the legal field, particularly in Wales, over recent years.

Today presents an excellent chance for us to recall our rich history, celebrate our diverse community, and look towards the future of our profession.

But first, as the new President of the Law Society of England and Wales – and importantly, the proud third

Welsh President we've had in our two hundred years – I'll take a moment to introduce myself.

MY PRESIDENCY AND BACKGROUND

Mine is an experience that I'm sure many here will be more than familiar with. I grew up in North Wales.

Initially, I wanted to join the police force. But back in the 1980s, there was a height restriction: You had to be six foot tall, and I wasn't quite there, so I pivoted.

I did my A-levels, applied to study law, and – ironically – had a growth spurt afterwards. But by then, my path was set.

I didn't come from a legal family. I had no contacts in the profession. I wasn't sure I belonged. But I was fortunate enough to be offered a trainee position at a firm in Wrexham.

That opportunity changed everything.

And now, more than 30 years later, I stand before you preparing to become the third Welsh president in the Law Society's 200-year history.

That's not something I take lightly. Representation matters. When you lead an organisation that covers a wide breadth of devolved and reserved legislation, it's critical.

And I'm proud to be flying the flag for Wales – not just symbolically, but actively, by championing the values and priorities that I believe will shape the future of our profession.

My journey to the presidency wasn't always obvious. In fact, it was a conversation in 2014 with then-president Nick Fluck that first planted the seed. Nick came from a small, two-partner firm, just like me. He said, "If I can do it, why can't you?"

That moment of encouragement stayed with me. And it's a message I now share with others: if you care about

this profession, if you want to make a difference, there is a place for you.

ORIGINS AND OUR BICENTENARY

And after that look at my own past, I'd like to take you back through the Law Society's.

Since 1825, when we were founded on Chancery Lane at the heart of London's legal sector, we have proudly been the voice of solicitors.

In those early days we had around 1200 members. Today that has grown to around 210,000 members.

Our purpose then, as it is now, was to uphold the rule of law, ensure access to justice and promote excellence in our profession.

We would not be able to achieve these goals without the vital work of our members.

Whether from London or Llandudno, our members today

come from every walk of life, every area of law, every corner of England and Wales – and even beyond.

THE WELSH LEGAL LANDSCAPE

There are over 4,000 solicitors on the roll in Wales today. Over the past two centuries, solicitors in Wales have provided an important and long-lasting contribution to the development of the legal profession in both Wales and England.

From the Laws of Hywel Dda in medieval Wales, which laid the foundation for justice and fairness, to the new Wales-only laws that have been enacted since the Senedd gained law-making powers in 2011, Wales has a rich legal heritage to celebrate.

Historically, the profession in Wales has been innovative and rooted in local communities, from pioneering digital advancements to reach those in rural areas, to embracing new ways of working.

The introduction of the Welsh Tribunals Unit, alongside the increasing divergence of Welsh law from English law, reflects the growing complexity and distinctiveness of Wales's legal framework.

And we were pleased to welcome the proposed reforms we are expecting to see in the draft Tribunals (Wales) Bill, which this Senedd has committed to publish. These reforms will hopefully go a long way towards modernising Tribunals in Wales.

INFLUENCING IN WALES

Throughout this period, the Law Society has been a constant supporter of solicitors, ensuring they have the tools and guidance they need to serve their communities.

At the heart of everything we do are our members – the solicitors who serve their communities with dedication and integrity.

Over the past few decades, we have seen the pace of devolution grow significantly, and as a result the laws which operate in Wales are already very different to those in operation in England, and will become even more different across a wider range of policy areas as time moves on.

With this in mind, the Law Society takes a different approach to influencing in Wales. Our Wales office has been doing fantastic work with the Welsh Government in this distinct political environment.

We maintain relationships across the political spectrum in the Senedd and influence all bills of relevance to the legal sector.

As the number of these pieces of primary legislation grows increasing divergence from English law, we have grown our engagement with Welsh lawyers to understand the specific challenges they face, directly feeding these back into our efforts.

The Law Society Wales Office has also been instrumental in ensuring that all Welsh solicitors have the representation, support, and resources they need to thrive in a rapidly changing political and legal landscape.

We're proud to say that since the establishment of the Office, we've been able to take an even stronger focus on promoting the distinct legal needs of Wales.

From devolved legislative developments in housing and healthcare, to ensuring our access to justice initiatives reflect the ways the Welsh landscape differs from the wider picture.

The local law societies across Wales, some of which predate even our own 200-year history, have been key in fostering this spirit of collaboration.

That is a theme we are keen to continue. We're eager to hear from you about the challenges you face, and the opportunities you see to build on the success you've achieved.

Now is the time for us to keep pushing toward a profession that is inclusive, supportive, and forward-thinking.

Feedback, through events like these, will help to inform our work and ensure that we are at the forefront of debates that will help to shape the legal profession for years to come. So please do come and say hello to me today if you would like to speak about anything.

CHALLENGES IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

Today, the legal profession faces challenges new and old. Some of these challenges are cross-cutting across England and Wales, whereas others have the unique distinctions you would expect from two distinct but fully interconnected legal landscapes.

Access to legal aid continues to decline across England and Wales. And of course, recent events like the Legal Aid Agency data breach have added further pressure.

Many firms have had to absorb hours of unpaid administrative work, and we've been urging the Agency to establish a compensation scheme to help them recover those costs.

We also want to ensure that the boost in legal aid funding we've all fought so hard to secure from the UK Government isn't simply absorbed into patching up the LAA's archaic systems.

This was a frankly predictable issue, and it is a waste of everybody's time and money if we go back to the same old way of doing things, only for the same problems to strike again.

Underinvestment has also created significant challenges across our courts.

While surveying for our new *State of the Courts Report*, we heard about a lack of private consultation rooms, poor maintenance, and uncomfortable temperatures in courts across England and Wales.

All of these issues contribute to poor experiences for both professionals and the public.

This makes justice inaccessible for many but also creates significant barriers for our efforts to make our profession inclusive and reflective of the society we serve.

We know, for example, that disrepair in the courts can make them inaccessible for disabled solicitors.

And the impact is disproportionate: nearly half of disabled solicitors reported that the courts were ‘not at all’ fit for purpose, compared to a quarter of those without a disability.

Inadequate facilities and a lack of reasonable adjustments are unacceptable barriers to access in this day and age, and they must be addressed.

