

INSIDETRACK

Property department success leads to promotions at Latimer Hinks



The Latimer Hinks Property Team (left to right): Martin Williamson, Neil Stevenson, Nicola Neilson & Adam Wood.

Latimer Hinks, the long-established Darlington solicitors, completed £150 million worth of property deals in 2016.

New figures from the property department at Latimer Hinks, which offers clients services covering agricultural, residential and commercial sales and purchases, shows that during 2016 the company dealt with almost 300 property sales with a total value of £80 million and over 200 property purchases, total value £67 million. In addition they helped Clients secure funding amounting to almost £3 million.

The results coincided with the inclusion of the firm in two of the UK's most influential legal guides, Chambers UK, and the Legal 500, which described Latimer Hinks' property team

as "quick to update clients" with "a wide range of knowledge".

Anne Elliott, Chief Executive of Latimer Hinks, congratulated the department, saying: "It was a very good year for Latimer Hinks, not just in the property department, but across the whole business. We received a Northern Law Award, consolidated our position in the Legal 500, and obtained an exceptionally positive listing in Chambers UK.

"The success of the property department really is the icing on the cake, and is validation of our position as a leading law firm in the North East and indicates to our clients that we have the best and brightest working with us. I'd like to thank the entire team for their meticulous and attentive approach to their work."

In recognition of their hard work and commitment to the firm, residential property expert Martin Williamson and commercial property solicitor Adam Wood, were both promoted to the position of Director during 2016. The duo join fellow Directors, Neil Stevenson and Nicola Neilson, who both specialise in property law. Four other Directors are involved in private client work.

Martin, who has more than 30 years' experience dealing with legal matters relating to residential property, including all aspects of property sales and purchases, said: "I've been with Latimer Hinks since 2004 and have seen the ups and downs of the North East property market during that time. One thing that has remained consistent is the approach of the business to ensuring clients receive the very best Director led service and value for money."

Adam, who joined Latimer Hinks in 2013 and specialises in commercial property investment and development, added: "I'm delighted to have joined such a talented team of Directors at Latimer Hinks. Every day my colleagues show me why Latimer Hinks has continued to go from strength to strength during its 125 years serving the people of the North East. Every member of the team is committed to supporting the clients. Whether they're looking to let out a small property or buy many acres of farmland, each client receives a top level service."

Anne Elliott added: "Although I commend our team for their hard work, ultimately our success is reliant on our clients. These excellent figures from our property department, which we believe to be our best yet, also indicate that the North East economy is buoyant, in both rural and urban locations."

To speak to the Property Team call, 01325 341500.



The success of the property department really is the icing on the cake, and is validation of our position as a leading law firm in the North East"



Latimer Hinks
S O L I C I T O R S



150 year old County Durham jewellers moves into new flagship premises

Latimer Hinks Solicitors has played a crucial role in the relocation of two North East branches of Pandora, the international jewellery manufacturer, operated by Bramwells Jewellers, a family-run master jewellers founded in 1867.

The Darlington-based law firm, one of the longest established in County Durham, provides commercial property services to Bramwells Jewellers.

The legal documentation for the new Pandora stores, which sees Pandora move to new flagship premises in Intu Eldon Square Shopping Centre, Newcastle and Prince Bishops Shopping Centre, Durham, was negotiated and completed by Latimer Hinks, a sector-leader in property law.

Bill, Jill and Peter Bramwell, whose family has owned Bramwells Jewellers since 1867, hold the franchises for the new Pandora branches. The decision to move the Pandora stores into new prime retail locations was made to further grow the businesses and create new job opportunities for the future.

Adam Wood, a property lawyer at Latimer Hinks, said: "Latimer Hinks is delighted to support Bramwells in completing this exciting venture. Pandora is a global brand and we are



Peter Bramwell, Adam Wood, Director and Solicitor at Latimer Hinks and Bill Bramwell at the Pandora store, Prince Bishops, Durham.

proud to support Bill, Jill and Peter Bramwell by putting in place the legal documentation for the new Pandora stores."

Bill Bramwell said: "It is an exciting time for Bramwells as we continue to build on 150

years in business. We have been fortunate to have the benefit of considerable knowledge and sound legal advice from Adam Wood at Latimer Hinks as we have expanded into new premises."

Four important employment law updates for 2017

While question marks continue to hang over how Brexit will affect UK employment law, there are a number of upcoming changes we can be sure about. From limits to salary sacrifice schemes to preparations for data protection regulations, here are four updates relevant to companies large and small.

1. Employing foreign workers

From April, small employers who sponsor foreign workers with a tier 2 visa will have to pay an immigration skills charge of £364 per worker. This charge is on top of the current fees for visa applications.

