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Law Firm Partner Moves in London

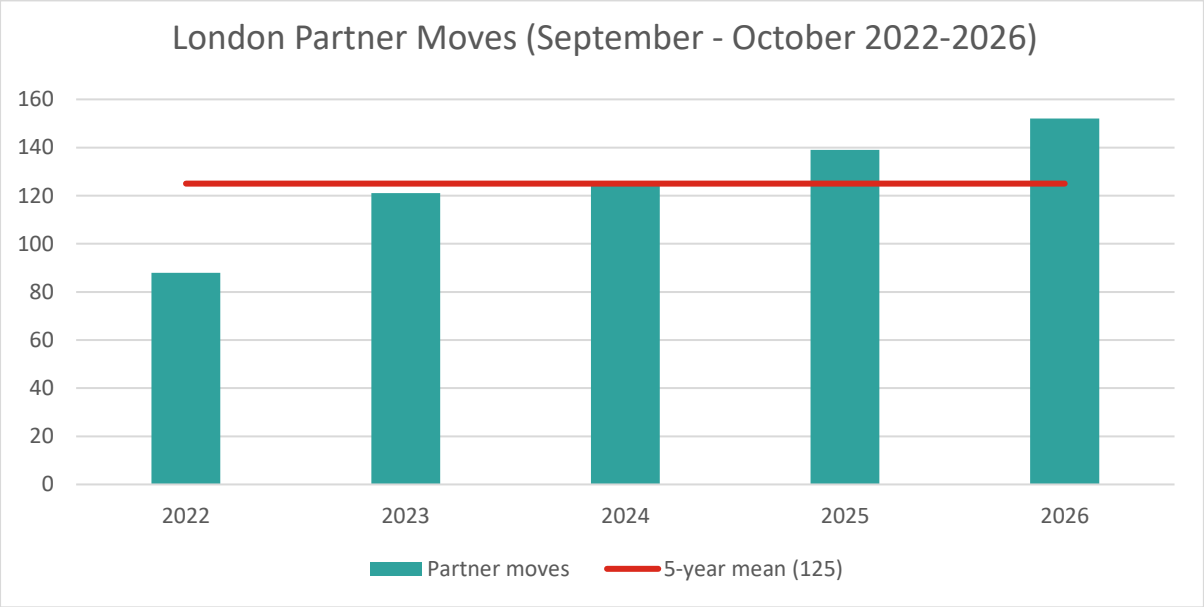
September – October 2026
Issue No. 95

Welcome to the 95th edition of Law Firm Partner Moves in London, from the specialist partner team at Edwards Gibson, where we look back at announced partner-level recruitment activity in London over the past two months and give you a 'who's moved where' update. Our records go back to 2007, and this is our methodology.

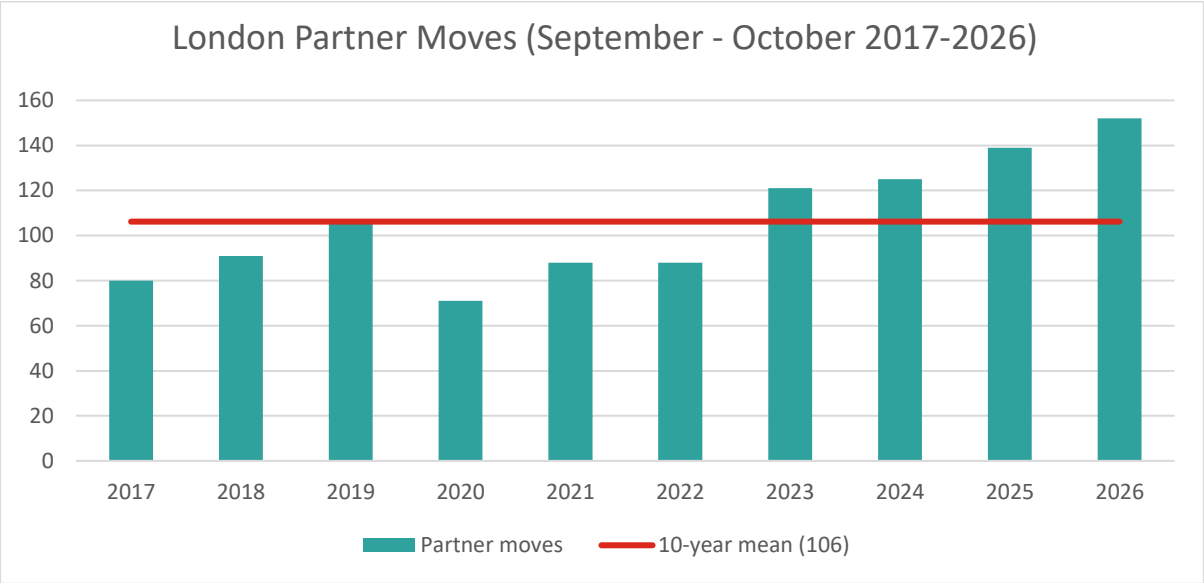
September – October 2026

This bi-monthly round-up contains **152** partner moves, **9%** up on the previous record of **139** for the same period last year; **22%** up on the cumulative five-year average (**125**); and **43%** above the cumulative ten-year average (**106**).

Although the numbers were buoyed by the high-profile disintegration of New York firm **Weil**, which accounted for **20** moves (**13%**) in this edition, even without those departures activity would have remained within touching distance of last year's record. With a score of the firm's remaining London partners still unaccounted for at the time of writing, expect more Weil émigrés to emerge in future editions from the flotsam and jetsam of what looks to be the biggest law firm collapse in history.