Technology is another area of concern we’ve worked to help address in Wales. One in five of the solicitors we surveyed for this year’s *State of the Courts Report*

covering England and Wales said the tech on site was 'not at all' fit for purpose.

And the geography of justice, notably the lack of access to justice, legal advice deserts and the dispersed, rural nature of some Welsh courts present numerous additional challenges to members and legal services users here.

The rurality of practice has historically been further exacerbated by weak public transport and a lack of technological support.

We are working hard to rise to these challenges and are working with the Welsh Government to address them.

To ensure firms across Wales have the support they need to thrive and grow.

One great example of that is in tech. The Wales Office coordinated a Welsh Government grant initiative of £100,000 to help 30% of eligible firms in Wales obtain Digital Cyber Essentials Security certification, in

partnership with Pure Cyber, a local cyber security firm.

This is just one small step toward making improvements in access to justice for our members here, and one we are proud to have traversed together.

Another area of critical support is that legal firms in Wales are comparatively smaller, with the majority being high street firms.

These firms often lack succession planning and therefore benefit from the support, networks, skills and events the Law Society in Wales provides.

The increasing and worrying growth of legal deserts in Wales in the West and middle of the country desperately needs to be addressed by both UK and Welsh Governments.

To this end, the Law Society Wales Office has been vocal in calling for the inclusion of a fully funded Level 7 Legal Apprenticeship within the Welsh apprenticeship framework, to address the paucity of solicitors in these

desert areas and ensure the profession continues to attract and develop future legal talent.

And we continue to work with the Welsh Government to encourage further investment in important tech and innovation schemes.

REIMAGINING JUSTICE IN WALES 2030

I'd like to also share some insights from one of the landmark pieces of work to come out of our Wales Office: a set of ambitious policy papers titled *Reimagining Justice in Wales 2030*.

This is a forward-looking initiative that explores how Wales can further build resilience into its justice system over the next decade, written with the input of our members here and addressing some of those significant challenges I mentioned earlier.

This work is built on six key themes, each addressing a critical aspect of the legal landscape in Wales.

Law firms operating here will face a series of external challenges by the end of the decade, which have so far not been addressed by long term policy solutions.

These include specialisation, the implementation of new technologies such as AI, the sustainability of small law firms, and the growing pressures on SMEs and high street practices.

We want to explore the challenges and opportunities that further devolution may offer our members and help to shape a prosperous Welsh legal sector for all.

The first theme is access to justice.

There is an urgent need to reform both civil and criminal legal aid. Many people in Wales face barriers to accessing legal support, and without meaningful reform, these inequalities will deepen.

Estimates suggest that only 18–20% of the population in

Wales qualifies for legal aid. But troublingly, accurate data post-2016 is scarce.

Second, the courts.

Wales faces serious challenges in its court infrastructure—backlogs, staffing shortages, and outdated systems.

There is much room for tribunal reform and greater use of digital technologies to modernise the system. But digitalisation must be inclusive and carefully implemented to avoid excluding vulnerable users.

Which leads me to our third insight: Technology.

Legal technology offers transformative potential. The paper showcases tools that are accessible and practical for Welsh firms, encouraging adoption that enhances efficiency without compromising justice, across the whole of Wales.

Technology should empower legal professionals and

improve client outcomes. We've already begun to see these wheels in motion – what is needed now is to learn from our challenges and successes, so that we can continue moving in the right direction.

Fourth, devolution.

The Law Society urges the Welsh Government to prepare for any potential devolution of justice powers. If done well, with proper funding and planning, this could bring significant benefits.

But if mishandled, it risks creating confusion and undermining public trust. The message is clear: devolution must be coherent, timely, and strategic. With this in mind, on Tuesday the Council of the Law Society passed a resolution affirming our three conditions for support of any future devolution of justice functions.

In summary, these are:

1. Full and fair funding must accompany any functions devolved from UK Government

2. There must be complete freedom for solicitors to practice on either side of the border.
3. There must remain a single, unified regulatory framework across Wales and England

Fifth, the law firm of 2030.

Looking ahead, the report envisions a legal sector that is resilient, innovative, and well-supported.

It calls on the Welsh Government to treat legal services as the essential sector it is, and to collaborate more closely with Westminster to ensure sustainability and growth.

If done right, the social and economic results could be outstanding.

Finally, Welsh legal data.

A major concern is the lack of contemporary data on the legal sector in Wales. Without robust data, it's difficult to identify problems or craft effective solutions. There is a

significant need for rigorous, up-to-date data to underpin future reforms.

It's about building a justice system that is fair, modern, and fit for the future. Which is why we've presented this report to policymakers, practitioners, and communities, urging them to work together to shape a legal landscape that truly serves the people of Wales.

LOOKING FORWARD

But for now, in the interest of looking forward - I want to ask you all to think about something: What can we commit to, today, as a collective, to build up the kind of small positive achievements that lead to even bigger change?

Maybe it's a commitment to work with us as the Law Society of England and Wales, to help us advocate for and support you in the Senedd and in Westminster.

Or maybe it's thinking about actions you can take that can help your firms become more resilient – further steps toward embracing inclusion, utilising technology, and thinking about that crucial forward planning as the political and devolved landscape continues to evolve.

CLOSE

Thank you so much for your time. I'm really looking forward to hearing from the remainder of today's speakers.

I'm also looking forward to tomorrow morning, where I'm excited to invite you to join me for a 5k ParkRun through the beautiful grounds of Castell Penrhyn.

I founded the social running club *Legal Runner* after discovering that running was transformative to my mental health and wellbeing at work. Please feel very welcome to join at your own pace and come for coffee and a cake afterwards.

Let us continue this dialogue beyond today, so we can ensure that Wales' legal system remains strong, fair, and forward-thinking.

Diolch yn fawr i chi gyd am ddod heno.

Thank you very much.



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Speech: Counsel General for Wales

Delivered by Julie James AS at the Legal Wales
Conference, Friday 10 October 2025
(at Bangor University)



Legal Wales Speech – Bangor 2025
Celebrating 200th Anniversary of the Law Society and Criminal
Justice

Bore da - good morning.

It is a privilege to be with you again today amongst such a gathering of distinguished guests.

I would like to start by thanking the Legal Wales Foundation for the invitation. It is always a pleasure to be asked to speak at such a prestigious event in Wales' legal calendar.