SMEs powering post-Brexit labour market

The CBI's latest research into the UK labour market has revealed that many small and medium-sized firms remain positive following the EU referendum, with 32% expecting to hire more staff throughout 2017.

However, the survey also found that over half of UK SMEs say a skills gap is their biggest worry for the future.

2. Salary sacrifice scheme restrictions

Many salary sacrifice schemes will no longer be offered tax free, including company cars, mobile contracts and private health checks. However, employees who signed up before 4 April 2017 will continue to enjoy the benefits until at least April 2018 – with some benefits running until 2020. Pension, cycle-to-work and low emission car schemes will remain tax free.

3. Getting ready for General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Although not set to come in until May 2018, employers must begin preparing to meet EU GDPR requirements this year. The regulations mean that employers will no longer be able to use generic consent (such as a general data usage consent in a contract of employment) for collecting their employees' personal data.

4. Trade union balloting

New balloting requirements are due to take effect this year. Under the rules, a minimum turnout of 50% is required for a valid vote for strike action, with the majority of voters having to be in favour of striking. The changes are slightly different for those in important public services such as rail companies, who will require 40% of all eligible union voters to vote in favour of taking industrial action.

Landmark Emmerdale episode highlights importance of herbert protocol

It's rare for a work of TV fiction to have a profound effect on its audience, but that's not to say it doesn't happen. One of those rare occasions came along recently when Emmerdale aired a special episode focussing on long-standing character Ashley Thomas's experience of living with vascular dementia.

It can be difficult to understand how people living with dementia perceive the world, but the show's producers put the viewers into Ashley's shoes perfectly. I'm sure it will have touched a nerve with the millions of people who are affected by dementia every year, (either directly or indirectly).

For those who don't follow the soap, the episode in question followed a day in the life of Ashley Thomas, whose struggle with vascular dementia has been followed by viewers since he was first diagnosed with the illness in the Autumn of 2015. Since then viewers have seen a slow, but steady deterioration as Ashley gradually loses his battle with the illness. This has had a genuine effect on some of Emmerdale's more avid viewers, who have come to know and love Ashley since he first arrived as the village's vicar in 1996. There was an outpouring of emotion on social media, with many commenting on just how close to home the episode was.

The producers deserve to be commended for their portrayal of some of the more well-known symptoms of dementia. Using the village of Esholt, where Emmerdale was originally filmed up until the mid-90s, helped viewers understand the disorientation and confusion that dementia sufferers sometimes undergo. Sudden switches of location as Ashley



wandered the streets showed the incredible confusion and frustration that memory blackspots can have on sufferers, and replacing other well-known and popular characters with new actors played a similar purpose. This latter cinematic device is one that I think will have hit home most poignantly with viewers; visiting a family member with dementia who is unable to recognise you can be immensely painful.

Of course, Ashley's story is not unique. It's common for those with dementia to wander. The symptoms of dementia are caused by the damage or destruction of the brain cells responsible for memory, thinking and behaviour. This means it is very easy for a person to become disorientated and lost, even in a place they have lived in for years, as was the case with Ashley. In fact, dementia sufferers going missing is a serious and regular occurrence, with around 60% of those with the illness wandering. Their illness means that they are particularly vulnerable to being injured during these episodes; they can walk into traffic, fall victim to foul weather or be taken advantage of by malicious strangers.

This is a fear that many of those caring for dementia sufferers have, and why preparedness is key. When a dementia sufferer goes missing, the police need a significant amount of information from the person's family, but usually (and quite understandably) those people who best know the missing person are under an immense amount of stress, and aren't likely to be in a frame of mind to recall the historic data about their loved ones that the authorities need. That is why the adoption of the Herbert Protocol by Durham Constabulary

in November 2016 was so badly needed.

The protocol is a way to give carers more peace of mind and makes the job of finding a missing person much easier for the authorities. The Protocol encourages carers, families and friends to complete a simple form, identifying vulnerable adults - but especially those suffering from dementia - who are at risk of going missing, and to collate relevant information, which can be used if such an event occurs.

For dementia sufferers this ought to include information on any prescribed medication, regular routines, mobile numbers, places where they previously lived or worked and a recent photograph. The document lives offline and should be kept in a safe place by the carers and family of the vulnerable person so it can be contemporaneously updated but is also close to hand should it be required.

Emmerdale's focus on Ashley and his illness was one of the finest and most moving pieces of television of recent times. Although it took an emotional toll on viewers, it also served a valuable purpose by highlighting the serious risk that people with dementia can pose to themselves - I hope that it inspired others to proactively investigate what to do should a loved one go missing.

