

'Double Congrats' to Frankie!

We have the pleasure to announce that the Partners at QualitySolicitors Mander Cruickshank have invited Frankie Harwood to become a Partner of the LLP from April 1 2015.

Frankie first joined us in September 2009 and has made a major contribution to our firm and is now Head of Probate and Wills. We are delighted that Frankie has accepted our invitation and we wish her all the best in her career with us for the future.

We also extend our warmest wishes to Frankie on her recent marriage to Alex, and we know you will join us in wishing them a lifetime of happiness together.



Frankie Harwood, Head of Probate and Wills



ASK THE LEGAL EXPERT

You might wish to take advantage of our Ask the Legal Expert service, which is a face-to-face meeting with one of our lawyers to discuss your circumstances in much more detail.

Ask the Legal Expert' is a reassuring face-to-face meeting with a lawyer who will give you legal advice on your situation for only £99.

This session is designed to answer any questions, clarify your rights and give expert guidance.



Our promises:



Direct lawyer contact

People often complain that law firms make it difficult to speak directly with the lawyer running your case. We promise that you will know their name and have direct access to them whenever they are needed.



Same-day response

If you decide to contact your lawyer, it's usually because you need a quick answer. That's why we always do our best to return your call on the same day you contact us.



Free first advice

Whatever your needs, your first conversation with one of our legal experts is an opportunity for you to ask questions and for us to understand your situation.



Saturday openings

You're probably very busy during the week, so if you need a face-to-face meeting with your lawyer then we can arrange this on a Saturday morning if it's more convenient.



Clear-Price Guarantee

People often worry that using a solicitor means uncertainty about what everything will cost. We promise to inform you before we begin and to keep you informed throughout.



DISAPPOINTMENT FOR CRIMINAL SOLICITORS AT JUDICIAL REVIEW SETBACK

QualitySolicitors Mander Cruickshank have a long and proud tradition of providing legal aid services in various areas of law, including criminal law.

Changes to Child Support Agency

Parents who are separated and pay or receive maintenance through the Child Support Agency (CSA) need to know that the way in which child maintenance is handled is changing between now and 2017.

Partner, and Head of Family, Kathryn Hicklin has ensured all QualitySolicitors Mander Cruickshank staff are aware of the changes so that we can provide up to date advice to our clients. She said, "the CSA will send a letter informing parents when the child maintenance arrangement will end, and how and when new maintenance arrangements should be made. The plan is for the CSA to provide parents with at least six months' notice before the changeover, and a reminder the month before the individuals arrangement is due to end."

Kathryn stressed the importance of continuing to make payments until told otherwise, including payment of any arrears owed after the arrangement ends. She added, "the choice for parents will then be to arrange child maintenance yourself, or to make new child maintenance arrangements through the new Child Maintenance Service." They have a helpline available Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm, and Saturdays 9am to 4pm, and can be contacted on 0800 083 5130.



We are united with other members of our profession in expressing our disappointment that the legal challenge against government plans to cut by more than half the number of duty solicitors attending Magistrates' Courts and Police Stations across England and Wales. Judges in London's High Court have ruled that the Ministry of Justice plans were not legally flawed.

Partner, and Head of Criminal Defence, Mr Paul Tubb, responded by saying, "we fully intend to continue providing legal aid assistance to those in need of representation in the Police Stations and Courts." He went on to say, "whilst the Judicial Review failure has increased uncertainty within

the profession about the viability of legal aid work, and concerns that the plans will lead to inadequate access to legal advice for suspects and defendants, it is important to remember that this decision is currently being appealed to the Court of Appeal, and the fight against the plans is by no means over."

Paul Tubb,
Partner,
and Head
of Criminal
Defence



Building work begins

QualitySolicitors Mander Cruickshank are delighted to announce that the building work at our Coalville Office has started, and should be completed within four months. Partner Jim Abbott was on site as the first brick was laid.

When asked about the work, he said, "This extension will greatly increase the office space available, and enable us to continue expanding our services in line with increased demand. We have recently expanded the number of services we provide to the community, including the addition of our Mental Health department, and have increased staffing levels in our Conveyancing department. This extension will also ensure we are able to offer the most up to date services technologically, and in comfortable surroundings."



DNA tests to end acrimonious and embarrassing court battles

Justice Minister Simon Hughes has recently announced that funding has been secured to provide DNA tests to determine parentage, and in his view, ending "acrimonious" family court battles. The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service will provide up to £1m a year to pay for the tests in England from September.

Partner, and Head of Family, Kathryn Hicklin pointed out that "government cuts to legal aid in 2013 meant that funding for DNA tests was no longer available, and the knock on effect was that court cases lasted longer because many parents simply could not afford the fee". She added "even the Ministry of Justice has accepted that this was the case, but it is hoped that this new funding will save the courts time and money."



Kathryn Hicklin,
Partner & Head of Family Law

Award of Training Contract

At a time when record numbers of law students are unable to secure training contracts, we at QualitySolicitors Mander Cruickshank are delighted to announce that we are continuing to provide regular training contracts for our highly motivated junior lawyers.

We congratulate Rebecca Holmes for being awarded our latest Training Contract, which will commence in April 2015. She works within our Criminal Department, and over the last 18 months has demonstrated a high level of motivation, determination and willingness to learn. Head of Criminal Defence, Paul Tubb, said "Rebecca has already gained her Police Station Accreditation, and frequently receives high levels of praise from satisfied clients. She is often commended on her good client care, her willingness to listen, and her accurate and detailed advice."



East Midlands property set for stable 2015

The housing market looks set for an unremarkable year, claims Shani Box, Head of Conveyancing at Quality Solicitors Mander Cruickshank.