Today's event, as we have heard, marks a significant milestone in the life of the Law Society. I think it also offers a timely space for reflection on the values that shape our profession, our justice system, and, ultimately, the lives of those we serve.

I understand the themes of the conference this year are the 200th anniversary of the Law Society, and criminal justice. I will do my best to adhere to those lines. Within them there is much to celebrate, much to consider, and as always, much to do.

Anniversaries are a time for celebration, but also for re-examining the foundations on which we build.

When we celebrate the Law Society, we are, in truth, celebrating the law itself and the ideals it aspires to embody. Those ideals bear repeating: that there is a common set of rules for everyone; that disputes are resolved through reasoning, through evidence, through the pursuit of truth; and that we can avoid resorting to settling our differences by fighting, or by arbitrary use of power or wealth.

Of course, as all of us here know, reality does not always live up to those ideals. But they are very fine ideals. The fact that they have broadly held sway for two centuries is, in itself, something to celebrate.

It is worth noting that, for most of those 200 years, Wales has not possessed its own distinct set of laws. But today, we do. The 26 years of devolution may not be as impressive an anniversary. But it is long enough that there is now a substantial body of law that applies only in Wales.

One of the distinguishing features of law made in Wales is our commitment to accessibility. Through codification, we seek to make the law clearer and more approachable than ever before.

I am therefore very proud that we have just introduced our second major codification project into the Senedd – the full consolidation of planning law in Wales.

The planning system is central to how we deliver the Welsh Government's priorities and plays a fundamental role in people's lives. It's not just about land use, it's about shaping the Wales we want today and tomorrow for our communities.

It is essential to creating sustainable development and places. It delivers value-based economic prosperity and improves the social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. An effective and efficient planning system is therefore vital, and I believe the simplification and modernisation of the law, through consolidation, is a prerequisite to achieving this.

Another special anniversary being celebrated here today is that of the Law Commission's 60th anniversary. Their contribution to efforts to improve the law are well recognised, and I want to pay tribute to them today for that and to put on record my sincere thanks for their very detailed review of planning law that helped set the direction for the Bill and for their positive engagement and assistance in shaping the final form of it.

Of course, most planning legislation like many other aspects of the statute book is that it is currently made only in the English language; this is a barrier to those who wish to use Welsh as a language of the law.

As such another proud distinction of our accessibility programme: our law is bilingual. This, too, is not just a formality but a living element of accessibility, embodying the richness of Welsh identity and the principle that the law must speak to everyone.

For most people, though, however accessible the law, in most circumstances they are unlikely to sit down and read it themselves. Still less are they likely to seek out information about how the law has been applied in practice. They will want to talk to people with experience of the processes they are going through. At important moments in your life, you want a professional – if not a team of professionals – fighting your corner.

Solicitors are just one of the types of legal professional who do all these things, and more. I am happy to see the wide variety of firms that were shortlisted for the Legal News Wales Awards and are shaping the future of legal services in Wales.

In celebrating 200 years of the Law Society, we are also celebrating the very idea of courts and tribunals. Again, it is worth the basic explanation of what that means we are celebrating. These are impartial venues where every party to a dispute, regardless of their status or resources, should be entitled to speak, to make their case, and to be heard.

As Counsel General I have a particular responsibility towards devolved Welsh tribunals. As conference attendees may know, there are a handful of these, covering important areas such as mental health, education and standards in local government.

We continue to work on the package of reforms that would give our tribunals the right governance framework. That includes proper statutory protection for judicial independence. We are working to produce a draft bill which will be ready for the new Welsh Government to take forward following the election.

We are working closely with the President of Welsh Tribunals on this, and benefiting from the many responses to our White Paper. The Bill we are producing will create a single first tier tribunal for Wales, and the introduction of a Welsh appeals tribunal. I am sure you will all recognise these as significant milestones.

Before I turn to criminal justice, one more thing about lawyers in Wales.

Even now, 26 years into devolution, the law as it applies in Wales is in most respects the same as in England.

And any lawyer who can practice in one, can also by definition practice in the other.

We cannot take for granted that these things will forever stay the same. If this conference meets to celebrate 300 or 400 years of the Law Society, who knows what the picture would look like.

A natural consequence of devolution is that the law will continue to diverge and Senedd reform will likely accelerate that process. As the law diverges, the recognition that Wales is already a de facto distinct jurisdiction will be harder and harder to deny.

As that happens, too, lawyers based in Wales will be ever more at a commercial advantage when it comes to work in Wales.

But I want to be very clear that we are a long way from that place. When we talk, as we sometimes do, about a distinct Welsh jurisdiction, we only mean to recognise the facts.

The fact is that law differs when you cross from Cheshire into Denbighshire or you go over the Severn Bridge. But there should be no threat in that.

We are unequivocal that at least for the foreseeable future there should continue to be a single England and Wales solicitors' profession, a single qualification and a single regulator. The same applies to barristers and other types of legal professional. No Welsh Government is going to be advocating for blocking Welsh lawyers from English markets.

Let me turn now to the second theme of this conference, criminal justice. I sometimes try not to talk too much about criminal justice, because it can get too much attention in comparison to other parts of the justice system in which many of us, including myself, have spent our legal careers doing equally important and often little understood work.

There's no doubt, though, it has been a momentous year for the criminal justice system.

Back in May, we saw the publication of David Gauke's Independent Sentencing Review, a moment that, for many of us, felt long overdue.

I was genuinely encouraged to see these reports acknowledge the deep-rooted challenges in our criminal justice system – issues we've been raising for years.

It's a welcome shift to see recommendations that move us away from the approaches we know are ineffective, like short-term prison sentences, which too often fail to address the root causes of offending.

The Sentencing Review also shines a light on something we've long advocated for. It calls for stronger community services, services that don't just punish, but support people to change by addressing their underlying needs. That's how we build safer communities. That's how we break the cycle.

Here in Wales, we already carry the responsibility for many of these vital services – health, education, housing. We know the value of investing in people, not just punishing them. But with more individuals expected to serve their sentences in the community, we must ask: how will the UK Government ensure these services can meet the rising demand?

That question remains unanswered, but I want to assure you that I'll be watching developments closely as the Sentencing Bill progresses.

Then in July, we had the publication of Part 1 of the Independent Review of the Criminal Courts led by Sir Brian Leveson.

This review brings much needed attention to diversion, and the importance of resolving cases earlier in the process. This direction is welcomed and aligns with our own views on how justice should be achieved in our communities.