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The most covetous firm this edition was **Gibson Dunn**, which hired **11** partners, followed by **Simpson Thacher** with **8**. **Kirkland & Ellis** added **6**, while **Mayer Brown**, **TLT** and **Travers Smith** hired **4** apiece. **13** other firms made three hires each: **Dentons**, **Fisher Phillips**, **Fladgate, Freeths**, **Greenberg Traurig**, **Haynes Boone**, **Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer**, **Hill Dickinson**, **Norton Rose Fulbright**, **Paul Hastings**, **Paul Weiss**, **Proskauer Rose** and **Stephenson Harwood**.

Top partner recruiters in London September – October 2026

Gibson Dunn	**11**	(10 laterals)
Simpson Thacher	**8**	(8 laterals)
Kirkland Ellis	**6**	(0 laterals)
Mayer Brown	**4**	(4 laterals)
TLT	**4**	(3 laterals)
Travers Smith	**4**	(4 laterals)
Dentons	**3**	(2 laterals)
Fisher Phillips	**3**	(2 laterals)
Fladgate	**3**	(2 laterals)
Freeths	**3**	(2 laterals)
Greenberg Traurig	**3**	(2 laterals)

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Haynes Boone	**3**	(3 laterals)
Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer	**3**	(3 laterals)
Hill Dickinson	**3**	(2 laterals)
Norton Rose Fulbright	**3**	(1 lateral)
Paul Hastings	**3**	(2 laterals)
Paul Weiss	**3**	(2 laterals)
Proskauer Rose	**3**	(2 laterals)
Stephenson Harwood	**3**	(1 lateral)

Another **19** firms made two hires apiece: **A&O Shearman**, **Addleshaw Goddard**, **Ashurst Perkins Coie**, **Bailey Glasser International**, **Browne Jacobson**, **Clifford Chance**, **DLA Piper**, **Edwin Coe**, **Eversheds Sutherland**, **Greenwoods**, **HFW**, **Irwin Mitchell**, **Latham & Watkins**, **McDermott Will & Schulte**, **Mishcon de Reya**, **Pinsent Masons**, **Sullivan & Cromwell**, **WilmerHale** and **Withers**.

On the other side of the coin, over the same period, troubled **Weil** suffered the highest attrition, losing **19** lateral partners, followed by **Baker Mckenzie** (which lost **8**), then **Freshfields** (which lost **5**), and **Ashurst Perkins Coie** – which saw **4** partners leave, and finally **Reed Smith** and **Stephenson Harwood** (which lost **3** apiece).

- **Firms with largest attrition in September – October 2026 (partnership to partnership moves only)**

Weil	**19**
Baker McKenzie	**8**
Freshfields	**5**
Ashurst Perkins Coie	**4**
Reed Smith	**3**
Stephenson Harwood	**3**

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Team hires September – October 2026

The largest multi-partner team move this edition was **Gibson Dunn**'s acquisition of an eight-partner funds team from **Weil**, followed by **Simpson Thacher**'s five-partner finance raid on the same firm. **Mayer Brown** also made a sizeable team hire, taking a three-partner high-yield and leveraged finance team from **Baker McKenzie**.

A further eight firms picked up two-partner teams: **A&O Shearman** (funds from Stephenson Harwood); **Clifford Chance** (finance from Paul Weiss); **Fladgate** (aviation from Clyde & Co); **Gibson Dunn** (real estate from White & Case); **Greenwoods** (real estate from Moore Barlow); **Paul Weiss** (private equity from Weil); **Simpson Thacher** (funds from Weil); and **Sullivan & Cromwell** (corporate from Weil).

Overall, four of the 11 two-partner-plus team moves this edition came from the wreckage at Weil, including the two largest.

Good Weil it lasts – US Big Law Elite

The extraordinary proposed wind-down of **Weil** dominated this edition, accounting for **20 London moves** (19 laterals) with doubtless more to come in our future editions as the remaining Weil émigrés resurface at new homes. Weil's implosion is all the more remarkable because this was not an intrinsically broken or unprofitable business: it generated approximately **$2.1bn** in revenue last year, with profits per equity partner reportedly exceeding **$5m**, and there was no obvious debt crisis, catastrophic client loss or external shock which should have killed it. Yet, following an accelerating run of partner departures, failed merger discussions and incoming executive partner **Ramona Nee**'s decision not to take up the top job, on 28 October the firm's management committee recommended that the partnership be dissolved.

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We examine the causes and wider implications in considerably more detail in our recent **Global Legal Post** article, *Live by the lateral, die by the lateral: How Weil was pulled apart by Big Law's star culture*.

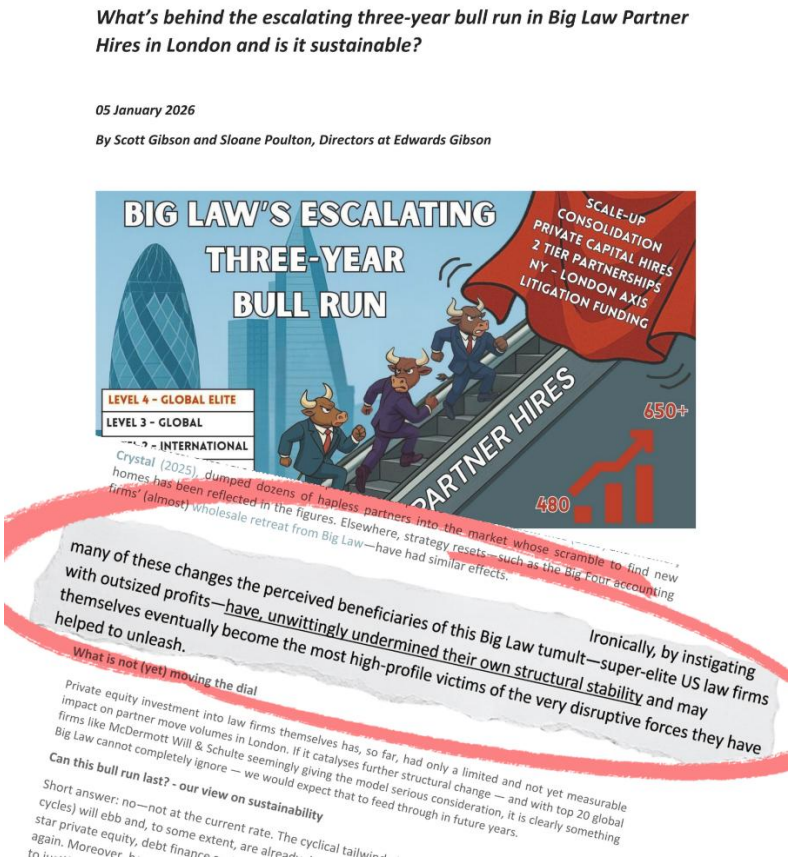
For regular Edwards Gibson readers, the underlying mechanism should be familiar. In April 2025, ***Big Law Jenga: How Private Capital Stars Are Making Elite Firms Unstable*** warned that the rise of highly paid private-capital rainmakers with exceptionally valuable and portable client relationships, alongside an influx of lateral hires, changes to traditional partnership structures and widening compensation differentials, was weakening the institutional DNA and cohesion of elite partnerships and increasing the risk of a self-fulfilling "run on the partnership", under which even a strong and profitable elite firm could rapidly collapse.