It is a fantastic platform to raise awareness around this condition and the pain it inflicts on its sufferers and their nearest and dearest.

To raise awareness of the Herbert Protocol we have produced a video with help from Age UK Darlington - the Herbert Protocol, why it is so important. www://youtu.be/XJdwyo40bE.



Natalie Palmer, Director & Solicitor
Contact: 01325 341500.
Email: nsp@latimerhinks.co.uk

**Solicitors for families,
businesses, farmers &
landowners**

Contacts and services

you & your family

An understanding approach to house buying and selling, long term care and retirement, wills, trusts and probate.

Private Client Team: Anne Elliott, Andrew Way, Elizabeth Armstrong, Natalie Palmer, Gillian Ibbotson, Nadine Kilvington, Kelly McLoughlin, Daniel Williams, Jennifer Quayle, Claire Conway, Julie Porter, Toni-Ann Galvin, Nikita Noël

Residential Conveyancing Team: Nicola Neilson, Martin Williamson, Jonathan Sturgeon, Laura Richardson, Jack Stainthorpe

business & commercial

Advice on commercial property law, employment and contract law, selling a business and succession planning.

Commercial Team: Nick Poole, Anne Elliott

Commercial Property Team: Neil Stevenson, Nicola Neilson, Adam Wood, Tim Haggie, Jonathan Sturgeon

farms & estates

Knowledgeable legal expertise in land sales and purchases, land option agreements, tenancy agreements, succession planning, diversification schemes and renewable energy developments.

Agricultural Team: Anne Elliott, Neil Stevenson, Nicola Neilson, Elizabeth Armstrong, Martin Williamson, Adam Wood, Tim Haggie, Rosanne Tweddle

Private Client Team: Anne Elliott, Andrew Way, Elizabeth Armstrong, Natalie Palmer, Gillian Ibbotson, Nadine Kilvington, Kelly McLoughlin, Daniel Williams, Jennifer Quayle, Claire Conway, Julie Porter, Toni-Ann Galvin, Nikita Noël

**Contact details for
Latimer Hinks:**

Tel: 01325 341500

lh@latimerhinks.co.uk

www.latimerhinks.co.uk



Is Airbnb regulation looming?

Since 2008, travellers across the world have been checking in to annexes, granny flats and spare rooms. The international Airbnb boom has spread far and wide, with lets available in locations as unusual and remote as nomadic Mongolian villages and flats in Kabul, a city beleaguered by conflict since 2001.

Property rentals of this nature may not be everybody's cup of tea, but for those who may be considering folding away the dust sheets in their spare rooms and flinging open their doors to the tourist market, it might be worth considering whether the wind of change is blowing against the practice.

Here in the North East short-term lets are bringing home the bacon for many homeowners; Airbnb advertises rooms to let from as little as £14 per night with whole properties coming in at considerably more. The last chancellor, encouraging such micro-entrepreneurship, introduced a tax break for homeowners renting out a room on the first £1000 they earn. But could international rumblings, calling for regulation and a

clampdown on Airbnb-style property letting, bring the booming industry grinding to a halt?

In the past twelve months cities across the world, including Barcelona, Berlin, and most recently New York, have begun machinations to introduce greater regulation of short-term lettings, introducing registers of renters and subjecting them to strict conditions. In New York, where the minimum let for most apartments was already 30 days, regulation has gone further and forbidden advertisement on sites such as Airbnb.

Such regulation is driven by the belief that the proliferation of short-term rentals is driving up property values in popular cities, pricing local residents out of the market and forcing them to move out of the area. Academic opinion seems to be divided on the matter. Largely, the sub-letting of single rooms, within inhabited properties remains acceptable and is not considered a threat to the wider property market. However, there is growing pressure from the established hospitality lobby, keen to ensure that their "competitors" are subject to comparably stringent regulations.

Such changes seem removed from the UK market for the time being, and certainly from short-term letting here in the North East, where house prices and shortages present less of a difficulty than in major towns and cities.

But landlords who keep a close eye on the political world might have come across the Renters' Rights Bill, a private member's bill currently tabled for debate in Westminster. The bill proposes a number of changes to existing legislation, clamping down on rogue-landlords, reducing the range of fees landlords can charge, restricting the purchase of HMOs and making it compulsory to conduct electrical safety checks every five years. If it makes it into law, the Bill seems unlikely to create huge waves and is certainly a distant cry from the crackdown on short-term lettings apparent elsewhere.



**Martin Williamson, Director & Head of
Residential Property**

Contact: 01325 341500

Email: mw@latimerhinks.co.uk