I want to acknowledge the UK Government's commitment to tackling the unacceptable backlog in our courts and the practical steps being taken to address it. Still, some recommendations in the report present real challenges. These are challenges that must be carefully weighed before we move forward with implementation.

Of course, here in Wales, we've generally managed to keep our court backlogs smaller than in many parts of England.

While we all want to see cases resolved as quickly as possible, we must also ensure that, in our pursuit of efficiency, we do not undermine the crucial safeguards that protect those accused of crimes. Striking the right balance is essential.

There is no magic line you can draw that clearly marks where an offence is so serious that you must have the right to have your case heard by a jury. But it is a protection we discard at our peril.

The involvement of a jury does not rule out miscarriages of justice. We have seen enough of those. But by sheer weight of numbers of people needing to overcome their reasonable doubts, it must reduce the likelihood of those injustices.

And the more we look to use automation and AI to do some of the work of identifying and investigating criminality, the more essential it becomes that there is that human element as well.

This is an area I will be discussing with the courts minister, and I will continue to raise these points as the conversation develops.

If we take a step back and look at the bigger picture, at the heart of our challenge lies a common thread. It is a pattern of over-criminalisation, an over-reliance on the courts, custodial sentences, and mandatory sentencing minimums. Too often, we reach for the most punitive responses, rather than asking whether they are truly the most effective.

On the other side of the coin, we see alternatives underused or inconsistently applied—civil penalties, true diversion from court, and, crucially, action to address the root causes of offending. We need more focus on what drives people to commit crime and on empowering local professionals, giving them the freedom and trust to do what works best for each individual.

Every part of the justice system has a part to play—police, prosecutors, judges, magistrates, and legal representatives. Each of us must ask: what approach will make the greatest difference in this person's life and in our community? There must, of course, be justice, but that justice can take many forms. We should always be asking, within the bounds of the law, what form of justice serves best the ultimate objective of reducing crime and protecting the public?

There are also very important roles here for probation and the third sector.

I mentioned earlier that I welcomed David Gauke's recognition that these services are central to addressing the root causes of offending. They may not always make headlines, but their impact is profound.

Without probation officers working tirelessly to guide individuals away from reoffending ... and without third sector organisations offering tailored support ... we would struggle to keep our streets safe and help people rebuild their lives.

That support might be getting people into housing on release from prison. It might be treatment for mental health conditions, drug or alcohol addiction, or support coming to terms with a new diagnosis. Too often still we do not recognise people's needs for speech and language therapy until they are in the arms of the justice system.

Likewise the number of people whose neurodiversity is only recognised in custody is still worryingly high. Of course prisons in Wales contain many people who grew up in England, and vice versa, but these issues seemingly arise equally in England and Wales.

While I remain hopeful that the Sentencing Bill will result in meaningful reform across England and Wales, we continue to believe that Wales requires a bespoke approach. So I'm very pleased that the UK Government manifesto contained a commitment to discuss devolving probation.

Probation services operate hand-in-hand with support systems, many of which are already devolved. We believe that bringing probation under the responsibility of the Senedd would allow us to better align these services. It can embed a more coherent strategy for rehabilitation and ultimately support individuals to move away from offending for good.

You may have seen media reports suggesting that the UK Government has ruled out probation devolution.

That's simply not true. What is true though is that we are taking non-legislative first steps in that direction before we move on to talking about full legislative devolution.

Last year, Dame Vera Baird, acting as independent adviser to the Welsh Government, spent considerable time in Manchester learning about the collaborative model adopted there. What that means is that probation services and the combined authority co-design and co-commission support based on the needs of people across Greater Manchester.

The Memorandum of Understanding in place there has enabled greater flexibility in funding, allowing resources to quickly and effectively be directed where they are needed most. In practice, that has meant hubs in each local authority area where some of the people living the most chaotic lives are getting all the support they need in one place to turn their lives around.

My colleague the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice recently visited Manchester to learn more about this approach. We are now actively exploring how a similar model could be implemented in Wales through discussions with the UK Government and the prison and probation service.

While this isn't full devolution, it represents a meaningful step in the right direction.

It's not just probation we are discussing with the UK Government but also youth justice. Here it's even more important that we focus properly and professionally on what is driving offending behaviour – often including adverse childhood experiences and trauma.

Children have a right to thrive and reach their full potential, yet too often, we act only after problems emerge.

The stakes are highest with children. Although many will desist naturally, for some the decisions made by the system in these childhood years will be the difference between two very different paths through life.

The evidence is clear. Preventing offending and positive outcomes are achieved through early and sustained investment in children's well-being. Children need stable families, safe and nurturing schools, access to quality health services, trusted adult relationships, and supportive communities. When children's basic needs are met and their strengths recognised, the likelihood of harm, offending, or long-term disadvantage diminishes significantly.

We are already in Wales responsible for the services that support children and make a real difference in their lives.

Through effective partnerships and early intervention, prevention and diversionary approaches, there are far fewer children in the justice system than there were ten or twenty years ago. The reduction in children entering the system and those receiving custodial sentences is both inspiring and transformative.

We are getting it right, but there's still so much more we can do. Through devolution, we can get local services working in lockstep, intervening early and delivering more joined-up holistic and consistent care and support.

Our priority now is working with the Ministry of Justice to explore options for realigning areas of youth justice.

The Deputy First Minister recently agreed with the Lord Chancellor to explore bringing the oversight and funding of local services to Wales. Those conversations are ongoing now. They are just starting points in a hoped-for process of devolution, but we and the MoJ are committed to making swift and visible progress.

Early intervention and prevention are not optional; they are both effective and essential. The investment we make in children today protects our society tomorrow and for future generations.

We also need to learn from the work we do with children to inform how we can also help adults and make our communities safer. That's part of why youth justice is one of the right starting points for our devolution journey in justice.

I hope this has been a useful survey of the Welsh Government's perspective on criminal justice in Wales. Let me finish where I started, which is to recognise the crucial contribution of the legal professions in all of this. There is no use in the best set of criminal laws in the world, if we don't have the criminal lawyers to do it. Right at the tail end of its tenure, the previous UK Government finally partially woke up to the drain of people away from criminal legal practice. The Bellamy Review led, eventually, to the first rises in legal aid rates in a generation. But people in this room and many others had been telling the world for years of the scale of the challenge.