The danger is particularly acute for elite US firms heavily dependent on a concentrated and predominantly private-capital client base. Combine that concentration risk and increasingly portable rainmaker relationships with US partnership structures which, unlike their UK cousins, offer relatively little friction when partners leave, and apparently formidable firms can become surprisingly vulnerable when confidence starts to fracture.

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Our analysis, published in January, *What's behind the escalating three-year bull run in Big Law Partner Hires in London and is it sustainable?* went further, warning that:

"Ironically, by instigating many of these changes the perceived beneficiaries of this Big Law tumult—super-elite US law firms with outsized profits—have, unwittingly undermined their own structural stability and may themselves eventually become the most high-profile victims of the very disruptive forces they have helped to unleash."



We returned to the theme on the Non-Billable podcast in May, arguing that elite US law firms were no longer the stable bastions they once were and that, once a handful of rainmakers leave, departures can snowball as partners who might otherwise prefer to remain are forced rationally to consider whether they can afford to be left behind.

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We did not, of course, predict **Weil** specifically. What we did predict was that, over the past five years, the evolution of a particular cadre of elite US firms was making something like Weil increasingly likely. Law firm partnerships are inherently unstable, but combine concentrated and highly portable private-capital relationships, increasingly mobile rainmakers and relatively frictionless partner exits, and that instability becomes particularly acute. Once departures begin eroding confidence, the rational economic incentives facing those who remain can themselves accelerate the run on the partnership. *Big Law Jenga* was always a warning about what happens when enough pieces are removed from an apparently impregnable tower. With Weil, the tower finally fell.

Baker's dozen

Completely overshadowed by the wreckage at Weil, **Baker McKenzie** quietly lost eight partners this edition, a figure which in almost any other round-up would have been rather more newsworthy. Three leveraged finance/high-yield partners departed for **Mayer Brown**, two (restructuring and US securities/capital markets) for **Dentons**, with one apiece joining **K&L Gates** (real estate), **McDermott Will & Schulte** (tax litigation) and **Travers Smith** (international arbitration). Together with five departures earlier this year, that takes Baker McKenzie's 2026 attrition to **13** partners year-to-date: fittingly, a baker's dozen.

WilmerHale born again

Following June's seismic loss of **Gary Born** and his international arbitration team to **King & Spalding**, examined in our article **WilmerHale – The Born Defection**, **WilmerHale** has begun rebuilding its depleted London disputes bench. This edition it hired a new head of London disputes from Clifford Chance and a former head of international arbitration at Cooley. At the risk of a movie pun too far, the Washington DC firm's London office, for so many years synonymous with a Born identity, has begun reshaping its Born legacy.

Paul Weiss - Caught in a food chain of its own making

Having single-handedly done more to reshape London's Big Law biome in such a short period than perhaps any US firm before it, **Paul Weiss** is continuing to discover that it is not immune to the ecosystem it helped disrupt. Following the April loss of its European head of M&A to **Kirkland & Ellis**, this edition sees **Clifford Chance** reclaim two finance partners it had previously lost to the Wall Street firm, all relatively recent English-law recruits from Paul Weiss's fiery London rebirth. There is, however, plenty of predatory life left in the Wall Street raptor: Paul Weiss made three London hires of its own this edition, biting a two-partner chunk out of an already weakened **Weil** (one corporate/private equity lateral and one vertical) and taking another (structured finance) from

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Freshfields. But it seems even one-time apex predators are subject to the remorseless Darwinian logic of London's red-in-tooth-and-claw Big Law ecosystem.

A star is born

As one Wall Street star went spectacularly supernova, another, rather smaller, US light appeared in London. Employment specialist **Fisher Phillips** launched its first European office with three hires, providing a neat, if entirely unrelated, counterpoint to the demise of **Weil**.

Other Fun Facts September – October 2026

- **28%** of moves this edition were female (**42**).
- **12** firms hired from in-house or business: **Ashurst Perkins Coie** (from Oaktree Capital Management), **Broadfield** (from Ansoff Business Advisory), **CMS** (from Amazon), **DLA Piper** (from Global Innovation Fund), **Fieldfisher** (from EY), **Fisher Phillips** (from Fraser Incentives Consultancy), **Fox Williams** (from Freetrade), **Kirkland Ellis** (from Deloitte), **Proskauer Rose** (from KPMG US), **RPC** (from CyXcel), **Skadden** (from Antin Infrastructure Partners) and **Withers** (from Vialto Partners)
- **30%** of all moves (**45**) were moves from non-partnership roles (either moves from in-house or non-partners elevated to partnership upon moving from another law firm).

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Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to discuss this article or any other aspect of the market in more depth.

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A&O Shearman

The transatlantic giant welcomes funds specialists **Sarah de Ste Croix** and **Gabriel Boghossian** as global co-heads of secondaries, from Stephenson Harwood. De Ste Croix, who headed Stephenson Harwood's private equity practice, and Boghossian, who led its secondaries practice, advise on the full spectrum of secondaries, including continuation vehicles, LP portfolios, GP stakes and other liquidity solutions.

Addleshaw Goddard

Two verticals arrive at the international firm, which elevates funds finance lawyer **Nick Pascal** from Ashurst Perkins Coie, where he was counsel, and employment lawyer **Kathryn Kerr** from Deloitte Legal, where she was a director. Pascal advises borrowers, lenders, private funds and financial institutions on funds finance transactions, including subscription lines and NAV financings, and also handles lending to insurers. Kerr counsels on employment disputes, investigations, cross-border projects and reorganisations, as well as workforce challenges and regulatory change.

Akin

The Texas-born firm elevates corporate private equity lawyer **Filippo Durazzo** from Sidley Austin, where he was a senior managing associate. Durazzo, whose move is a follow-on to **Jonathon Hamill**'s from our last edition, advises private equity sponsors and their portfolio companies on cross-border M&A, hybrid and minority investments and joint ventures.

Ashurst Perkins Coie

Two new faces for the transatlantic firm, which adds energy and infrastructure lawyer **Henry Stewart** from Watson Farley & Williams, where he was head of the global energy sector and head of the London projects group, and **Tom Jaggers** from global asset manager Oaktree Capital Management, where he was a managing director in the European principal (private equity) group. Stewart focuses on project finance, project finance restructuring and holdco debt across the energy and infrastructure sectors, particularly energy transition. Jaggers, a corporate private equity lawyer by background, spent the last 16 years structuring and executing investments across Europe from the sponsor side.

Bailey Glasser International

Operating through Edward McCourt & Company LLP, the UK arm of the West Virginia-founded disputes firm continues its raid on Pogust Goodhead with the additions of former partners **Guy Robson** and **Faranak Ghajavand**, the latter following a brief stop at Gateley. Robson, a class-action specialist, takes charge of the firm's Latin America practice, while Ghajavand previously led the causation and quantum phase of the controversial Mariana Dam litigation. The duo join former Pogust senior partner **Jeremy Evans**, who emerged at the firm earlier in the year as its managing partner, and reunite with non-partner founder **Thomas Goodhead** as part of the rival team seeking control of the claim. Unfortunately for Bailey Glasser, the High Court subsequently ruled in October that the claimant committee lacked authority to replace Pogust Goodhead with the firm as lawyers for the wider claimant group.

Bevan Brittan

Debt finance lawyer **Amrish Sharma** arrives at the national firm from DWF. Sharma counsels on acquisition and leveraged finance, general corporate lending, refinancings, restructurings and venture debt.

Bird & Bird

The technology-focused outfit adds AI advisory lawyer **Michelle Sally** to its ranks from TLT. Sally advises on AI governance, implementation and the legal and regulatory challenges arising from the deployment of artificial intelligence at scale.

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- Boodle Hatfield

  The West End firm elevates employment lawyer **Tom McLaughlin** from employment boutique BDBF, where he was a managing associate. McLaughlin advises both employers and employees on employee competition disputes, restrictive covenants, confidential information, executive exits and employment litigation.

- Broadfield

  Private funds specialist **David Brennand** joins the BDB Pitmans successor from consultancy Ansoff Business Advisory, where he was a senior adviser. Brennand covers alternative funds and joint venture arrangements.

- Browne Jacobson

  A brace of laterals for the national firm, which bags healthcare regulatory and public law specialist **David Hill** from Blake Morgan and construction disputes specialist **Alexander Studholme** from construction disputes boutique Mantle Law. Hill counsels NHS bodies, independent healthcare providers and HealthTech companies on matters including integrated care, access to medicines and new health technologies. Studholme specialises in international arbitration across the construction, infrastructure and energy sectors.

- Burges Salmon

  Contentious insolvency lawyer **Benn Richards** makes the jump to the Bristol headquartered firm from Michelmores. Richards advises on claims arising from wrongful trading, misfeasance and breach of duty, as well as wider commercial disputes linked to financial distress and restructuring.

- Carpmaels & Ransford

  The 250-year-old European IP specialist swipes patent litigator **Christopher Stothers** from Freshfields. Stothers advises on IP litigation, arbitration and mediation, with a focus on life sciences and telecommunications.

- Clifford Chance

  Prodigal Son … and Daughter. The magic circle firm welcomes back leveraged finance duo **Taner Hassan** and **Silvia Menendez** from Paul Weiss, where the former joined as head of European leveraged finance as part of the US firm's headline-grabbing London expansion in December 2023 and the latter followed a few months later as a vertical hire. The pair advise on buyouts, public takeovers, mergers and restructurings with Menendez, having a particular focus on energy and infrastructure financings and splitting her time between the firm's London and Madrid offices.

- CMS

  The global firm strengthens its technology team with the arrival of **Prash Mehta** from Amazon, where he was EMEA compliance lead for Amazon's satellite broadband business. Mehta specialises in space and satellite law, satellite communications, telecom regulation, technology, compliance and public policy.

- Cripps

  Banking lawyer **Emmie Spring-Manek** arrives at the South-East headquartered firm from Simmons & Simmons, where she was a senior practice development lawyer. Spring-Manek covers real estate finance, bilateral and syndicated lending and leveraged finance.

- Crowell & Moring

  International arbitration veteran **Chiraag Shah** defects to the Washington DC headquartered outfit from Morrison Foerster, where he was global head of the practice and head of the Africa desk. Shah, who is dual English and Kenyan qualified, advises on commercial and investor-state arbitrations, commercial litigation and sanctions-related disputes, with a particular focus on Africa and the Middle East.

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- Debevoise

  The New York firm nabs funds and secondaries specialist **Mary Lavelle** from Freshfields, where she was global co-head of the practice. Lavelle, who joined Freshfields from Akin little more than two years ago, advises on fund formation and asset management matters, secondary transactions and related liquidity solutions.

- Dechert

  Making the switch to the global firm from Kirkland & Ellis is leveraged finance lawyer **Ben Burton**. Burton represents sponsors and their portfolio companies on leveraged and acquisition finance transactions, including across the syndicated and direct lending markets.

- Dentons

  Three new arrivals at the global leviathan, which adds: restructuring specialist **Kevin Heverin** and US securities and capital markets lawyer **Megan Schellinger** from Baker McKenzie; and pensions vertical **Ed Hunnisett** from Slaughter and May, where he was a senior counsel. Heverin, whose latest move comes after he lateraled to Baker McKenzie from A&O Shearman last year, advises on restructurings, workouts, debt financings, special situations and distressed M&A. Schellinger, who is New York and English qualified, handles Rule 144A and SEC-registered offerings and private placements of international debt, as well as equity and equity-linked securities, including IPOs, rights issues and block trades. Hunnisett's practice encompasses scheme surplus, investments, governance, buy-ins and strategic projects.

- DLA Piper

  Arriving at the global firm are US-qualified nuclear energy specialist **Vincent Zabielski** from Pillsbury and **Cillian Moynihan**, who joins from Global Innovation Fund, where he was general counsel. Zabielski focuses on international nuclear energy matters, including new-build EPC contracts, power purchase agreements, operation and maintenance, and nuclear fuel supply. Moynihan, previously a partner at Kirkland & Ellis, advises private equity, growth equity and venture capital investors on private M&A and public takeovers.

- DWF

  Aviation specialist **John Gilfedder** joins the private equity owned firm from DLA Piper where he was a legal director. Gilfedder specialises in contentious aviation matters, advising airlines, manufacturers and insurers on major losses, fatal accidents and product liability disputes.

- Edwin Coe

  Two hires for the London firm (one lateral and one vertical), which welcomes private client lawyer **Elizabeth Neale** from Broadfield and real estate finance lawyer **Andy King** from Mills & Reeve, where he was a principal associate. Neale focuses on tax, trusts, probate and estate planning, while King handles real estate investment, development and acquisition finance, as well as restructurings and security enforcement.

- Enyo Law

  Disputes lateral **Huw Jenkin** joins the London litigation boutique from Travers Smith. Jenkin's practice spans commercial litigation, civil fraud, competition disputes, international arbitration and contentious regulatory work.

- Eversheds Sutherland

  The international firm makes two financial services regulatory hires: payments and fintech specialist **Paul Harris** joins from Osborne Clarke, while **Anahita Patwardhan** is elevated from Hogan Lovells Cadwalader, where she was a senior associate. Harris focuses on payments, e-money, fintech and digital assets, while Patwardhan covers financial services regulation, with a particular focus on retail investments, wealth management and private banking.

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- Fieldfisher

  The European firm adds contentious tax specialist **Julian Balson** from EY's tax controversy team. Balson advises businesses and individuals on direct and indirect tax disputes, investigations and litigation, including HMRC intervention and allegations of fraud.

- Fisher Phillips

  Punching-in. The Atlanta-headquartered employment boutique makes its debut in Europe, with the hire of employment partners **Daniel Pollard** from Charles Russell Speechlys, **Richard Harvey** from Pierson Ferdinand and executive compensation expert **Ian Fraser** from Fraser Incentives Consultancy. Pollard, who leads the new office as regional managing partner, advises employers on the full spectrum of employment matters, including corporate transactions, business protection and boardroom disputes. Harvey focuses on employee relations, workplace investigations, regulatory and compliance matters, workforce restructurings and transformation projects. Fraser specialises in employee incentives, share plans and management equity arrangements.

- Fladgate

  Three hires (two laterals and one vertical) for the London firm which launches an aviation finance practice with **Nick Harding** and **Kirstin MacDougall** from Clyde & Co, where the latter was a legal director; and also welcomes construction disputes specialist **Alex Delin** from Irwin Mitchell. Harding and MacDougall counsel airlines, financiers and operators on aircraft financing and leasing, acquisitions and disposals and other fleet-related transactions, as well as business aviation matters. Delin advises developers, contractors, consultants and insurers on construction, engineering and building safety disputes arising from residential, commercial, mixed-use and infrastructure developments.

- Fox Williams

  Financial services regulatory lawyer **Philippa Verrecchia** defects to the City firm from investment platform Freetrade, where she was general counsel. Verrecchia specialises in investment services regulation, covering areas including conduct, authorisation, financial promotions, Consumer Duty, client assets and regulatory strategy.

- Freeths

  A trio of hires for the Nottingham-headquartered outfit, which welcomes non-contentious construction laterals **Jim Jordan** from DWF and **Keith Browne** from Teacher Stern, alongside insolvency and restructuring lawyer **Mark Price** from Dentons, where he was a senior associate. Jordan advises on development, energy and infrastructure projects, while Browne focuses on large-scale development and regeneration schemes in central London. Price handles insolvency, restructuring and dispute resolution matters.

- Gibson Dunn

  Eleven new recruits for the Los Angeles-headquartered giant, which swipes an eight-partner private funds team from, the soon-to-be-defunct Weil, led by London private funds co-heads **James Sargent** and **James Bromley** and comprising **Philip Baynes**, **Fiona Cumming**, **Aron Joy**, **Marc Schubert**, **Sophie Smith** and **Jacquelyn Volpe**; as well as real estate duo **James Johnson** and **Victoria Delacey** from White & Case, and restructuring vertical **Suzanne Thomson** from Milbank, where she was a special counsel. Sargent, Bromley, Baynes, Smith and Volpe cover fund formation and operation across a range of asset classes and strategies; Cumming (whose lateral move to Weil from A&O Shearman was only announced in June) handles fund finance, Joy covers fund-related corporate tax and Schubert financial services regulatory matters. Johnson and Delacey, who were both long-standing White & Case lawyers, advise on a range

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of direct real estate matters, with a particular focus on data centres and digital infrastructure, counselling developers, operators and investors on acquisitions, developments, leasing and commercial arrangements. Thomson advises on financial restructurings, distressed investments and special situations.

- Greenberg Traurig

  Two laterals and one vertical for the US firm which welcomes: non-contentious construction lawyer **Ben Patton**, who joins as head of the practice from Ashurst Perkins Coie, where he led the construction team; corporate energy lawyer **Hannah Roscoe** from Osborne Clarke; and infrastructure M&A lawyer **Sofiya Bumagin** from Sidley Austin, where she was a counsel. Patton advises on procurement and construction contracts for build-to-rent, logistics and infrastructure projects. Roscoe handles energy M&A, joint ventures, commercial arrangements, financings and project development, including battery storage, renewables and green hydrogen matters. Bumagin counsels private equity and other financial sponsors on infrastructure M&A and investments spanning energy, digital infrastructure and transport.

- Greenwoods

  The private equity backed firm adds direct real estate duo **Richard Hughes** and **Callum Leary** from Moore Barlow, where Hughes was head of commercial property. The pair handle acquisitions and disposals, development and real estate finance, with Hughes also covering investment and asset management and Leary specialising in future energy projects.

- Harbottle & Lewis

  The media and private client flavoured West End firm launches a white-collar and corporate crime practice with **Steve Smith** from Eversheds Sutherland. Smith acts for individuals and corporates on regulatory and criminal investigations, as well as the design, implementation and review of financial crime compliance frameworks

- Haynes Boone

  A trio of laterals for the Texas-headquartered outfit, which welcomes: international arbitration lawyer **Louise Woods** as chair of international disputes from fellow Texan Vinson & Elkins, where she was European co-head of international disputes; restructuring and insolvency specialist **Linton Bloomberg** from Reed Smith to head its London restructuring team; and derivatives and structured finance lawyer **Chris Acton** from Macfarlanes as chair of its UK derivatives platform. Woods advises on international commercial and investor-state arbitration, with a particular focus on energy disputes involving upstream oil and gas contracts. Bloomberg covers creditor and debtor representations, out-of-court restructurings, insolvency litigation and financial services matters. Acton advises on derivatives, trading and financing arrangements, including prime brokerage, repo, securities lending and margin lending, as well as related regulatory matters.

- Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer

  Three laterals for the transatlantic firm which adds: debt capital markets lawyer **Peter Allen** from Freshfields; life sciences regulatory specialist **Marie Manley** from Sidley Austin, where she was head of life sciences; and corporate private equity lawyer **Alex McCarney** from Eversheds Sutherland. Allen advises issuers and underwriters on debt capital markets transactions, including corporate and bank-side mandates, emerging markets transactions and liability management. Manley, who joins as head of life sciences regulatory, advises development-stage, specialty and established global life sciences companies on contentious and non-contentious regulatory matters, including market access and competition issues. McCarney focuses on mid-market buyouts, disposals, co-

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investments, restructurings and minority investments.

- HFW

  Two verticals for the shipping-flavoured outfit, which adds luxury assets lawyer **Toby Joy** from Withers, where he was a senior associate, and insurance and reinsurance specialist **Nelson Wang** from DAC Beachcroft, where he was counsel and head of the firm's China desk. Joy, who is English and BVI qualified, advises on the acquisition, financing and structuring of yachts and private jets. Wang counsels Chinese and international insurers and reinsurers on coverage, liability defence, subrogated recoveries and commercial disputes.

- Hill Dickinson

  Three hires (two laterals and one vertical) for the national firm which welcomes: sports specialist **Richard Bush** from Bird & Bird as head of sport, launching a dedicated sports offering; real estate lawyer **Ayesha Hasan** from Irwin Mitchell, where she was head of real estate transactions; and restructuring lawyer **Rhiannon Paine** from Simmons & Simmons, where she was a managing associate. Bush advises sports governing bodies, clubs and other sporting organisations on safeguarding, anti-doping, anti-corruption and financial regulation matters. Hasan handles real estate investment and transactions, including acquisitions and disposals, portfolio management, landlord and tenant matters, financing and restructuring. Paine advises on corporate and financial restructuring, special situations and distressed investments, including distressed debt sales and acquisitions.

- Irwin Mitchell

  Two laterals for the national firm, which adds construction and engineering disputes lawyer **Steve Nichol** from Duane Morris and corporate lawyer **Nicola Bennett** from Gateley. Nichol handles disputes across the transport, infrastructure, energy and building sectors, while Bennett advises on acquisitions, disposals and restructurings.

- K&L Gates

  Boomerang! After an 18-year absence, real estate specialist **Justin Salkeld** rejoins his former firm from Baker McKenzie, where he was head of London real estate. Salkeld advises on operational and investment real estate, including acquisitions and disposals, development, joint ventures, leasing and financing, with a particular angle in hotels.

- Katten

  Restructuring lawyer **Sunay Radia** arrives at the Chicago-headquartered firm from McDermott Will & Schulte. Radia focuses on creditor-side restructurings, particularly acting for trustees and security agents, as well as high-yield bond and leveraged finance workouts, refinancings, enforcements and distressed asset sales.

- Keidan Harrison

  Commercial litigator **Rachel Cropper-Mawer** makes the switch to the London disputes boutique from alternative law firm Gunnercooke, which she joined earlier this year from Channel Islands outfit Ogier, where she was global head of regulatory, investigations and enforcement. Cropper-Mawer advises on international disputes, investigations, asset recovery and regulatory enforcement.

- Kirkland & Ellis

  A half-dozen new faces at the world's highest-grossing law firm. Joining the tax team are corporate tax specialist **Pay Nassiri** from Deloitte, where he was a partner, and disputes lawyer **Michael Craig** from Slaughter and May, where he was an associate. Elsewhere, the firm adds IP litigator **Owen Waugh** from EIP, where he was a managing associate, funds specialist **Edward Coates** from Latham & Watkins, competition lawyer **Paul Seppi** from Willkie Farr & Gallagher, and debt finance lawyer **Brad Taylor** from

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Debevoise, the latter three of whom were associates. Nassiri advises on the tax aspects of M&A, joint ventures, real estate investments, equity and debt issuances, refinancings and restructurings. Craig focuses on tax disputes and investigations, while also handling broader regulatory enforcement and commercial litigation matters. Waugh specialises in patent disputes, with a focus on the telecommunications and technology sectors. Coates covers transactions in the private funds secondary market, including traditional continuation vehicles. Seppi handles merger control and foreign investment reviews in cross-border transactions, as well as cartel and other antitrust investigations. Taylor advises private equity sponsors and corporate clients on debt financings and capital markets transactions.

- Latham & Watkins

A brace of laterals for the global leviathan, which adds: private equity real estate lawyer **Patrick Hennessy** from Gibson Dunn; and technology disputes specialist **Jason Raeburn** from Paul Hastings, where he headed the London IP and technology litigation practice. Hennessy counsels private equity firms, real estate funds and companies on corporate real estate, buyouts, joint ventures and co-investments and reunites with former Mayer Brown and Gibson Dunn colleague **Jeremy Kenley**, who joined the firm at the end of last year. Raeburn, who also sits part-time as a deputy master of the high court, handles technology and life sciences disputes, particularly those involving AI, copyright, patents, trade secrets and data.

- Lester Aldridge

Private client specialist **Deena Iqbal** joins the Southwest firm from Burlingtons Legal. Iqbal handles wills, trusts, tax and succession planning, with particular expertise in cross-border and high-value estates.

- Mayer Brown

A quartet of US-law laterals for the Chicago spawned outfit which welcomes a three-partner finance team from Baker McKenzie comprising **Rob Mathews**, **David Becker** and **Ben Bierwirth** as well as capital markets lawyer **Scott Ashton** from Morrison Foerster. The trio, who had all moved together from White & Case to Baker McKenzie in 2019, focus on leveraged finance transactions and high-yield debt offerings, with Becker having a particular angle in the pharmaceuticals, life sciences, technology, real estate and hospitality sectors. Ashton advises on debt and equity securities offerings, with a focus on private placements by non-US businesses to US institutional investors and pension funds.

- McDermott Will & Schulte

Two hires (one lateral and one vertical) for the Chicago-headquartered firm, which welcomes tax litigator **David Jamieson** from Baker McKenzie and insolvency and restructuring lawyer **Natalie Blanc** from Ropes & Gray, where she was a counsel. Jamieson, who is dual-qualified as a solicitor advocate and chartered tax adviser, handles tax disputes, investigations and litigation, with particular expertise in VAT and indirect tax matters. Blanc (who is English, US and French qualified) advises on distressed M&A and special situations financings, with a particular focus on credit funds and special situations investors.

- Mishcon de Reya

A brace of laterals for the London firm which adds private client disputes lawyer **Elliott Phillips** from Signature Litigation and education law specialist **Miriam Carrión Benítez** from VWV. Phillips advises on private wealth disputes, as well as commercial litigation, civil fraud, asset tracing and insolvency. Benítez counsels leaders in the education sector on investigations, culture reviews, and safeguarding.

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Morrison Foerster

The US firm taps tech M&A specialist **Chris Grey** from Ashurst Perkins Coie, which he joined from Clifford Chance as a vertical hire in December 2023. Grey, who was global co-head of tech M&A and global co-lead of Ashurst Perkins Coie's technology sector, joins as UK tech sector lead, specialising in technology M&A, strategic investments and venture capital transactions, with a focus on fintech and AI.

Norton Rose Fulbright

Three hires for the global verein which welcomes: digital regulation lawyer **Joanna Conway**, who returns after nearly six years at Deloitte Legal/Deloitte; direct real estate vertical **Simon Woodcock** from Goodwin, where he was a counsel; and corporate specialist **Medha Marathe** from Latham & Watkins, where she was also a counsel. Conway specialises in digital risks and internet law and regulation, advising on the regulation of online content, free speech, AI and deepfakes. Woodcock advises on real estate investment, including acquisition, development, leasing, management and disposal. Marathe, who is dual English and Indian qualified and was previously a partner at Indian firm AZB & Partners, focuses on mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, carve-outs and corporate reorganisations, with a niche in cross-border transactions involving India.

Orrick

The US firm swipes financial services regulatory lawyer **Sumit Indwar** from Kirkland & Ellis, which he joined last year after more than 20 years at Linklaters (see our July-August 2025 report). Indwar advises on regulatory matters including licensing, conduct of business, governance within financial institutions, payments and digital assets, the sale of financial products, market misconduct and AML.

Osborne Clarke

Commercial disputes lawyer **Tom Webley** defects to the UK-based firm from Reed Smith, where he led the London banking and financial services litigation team. Webley specialises in financial services litigation spanning structured and asset-backed finance, corporate trusts, non-bank lending, and central banking.

Paul Hastings

Three hires (two laterals and one vertical) for the West Coast firm which welcomes: fund finance specialists **Daniel Margolis** from Stephenson Harwood and **Maccailein Campbell** from Reed Smith; and New York and English qualified capital markets vertical **Roberto Bruno** from Cravath, where he was European counsel. Margolis advises banks, lenders and funds on fund finance transactions, leveraged and acquisition finance and general corporate lending. Campbell, who follows former Reed Smith global fund finance chair **Leon Stephenson**, who joined Paul Hastings earlier this summer, handles fund financings including NAV, subscription line and hybrid facilities, alongside acquisition, project and portfolio finance. Bruno, a onetime partner at Proskauer Rose, advises issuers and investment banks on high yield and other US securities offerings.

Paul Weiss

A trio of hires for the Wall Street firm, which adds: corporate private equity duo **Max Oppenheimer** and **Jamie MacDonagh** from a disintegrating Weil, where the latter was a counsel; and structured finance specialist **Mandeep Lotay** from Freshfields in Amsterdam to head its European structured finance & securitisations team. Oppenheimer and MacDonagh advise private equity sponsors and corporate clients on acquisitions and disposals, carve-outs, growth and structured equity, minority investments, joint ventures and take-privates. Lotay covers private credit and asset-backed finance, securitisations and structured finance matters.

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Penningtons Manches Cooper

International arbitration specialist **Jean-François Le Gal** arrives from Pinsent Masons as head of international arbitration. English and French qualified, Le Gal, who also sits as an arbitrator, handles disputes across Africa, the Middle East and Europe, particularly in the energy, infrastructure and natural resources sectors.

Pinsent Masons

The international firm snags a brace of energy and infrastructure specialists: **Candice Lambeth** from Paul Hastings; and finance vertical **Joshua Htet** from A&O Shearman, where he was a counsel. Lambeth handles M&A transactions across the full spectrum of energy and infrastructure sub-sectors, including sell-side and buy-side mandates, auctions, carve-outs, co-investments and joint ventures. Htet specialises in renewable energy and infrastructure finance, advising sponsors and lenders on projects involving wind, solar, battery storage, transmission assets and the wider energy transition.

Proskauer

Three hires for the New York firm which adds: real estate finance veteran **Ruth Harris** from Ashurst Perkins Coie, where she headed the real estate finance practice and co-led the global data centre infrastructure platform; and tax lawyers **Adam Blakemore** from Hogan Lovells and **Julio Castro** from KPMG's US tax practice. Harris, a legacy Ashurst lifer, advises across all levels of the capital stack, including structured and back leverage, with particular experience in data centres and other operational assets including logistics and student accommodation. Blakemore, a legacy Cadwalader partner, acts on restructurings in solvent and distressed debt situations, corporate reorganisations and reconstructions. Castro focuses on the US tax aspects of the full lifecycle of funds.

Ropes & Gray

Making the switch to the Boston born firm is restructuring lawyer **Edward Downer** from Willkie. Downer advises on restructurings, liability management transactions, and bankruptcy, insolvency and secured debt proceedings.

RPC

Cyber and insurance lawyer **Edward Lewis** moves to the insurance specialists from CyXcel, a Weightmans-owned digital risk advisory firm which he founded and led. Lewis advises insurance and reinsurance clients on cyber coverage, cyber breach response incidents, and defends technology errors and omissions (E&O) insurance claims.

Seddons GSC

Disputes lawyer **Peter Ames** joins the 40-something-partner West End firm from Adams & Remers. Ames handles commercial and financial litigation, including contentious trust and fraud matters, professional negligence, insurance and construction claims.

Sheppard Mullin

The US firm elevates private equity and M&A specialist **Linda Zeman** from Simmons & Simmons, where she was a counsel. Zeman who prior to joining Simmons & Simmons was a partner at McDermott Will & Emery, advises private equity funds, sponsors and corporates on leveraged buyouts, acquisitions and disposals, mergers, joint ventures and corporate governance.

Shoosmiths

Technology disputes lateral **Caroline Tuck** makes the switch to the national firm from RPC. Tuck focuses on disputes arising from technology projects, including project delays, change control, termination and damages.

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- Sidley Austin

  In a vertical hire, the Chicago spawned outfit welcomes private equity and M&A specialist **James Sherlock** from Skadden, where he was a counsel. Sherlock advises financial sponsors on private acquisitions and disposals, carve-outs, co-investments, consortium deals, joint ventures and group restructurings.

- Simmons & Simmons

  Arriving at the UK-based international firm is energy M&A specialist **Quentin Robinson** from Ashurst Perkins Coie. An oil and gas specialist, Robinson advises on M&A, joint ventures, investments, project development and commercial arrangements across conventional energy, infrastructure and energy transition markets.

- Simpson Thacher

  Exodus! Eight laterals decamp from soon-to-be-defunct Weil, as the fellow New Yorker picks up former London head of finance **Tom Richards** alongside finance colleagues **Alex Eagle**, **Patrick Brendon**, **Gilles Teerlinck** and **Kai Zhang**; private funds specialists **Simon Saitowitz** and **Charles Cooper-Isow**; and private equity Weil lifer **Lewis Blakey**. Richards and his team advise on leveraged and acquisition financings, with Eagle and Zhang covering a broad range of debt products and Brendon and Teerlinck focusing on high-yield bond financings. Saitowitz and Cooper-Isow cover secondaries transactions, including GP-led and continuation fund deals, preferred equity investments and traditional LP portfolio transactions. Blakey advises on buyouts, including carve-outs and public-to-private transactions, as well as growth and minority investments and exits.

- Skadden

  Returning to private practice, infrastructure-focused private equity lawyer **Sam Blake** joins the Wall Street firm from Antin Infrastructure Partners, where he was a partner. Blake advises financial sponsors and other investors on infrastructure and infrastructure-related investments, including energy transition, digital infrastructure, transportation and regulated assets.

- Stephenson Harwood

  A trio of new faces (one lateral and two verticals) for the international firm which welcomes: property disputes specialist **David Marsden**, who relocates from Freeths' