



MCP fight for the vulnerable

MCP Partner and head of the Family Department, Steve Welcomme has been running a campaign to help keep Legal Aid available to all who need it in East Anglia. 34 other local law firms have joined forces along with 4 rural law societies.

This campaign has drawn a considerable amount of press attention including The Times Newspaper, in which Steve was quoted and The Law Gazette.

The government have proposed changes to the Legal Aid system in family and civil cases including paying a fixed fee and a reduction in the number of firms dealing with legal aid work.

These changes mean that many firms will be forced to stop providing Legal Aid as it will be financially impossible to continue to offer the service. People in rural areas will be particularly badly hit as there may not be a solicitor providing Legal Aid nearby.

Steve Welcomme said "Our privately paid work is already helping to subsidise our Legal Aid work, but we can't be expected to subsidise it further.

"What concerns me is that the most vulnerable people in society are going to find it difficult to get proper legal representation. The report has totally ignored the problems of rural areas like this. Lord Carter has admitted his proposals are based on an urban model.

"For instance if you are a woman living in Fenland in an abusive marriage you may find yourself having to travel miles to find a solicitor to represent you on Legal Aid, as the number of firms offering the service will be cut dramatically. That could be difficult if you have young children, no money and no transport.

"You could have the situation where the man, who works, has money to pay for proper legal representation, while the woman, who either doesn't work or only has limited income, will be unable to receive the same level of representation because she can't afford it.

"There will be an inequality of arms and that cannot be right when the aim is to ensure equal justice for all. It is the weak and vulnerable who will suffer. Many people will be deprived of the opportunity of putting their case in court or will have to do it unaided.

"The efficiency of the court system will be compromised by the poor preparation of the cases and poor standards of representation (or no representation) at court, at a cost of millions to the tax payer.

"Also, without access to proper legal advice or to the court the pressure will fall on the police, social services and other organisations, again at a cost to the tax payer.

"The public really do need to understand that it is not a question of fat cat lawyers being money grabbing. It is about ensuring that everyone who needs legal representation gets it and there is an equality of justice for all."

This campaign shows MCP's dedication to clients whether they be corporate, private or Legal Aid.

MCP would like to urge people to write to their local MP to express their views on the proposals.

For more information please contact Steve Welcomme.

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Trainee Solicitors



Our Current Trainees & Paralegals

Left to Right:

Rebecca Scott
Robert Colwell
Carolyn Wright
David Roper
Louisa Mawbey
Aimee Marsh

At MCP we appreciate that to maintain the high level of service that we provide to our clients we must ensure quality recruitment.

With over seven hundred applications a year for between one and two places we are able to select trainees who know our clients and the service they expect as well as having an empathy with the East Anglian region.

Our training programme follows that recommended by The Law Society and ensures that our paralegals and trainees have the opportunity of working at each of our offices with some of our most experienced solicitors in various areas of law. This gives them a broad overview before they begin to specialise.

Louisa Mawbey will qualify in February of 2007. She joined MCP in August 2004 working as a paralegal in the Criminal Department before then undertaking work in the Family and Property Departments.

Her final seat is in Probate and on qualifying in February 2007 she will join the Probate Department as an assistant solicitor at our Kings Lynn Office.

Robert Colwell completed his Law degree at Nottingham Trent University and his LPC at De Montfort University in Leicester.

He then worked as a paralegal in the Commercial Department when after six months he was offered a Training Contract. Seats in Criminal, Wills and Probate and the Family Department followed.

Rob also organises the local Young Solicitor Group and arranges social events including not only the trainee solicitors, paralegals and trainee Legal Executives within MCP, (of which there are over twenty) but also including trainees from other local firms.

Of our more recent recruits Carolyn Wright is currently working in our Property Department, Aimee Marsh in Matrimonial, and David Roper and Rebecca Scott in our Commercial Department.

All of our trainees are in agreement that MCP offers a variety of work in pleasant offices with the chance to learn from some of the best lawyers in the region.

Alison Muir, recruitment and training Partner said "It is extremely rewarding to recruit such hardworking and enthusiastic trainees and then see them develop throughout their training seat to become confident and competent lawyers. Three of our Partners started the firm as trainees and there are great opportunities for our recruits"

For more information please contact Alison Muir.

Wills, Living Wills & EPAs

People don't always like to think about the future. But when the time comes do you want your family to make difficult decisions at a time of great distress or would you rather set things up in advance by using a Will, Living Will and EPA?