That challenge has not gone away. When I talk to those of you who are solicitors in private criminal practice, you all tell the same story. The struggle to pay enough to recruit and retain. The alarming shortfall in duty solicitors. The devil in the detail of what work is remunerated and how. The criminal Bar of course has its own problems.

It is not sustainable, and it is not just a Wales problem. But like many problems faced across the jurisdiction, it is particularly acute in Wales, and in certain parts of Wales at that.

So, while we celebrate the remarkable resilience of the legal professions and recognise that there are great individual success stories in Wales, my message is clear. It is a message I give to my colleagues in London as much as to anyone. That message is that we cannot take the legal professions and justice for granted. It needs sustained investment. It needs sustained focus from political leaders.

In Wales, we want it devolved so that justice in Wales can get that sustained focus. But what matters most is not who is in charge. What matters is that those who are in charge, recognise this as one of the great responsibilities of government. That is my message as a Law Officer to colleagues in Wales and Westminster alike.

I hope together we can continue to make that case, and build on the progress of the last few months as we seek to overcome the deep rooted challenges of criminal justice together. Diolch yn fawr.



CYMRU'R
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Speech: Lady Carr DBE

Delivered by The Lady Chief Justice of England
& Wales at the Legal Wales Conference, Friday
10 October 2023⁵ (at Bangor University)



AS DELIVERED

Legal Wales Conference speech October 2025

1. Good afternoon and thank you for having me at this year's Legal Wales Conference here in Bangor. It's wonderful to be here again. P'nawn da a diolch am fy ngwahodd i Gynhadledd Cymru'r Gyfraith eleni. Mae'n hyfryd i fod yma eto. Can I start by acknowledging the enormous contribution of Huw Williams. This legal conference was his brainchild, together with that of Winston Roddick KC back in 2001, and the first conference took place as long ago as 2003. This is your 21st conference and, Huw, I know, that you are going to stay around but your contribution cannot be overstated both in terms of personal support for me but also running such an extraordinary show for so many years. Thank you.
2. This is the third occasion on which I have had the pleasure of speaking at this prestigious and important conference. Last year I listed all the posts in and for Wales now held by women for the first time. I as Lady Chief Justice of Wales and England, Caroline Rees KC as Leader of the Wales Circuit, Professor Alison Young as the new Law Commissioner for Wales, Julie James MS as Counsel General and Baroness Eluned Morgan as the new First Minister.
3. I had genuinely thought that were no firsts left for women in Wales. But how wrong I was. For in July 2025, the Most Reverend Cherry Vann was elected the 15th Archbishop of Wales, the first woman in the British Isles to be a Primate in the Anglican church. I am delighted that she is going to be leading our service in the Cathedral on Sunday. So, the Welsh female trajectory does not stop.
4. The first Presiding Judges of Wales were appointed 55 years ago, when Sir George Baker, later President of the Family Division, and Sir Hilary Talbot took up the role in 1970. Their immediate successors were the formidable Welshmen Sir William Mars-Jones and Sir Tasker Watkins, the latter being only judge ever to have been awarded the Victoria Cross – although not for action in the courts.
5. Moving forwards, we have just marked the retirement of Lady Justice Nicola Davies, who was Presiding Judge of Wales 2014-2017, her successor as Presiding Judge, Lord Justice Clive Lewis, will now, like her, lead for Wales in the Court of Appeal. As I said at Nicola's valedictory in the summer, Nicola Davies was a judge of exceptional distinction whose career has been defined by intellectual rigour, principled leadership and a profound commitment to equality and diversity. She was a judge and woman of many firsts, and I described her, in fact, as Wales' own lioness.
6. Similarly, we will soon see a change in the Presiding Judges of Wales, as Mr Justice Griffiths's term comes to an end. He has been an outstanding Presider. A fierce advocate for all matters Welsh. He gave a presentation to Judges' Council in February

2025 that was remarkable, I still have the slides! I wanted to give you a flavour of his activities as Presider, as they show the role that the judiciary can play in promoting and advancing justice here in Wales.

7. He has visited every court in Wales and sat in most of them. He has visited every prison in Wales but happily not sat in any of them. He passed the first televised sentence in Wales (on St David's Day, 2023 no less). He has sworn in two new First Ministers of Wales, and countless Cabinet Ministers, including the first black leader of Government in Europe (Vaughan Gething), his successor the current First Minister (Eluned Morgan), and (as a Cabinet Minister) former First Minister Mark Drakeford. He led the organising committee for the 2023 Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Conference in Cardiff; the first time it had ever taken place in Wales. He brought the Legal Service to St David's Cathedral for the first time in a generation, in 2024. He got Welsh translators in the Courts of Wales their first pay rise for 20 years.
8. He has sat on many interesting criminal trials and criminal appeals, and civil trials and civil appeals. He gave the judgment (in English and Welsh) of the Divisional Court in the first test case to clarify the interpretation of Wales' radical new housing law, the Renting Homes (Wales) Act. As a fun fact: he sat in that Court with a druid! (HHJ Milwyn Jarman KC, a member of the Gorsedd of Bards).
9. He was a founder member of the Executive Council of the Law Council of Wales; as well as being Chair of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee on the Welsh Language. Finally, and perhaps the icing on the cake, he put a piano in Cardiff Lodgings – and played it.
10. A particular accolade must go for his work towards a new Cardiff Civil Justice Centre. I am certain that without his drive, and the combined tenacity and commitment of the Counsel General, Julie James MS, to whom I also declare a special tribute. I have no doubt that we would not be making the progress that we are. It is still early days, but I feel that there is a change in gear here, I believe for the first time that we are going to see a new fit for purpose building worthy of civil justice in Wales.
11. Change is in the air, but I am delighted to say that the next Presiding Judge of Wales, succeeding Mr Justice Griffiths, will be Mrs Justice Mary Stacey, starting in January. She will bring to the role a remarkable breadth of experience, from different jurisdictions of the law, and diverse parts of the judiciary.
12. She practised as a solicitor, before being appointed as a Tribunal judge, an Employment Judge, a circuit judge in the civil courts, and a criminal judge as a Recorder of the Crown Court and Probation Liaison Judge. She was appointed to the High Court Bench in 2020. Her father was an Olympic athlete, so she will know how to stay the course. And she is of partly Welsh descent; through both of her paternal grandparents she is a wonderful judge and person and will do you proud. I would like

to thank her in advance but also Mrs Justice Morgan and Mr Justice Nicklin for all that they do for us.

13. Since the last conference in Wales, I returned in February, visiting Newport Crown Court, and sat in the CACD at Cardiff Crown Court. I also had the opportunity to meet with the First Minister and Counsel General and of course I visited the present Cardiff Civil Justice Centre along the way.
14. Going back to the First Minister and engagement with Parliament, I had a meeting with the Llywydd and I attended a reception with officials at the Senedd. These visits have been really productive in enhancing and developing relationships in getting better visibility for the work of the judiciary. I know that I am going to be working on relations there, and next year, I will be giving evidence in February to the Legislation Justice and Constitution Committee of the Senedd. I am planning to talk about the operation of the judiciary in Wales, the court estate and my priorities as Lady Chief Justice of Wales.
15. What are my key themes and takeaways from my visits in Wales:
 - Increase in case receipts and complexity of work.
 - Issues over staff recruitment and retention, in particular loss of experienced staff members.
 - Estate issues, including broken lifts and front doors (significant issues at particular court centres).
16. So here in Wales we are not immune from the challenges facing the courts and tribunals in England as well, but the justice system in Wales has more than held its own, quite remarkably delivering excellent performance in multiple areas.
17. So, without any of the reforms that are coming down the line we are disposing of more Crown Court cases than we are receiving.
18. In the civil courts, over 94% of civil and family work is being processed within five days of receipt, and the speed of final disposals in both civil and family work is well above the national average.
19. Wales continues to be a jurisdiction of choice for pilots which is a real compliment. Pathfinder which is a pilot that is being rolled out we hope nationally, it has certainly extended to the whole of Wales. It has seen remarkable results “front loading” cases that involve children by getting Cafcass involved at an earlier stage bringing parents in right at the beginning to hear the child’s voice.
20. Can I say a word about tribunals. I know Sir Gary Hickinbottom is here, I commend to you his recent annual report of the President of the Welsh tribunals, it is concise and

informative. He highlights suggestions for meaningful reform to the tribunals. His vision is to create a single, unified structure for the devolved tribunals with a new appeals process. It is fair to say that it is a significant disappointment to him and us that the necessary legislation to achieve all this was not included in the Welsh Government's legislative programme for the remainder of the current Senedd. We had high hopes, but I am sure we will get there, perhaps just not as quickly as we wanted.

21. There have been some key developments in the devolved tribunals space, pay parity between the Welsh and HMCTS-governed tribunals. The Welsh tribunals are being included in the ongoing SSRB Major Review which is welcome. There has also been the appointment of a Training Lead Judge, to oversee and support Welsh-specific training, and the outstanding capital expenditure requirements.
22. More generally, work continues to move on embedding equality between the Welsh and English languages throughout the justice system in Wales. I am still learning Welsh and currently up to section 2 on Duolingo! For those of you that do it the little owl is my best friend. *Boyd ee hun-ee bar-high*. Long may it continue. I am immensely grateful to HHJ Mererid Edwards, my judicial linguistic coach, who is ever ready to support me at short or even no notice. My inbox is fully of her audio clips repeating everything I am trying to say. Thank you.
23. In order to secure the future of Welsh-speaking judiciary in Wales, both full-time salaried judges and part-time fee paid judges have reached a historic agreement with the Judicial Appointments Commission, under the leadership of your former archbishop Dr Barry Morgan. It devises and establishes an improved procedure for identifying and appointing judges who not only meet the standards of excellence required of any judge, but who are also either already either proficient in Welsh to the standard required, or who have enough conversational Welsh to be trained up to higher levels after appointment. I am very grateful to the Welsh Matters Committee of the Judicial Appointments Commission for the work done over many months on this issue.
24. I would like to turn to the magistracy. There is much pressure and change in governance and structure, including the consultation on LJAs which ran until the summer. I would like to acknowledge the most unfortunate oversight that no Welsh Language Impact Assessment before the consultation was undertaken. I well understand why this omission went down like a lead balloon. The position is being mitigated but things like this are easy to avoid, and cause real anxiety and concern. Please do relay my comments to the magistrates whom you meet and work with the acknowledgement that it is our undertaking together to make sure that these things do not happen again.

25. As we reflect upon our progress and the times to come, can I ask you also to indulge me on a final thought. In preparing my remarks for the conference, I noted that this year is the 10th anniversary of the Welsh Language Tribunal. I enjoyed this afternoon's breakout session celebrating the same.
26. I have already spoken about the value and importance of the Welsh language. During my learning process, I have found great value in learning the etymology of words too. For example, a Welsh word with which many non-speakers are familiar is 'cwtch' – meaning a cuddle, hug or safe place. Its origin is from the Middle English 'couche', meaning to lie down or a hiding place, which itself comes from the Old French 'coucher'.
27. In the legal sphere, the word 'cyfraith' is Welsh for law. It derives from 'cyf', meaning together, and 'rhaith', meaning a judgment or decision. Together, this means a shared judgment or common rule, reflecting the communal nature of the laws by which we all abide – or, perhaps, the rule of law.
28. For me breaking down the etymology of words encourages me to reflect upon their true meanings and remind me of the power of words. In fact, the reason we are all here today is our belief in the rule of law, the 'cyfraith'.
29. But perhaps my favourite Welsh word is 'cartref' – home – which is a compound of 'car' (meaning love) and 'tref' (meaning settlement or town). So, the literal meaning of 'cartref' is 'a place of love'.
30. I can hardly think of a more fitting word for Wales and for its people – every time I visit I am struck once more by the community, friendship and kindness, and of the fierce Welsh patriotism. Thank you for inviting me once again to spend some time with you all today – and for making me feel quite at 'cartref'!
31. Thank you. Diolch.



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After Dinner Speech: Helen Molyneux

Delivered by Helen Molyneux, Founder of
NewLaw Solicitors & Co-Founder, Monumental
welsh Women, at the Legal Wales Dinner,
Friday 10 October 2023 (at Bangor University)



Thank you

When Huw first asked me to speak this evening about my career in the law and the Monumental Welsh Women project, I was a little reluctant at first as I wasn't sure how the two could be connected.

It's a long time since I've been asked to talk about my legal career as I actually retired from the law in 2016! Nearly 10 years ago now – and I'm pretty sure the legal industry has changed massively since then.

These days, I'm usually asked to speak about the overlooked women of Wales and the fact that until we started our Monumental Welsh Women statue campaign, there was not one single statue in the whole of Wales recognising the achievements of a real Welsh Woman.

So, I tried to think about how the 2 things – my career in the law and the statue project - could be drawn together and whether

there was any theme that I could pull out of them and the thought that kept popping into my mind was - that I was actually a bit late to the party in terms of the issues surrounding women's equality and recognition in the workplace and beyond. Literally, until about 10 years ago, I thought the battle was won as I hadn't felt that I had suffered from being a woman in my legal career.

Now, my story is my story and I wouldn't for one minute like to say that it is typical or that other women haven't struggled but, for me, the law was a profession where a combination of great female role models and supportive male mentors meant that I was able to thrive certainly in the early part of my career, which gave me the skills and confidence needed to set me on the road to success later. But my experience since led me to realise that for many women that still isn't the case

So, in terms of my career, I guess the first thing is, to say is - I never wanted to be a lawyer.

When I was growing up, my great idol was Kate Adie – who for those of you who are too young to remember was the great BBC war correspondent. When I was growing up Kate Adie was running around all over the world in a flak jacket dodging bullets and generally having a ball (my naïve teenage view obviously). At the same time, Margaret Thatcher was Prime minister – and I was young enough (just) to assume that a woman being prime minister and a female being a foreign correspondent was entirely normal and that if I wanted to be the prime minister or a foreign correspondent, I could.

So I was inspired by these women who were always on the telly at the time because I could see what I could be. So much so that I actually did want to be a foreign correspondent – I had enough self awareness even at that age to realise prime minister might be a bit of a stretch - and set my sights on going to journalism school – admittedly to become a local reporter in Merthyr Tydfil, rather than Afghanistan. Like all the best laid plans, however, things didn't quite work out as I imagined as I managed to get

myself pregnant before I'd even left school, but even that didn't seem to be an insurmountable problem as my mother – who come to think about it was not dissimilar to Mrs Thatcher in many ways - told me to just get on with it!

So I went to Journalism college when Alex, my son was 3 months old and trained to be a local reporter, but when I started working I realised I had a problem. I was earning £30 a week and my childminder fees were £25 – which didn't really work! So I went to university because in those days (a very long time ago now) you got a full grant and a single parent allowance! I only studied law because I thought I would be going back to court reporting and it would be useful to understand what was going on when the drug barons of Merthyr were up in court! I never intended to be a lawyer.

Again – plans never quite work out as you imagine - I finished law school and discovered that trainee solicitors earned twice as much as trainee reporters so, on my own with a small child, I thought I would just be a lawyer for a few years, qualify, earn a bit

of cash and then go back into journalism. Well, here I am 40 years later and I never did get to wear the Kate Adie flak jacket – although it certainly would have come in handy on occasions.

I joined Phillips and Buck as an articled clerk in Cardiff - which subsequently became part of Everhseds - and worked my way up to partner pretty quickly. I had some fantastic role models - male and female - including the indefatigable Wendy Hopkins – one of the original Phillips and Buck partners - who was my supervisor when I was an articled clerk. Remember those? Well Wendy's idea of supervision was that every 6 months she would take me for lunch in the local Italian restaurant and tell me all the gossip (she was a divorce lawyer so that was always entertaining!) and then give me career advice – which was the same every time – Darling girl, she'd say - you need to get elocution lessons!. The point being that, Wendy, being a Splott Girl, had had elocution lessons and believed they were the secret of her success. Personally, I think it was the fact that she was a great lawyer with the tenacity of a bulldog! I never did get the

elocution lessons – as you can probably tell. Imagine what I might have achieved if I had!

Anyway – I had a great time at Eversheds and learned how a great law firm was run, but as I approached my 40's I suddenly remembered that I didn't want to be a lawyer when I grew up and I definitely didn't want to work for the same firm for the whole of my career. Kate Adie would have thought I was very boring! I was also told, that the Chief Executive at the time thought I was a bit of a maverick – and he didn't mean in a heroic Tom Cruise vibe sort of way, I don't think. It definitely wasn't a compliment! So, generally I was starting to get itchy feet and looking for a change.

Now this was all around the time that the Clementi Review was taking place (2003 – 2004) - remember that? The opening up of legal services to non lawyers? - which was the subject of not much discussion if I am honest in the firm, but I personally found it very interesting! I honestly thought that other businesses would look at law firms, realise how much money they made and want

a piece of the action! I saw it as a great opportunity to work with other businesses and harness their commerciality to make even greater legal businesses.

So, after a chance meeting on a train with a man who owned an insurance broking business who promised to be my first client if I set up on my own – I decided to leave Eversheds and do just that. Now I come from a very artistic family – they are all painters and photographers and musicians – and I was the black sheep - an insurance lawyer. I have not one single artistic bone in my body and absolutely no imagination – which my sister says is the reason I was successful – I had a complete inability to look into the future and see what a potential for disaster there was! I just thought it would all be fine and if the worst happened, I'd just get another job.

One of my great mentors at Eversheds, Keith James, always used to say 'Begin with the end in mind'. So I started Newlaw in 2004 with the express mission of creating a law firm that was first

and foremost a business that I could sell once the Legal services Act came into force. Now when I went back and checked the timeline when I was preparing this speech – I was quite shocked – I think I might have jumped the gun a bit! The Clementi review wasn't published until 2004! - and I was already out the door! The legal Services Act didn't come into force until 2007 with ABS's – the model I was relying upon in my business model – not being legal until 2011! My whole business plan in 2004 was predicated on me being able to get external investors, become an ABS and sell to a business that wasn't a law firm! Perhaps that Chief Exec had a point.

Newlaw was essentially designed to develop into a legal outsourcing business - taking advantage of the rule changes which meant that the legal market was opening up to non-lawyers. Basically, we offered insurance companies and membership organisations the opportunity to set up their own law firms – they supplied the clients, we supplied the know-how, administration, people and compliance and we split the profits.

We had long term contracts with our partners to run their law firms which we white labelled in their names. What this meant was that we had a business that a) was not reliant upon the legal talent (in other words, if I left, nobody really cared) and b) had recurring income from long term contracts which meant the business had a value which was easily calculated. We grew the business to over 400 people in 10 years. We were the fourth firm to become an ABS, almost immediately after the regulations came into force in 2011 and we sold the business in 2014 to an insurance services PLC – bang on my 10 year plan. And then I retired!

So, I loved every minute of my time in the law and never really thought my career suffered from me being a woman – if anything I think it helped as sometimes people would underestimate me which meant it was possible to go under the radar a bit! The real eye opener for me though was actually when I retired and started doing Non-exec work in other industries. I met a lot of women who had never had the role models, encouragement or opportunities I had – really – taken for granted.

Now I don't want to exaggerate how successful and progressive the legal profession is – the gender pay gap in the law is still 11% and over 200 years since the establishment of the law society and 100 years after the first women were admitted to the profession, we are only now celebrating the appointment of our first Lady Chief Justices – **The Lady Chief Justice of Wales and England**, Rt Hon. Baroness Carr of Walton-on-the-Hill and , who it is an honour to meet this evening.

The Supreme court has only one woman Judge now – down from 3 or was it 4 not that long ago – out of 12! And the ratio of men to women in the most senior positions is still not quite balanced. So let's not pat ourselves too heartily on the back. But – my experience working in other industries since I retired is that some are a lot worse. And since I've retired, I've realised how lucky I was. In my non-executive roles, I have tried to champion pay equality – which in reality means equality of opportunity– but it's not just about the work environment. It's about role models in every day life and women's successes and achievements being celebrated and recorded – and ultimately seen as entirely normal! – not something to be amazed or surprised at but just part of the fabric of our society. We are still celebrating 'firsts' for women – the first women to be appointed Chief Justice etc – and I would love to be at a point where there are no more firsts for women to be celebrated.

So when my friend, the journalist Carolyn Hitt, told me that there was not one single statue of a real Welsh Woman in Wales, it struck a chord with me. I'd been lucky enough to find my own role models early on and had great role models in the law. But, if as a young woman, you didn't have those, you certainly wouldn't find them in the public spaces around us. As I said at the outset, until 5 years ago, there was not one single statue in Wales of a real Welsh woman. So that's how the idea for Monumental Welsh Women was born

The Monumental Welsh women group is actually itself a team of pretty great women. A more inspiring group of women I could not have wished to be working with – it's been an absolute joy. They are all volunteers and give their time and energy for nothing other than the love of a job well done.

It started with a group of us pooling our address books and organising a night out in the Dead Canary cocktail bar, Talking about Carolyn's article over a few drinks and wondering how many great, interesting Welsh women had there been that no one had heard about and that had been completely forgotten. All these great, inspiring stories lost! And the more cocktails we drank, the more it seemed like a really really good idea to build some statues!

Initially our plan was to create one statue of a real Monumental Welsh Woman –we thought that was ambitious enough - and we worked with the BBC to run a public vote which resulted in Betty Campbell being the most popular choice and our first Monumental Welsh Women statue – unveiled in Cardiff in 2021.

My favourite fact about the vote was that we got more votes than the Sports personality of the year!

That statue was so well received that, with a bit of encouragement from Welsh Government who promised to donate some money but only if we did all 5 of our shortlisted women, we took up the gauntlet and decided to do 5 statues of 5 monumental Welsh women in 5 years.

Since we started, we have raised over £600,000, worked with community groups in each location and commissioned the best sculptors to complete our mission and we are nearly there.

We have now completed 4 statues –

Betty Campbell, the first black head teacher in Wales and community champion, in Cardiff,

Elaine Morgan, the screenwriter and evolutionary theorist in Mountain Ash,

Cranogwen, a master mariner - just think about that for a women in the 1800s - and the first woman to win a poetry prize at the Eisteddfod, who was described by her biographer, Jane Arron as

‘the rock star’ of her day because she was such a draw on her lecture tours - Cranogwen is in Llangrannog.

Lady Rhondda the suffragette, famous postbox bomber and editor of one of the longest running magazines, Time and Tide, – in Newport. I could talk about these women for all day – they are fascinating characters and deserve at least an hour each to do them justice, so please go on our website and read about them and have a look at the beautiful statues that our artists have created for us. They have already become part of the Welsh landscape – especially the Betty Campbell monument in Cardiff which has rapidly become the place to meet in Cardiff – if you are ever trying to arrange to meet anyone in Cardiff these days, they say, see you at betty!

But I will spend a moment on Elizabeth Andrews – who is the subject of our 5th and final statue – mainly because we are still raising money for her, so I want to inspire you all to donate a bit!

The statue is being created by Billie Bond and will be outside the Rhondda Heritage Park.

Elizabeth Andrews was an incredible woman, born in Hirwaun, she was one of the most influential Welsh female political activists of the early 20th century. Her motto was Educate, organise, agitate!

She was One of 11 children born into a poor mining family in Hirwaun, and dreamed of being a teacher but was forced to leave school at 13 to help her parents make ends meet.

She moved to the Rhondda at the age of 26 and became the first Labour Party Women's Organiser for Wales, she set up women's sections, describing them as "working women's universities."

One of the campaigns she is most well-known for, is the pithead baths campaign. Giving evidence in the House of Lords to a Royal Commission on the mining industry in 1919, she spoke powerfully about the impact of the pits on family life. As a miner's

wife she knew how dangerous the industry was for the men but she stressed that women's lives were at risk too as they coped with overcrowded houses, poor sanitation and the high death rates among their children. She argued that Pit head baths could help transform women's lives by removing the relentless dirt brought in by the miners and the significant danger of lugging heavy tin baths of boiling water around the home.

I have seen a transcript of her evidence to the commission and other than the bizarre comments by the men on the committee who questioned her about Welsh women keeping hens in the bath and being dirtier than French women – the thing that jumped out at me was that she said that between March and May 1919, she had organised and spoken at over 25 meetings on the subject of housing and pithead baths. 25 meetings in 2 months. This was a woman on a mission! She was educating, organising and agitating and achieving dramatic, meaningful change. She is a great example of how to create change – through hard work , dedication and effort.

I like to think Elizabeth's motto guided the monumental Welsh women project. We educated ourselves about the lack of recognition for women's contributions to Welsh life, and realised that we needed to educate other women about their foremothers. We organised a fantastic group of women to change the status quo- and we have been agitating ever since to get the five statues done – and quite successfully, I think! It's an example of the power of a group of women who use their diverse skills and experience - and a lot of hard work - to achieve change. I like to think we have changed the face of public art in Wales and that our five statues are just the first of many more statues of women.

Thank you for listening and Please do have a look at our website - [monumental welsh women.com](http://monumentalwelshwomen.com) and if you feel inspired, please make a donation so that we can complete our mission next year.

Thank you!



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