"Looking at all the predictions it seems that 2015 isn't going to be a year of boom or bust for the property market here in the East Midlands. In the UK we have an obsession with property and here in Coalville is no different. All the indications should mean a year when there remains trust and confidence in property and thankfully that should benefit the whole economy," said Ms Box.

She said most experts had predicted slow rises and she expected many moves during the year to be more based on lifestyle needs rather than anything else.

"A stable housing market means people move for the right reasons," she said. "A few years ago when property was rising at an astronomical rate it created a very strange environment and we can only hope the effects of the relatively recent recession has meant people have learnt lessons," she said.

A home purchase is a highly stressful matter and those involved in a property transaction need assurance that the matter is in the safest hands.

"We try to give our clients realistic expectations as to timescales and then do our utmost to achieve them. We also communicate with our clients frequently to ensure they are not kept in the dark."

As part of our service QualitySolicitors Mander Cruickshank give all would-be clients a free 30 minute consultation to outline the process.

Millions of adults have no valid Will

Research by QualitySolicitors has raised awareness of how many adults in the UK may die Intestate.

Currently 70% of adults aged over 50 do not have a valid Will, and 46% of those who do have a Will admit that they have had a major life change since they last reviewed it. Reasons for not having a will are wide ranging, from not having thought about it, feeling uncomfortable talking about personal circumstances, to concerns about cost.

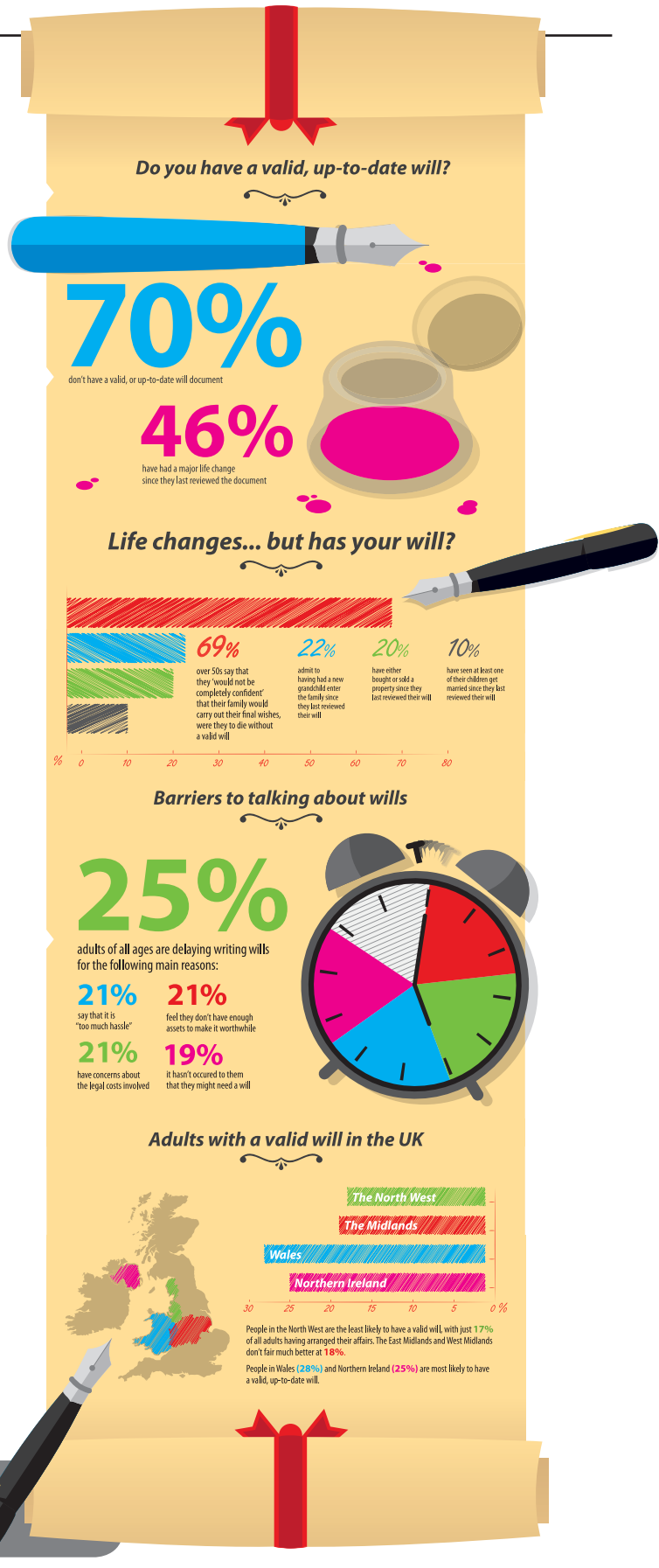
Frankie Harwood, Head of Probate, urges people to consider reviewing, updating or creating a Will. She said, "whilst all lawyers acknowledge that the prospect of passing away can be difficult to talk about, with many people feeling awkward or worried about discussing what will happen after they die, in my experience, the most common cause of family disputes following the death of a loved one, is the absence of a valid Will."

"Wills are there to bring clarity at a very difficult time of sadness and loss. It is greatly concerning that so many over-50s are currently without a valid, up-to-date Will."

She added that making a Will is easier than many people think and that it is imperative to use a recognised Will specialist especially if your personal situation is not straight-forward.

"With a good solicitor, the service is actually much cheaper, less hassle and less shrouded in jargon than people think." At QualitySolicitors Mander Cruickshank we offer a discreet and professional service at a cost that will not break the bank. For £140 plus vat (£168 incl vat) for a single Will, you can have a lifetime of peace of mind, knowing that your affairs will be sorted in accordance with your wishes.

Wills in the UK – Reservations amongst the over 50s
(1000 people surveyed)



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