Wills

A Will should be made to ensure your wishes are known. If you do not make a Will then your Estate would go to your next of kin or to the Treasury. By making a Will, you can choose to leave gifts to relatives, friends or even charities, as well as appointing Executors to deal with your Estate

Living Wills

A Living Will explains your wishes in the event of serious incapacity, both mental and physical. It can help to guide your family and doctors as to what you would want in these circumstances.

EPAs

Currently, an EPA (Enduring Power of Attorney) is used to appoint a person or persons to act on your behalf during your lifetime. It can be used to cover situations such as being mentally or physically incapable, or even just being in hospital or abroad.

By signing an EPA while you are mentally capable you will have peace of mind and certainty regarding the person(s) who will deal with your affairs.

However, changes in the law from April 2007 will abolish EPAs, but existing ones are likely to remain effective. From this date LPAs (Lasting Powers of Attorney) come into use. Firm details have not yet been published, but current indications are that both the relevant form and associated procedure are likely to be considerably more complex and expensive than EPAs.

With this in mind MCP have created the following packages to give you peace of mind at an affordable price while EPAs are still available.

For more information please contact Paul Hendriks.

	Single Person	Couple
Will & EPA	£150	£250
Will & Living Will	£150	£250
Will, EPA & Living Will	£200	£300

Selling Your Business

Rather like going away on holiday selling your business requires preparation. If it is a Limited Company, the Company's records, its contracts and the statutory records all need to be brought up to date. The accounts and accounting system need to be understood. Any intellectual property owned or used in the business needs to be gathered in and protected.

MCP were recently engaged in the sale of a Company where it was found that the Company did not have the necessary licenses to use its computer software nor was it registered under the Data Protection Act.

Neither was fatal to the transaction but both added substantially to the costs as it was necessary to research the history of both compliance issues. The Sellers had to give extended warranties concerning these matters and worst of all the Buyers were concerned by the general conduct of the business.

MCP now offer a "pre-sale" review of your company and will highlight any areas of weakness and where attention may be required.

Buyers of Companies are increasingly aware of statutory compliance and even more so in the sphere of environmental issues. So many businesses have a "history" and with present laws liability for that history may continue in respect of sites long since left behind.

The new Companies Bill has now been enacted. It is uncertain when it will be fully implemented. The new Act extends Directors' liabilities and makes statutory compliance ever more important. It also offers new protections and potentially the chance to reduce your audit fees.

MCP will be preparing advice notes on the new Act from a practical perspective: if you would like to receive these please contact Ellie Ryder.

New Staff

We have welcomed a lot of new staff in the last couple of months including:

Emma Boulton

Property Assistant, Thetford

Barbara Catanese

Employment Solicitor, Wisbech

Priscilla Ivory

Probate Solicitor, Thetford

Pamela Oldreive

Commercial Property Solicitor, Peterborough

Jonathan Phillips

Criminal Solicitor, King's Lynn

Caroline Howells

Property Secretary, Peterborough

Lindsay Simkins

Property Secretary, Peterborough

Natasha Pearson

Criminal Secretary, Peterborough

Kirsty McColl

Commercial Property Secretary, Peterborough

Suzanne Barnes

Commercial Secretary, Peterborough

Sarah Hammond

Property Secretary, Thetford

Uganda

Andrew Davies travelled to Uganda this summer. He raised over £2,500 for charities there by being paid by staff and clients alike to shave off his beard!

He spent his time building classrooms and dormitories for a primary school for orphans.



A Question of Sport

MCP's Peterborough office and guests took part in this year's A Question of Sport charity event and helped to raise £22,000 for Barnardos – double the amount raised last year!

We had two tables and sitting on one was Charlotte Edwards, Captain of the English Ladies Cricket Team, who helped us win the Alexander 11 game.

Also in attendance were ex-England footballer Peter Shilton, snooker personality John Virgo and BBC sports broadcaster Clare Balding.

MCP are part of the Peterborough Fundraising Committee who run this event every year.

Staff News

Sam Street, Claire Walker, Emily Swales and Sarah Warby all passed their ILEX exams

Aimee Marsh passed her LPC with distinction

Katherine Croft passed the written element of her Police Station Accreditation exam

Ellie Ryder passed her Chartered Institute of Marketing Professional Diploma in Marketing

Charlotte Winchester had twins on 18th September named Amelie and Jessica

Lisa Richardson had a baby boy named Charlie Robert George on 19th October

Robin Wide's partner had a baby girl on 28th October named Lily Elizabeth Belinda

King's Lynn Expansion

Due to increased business MCP are expanding! We are opening a new office on King's Lynn High Street this November. More on this story to follow next issue.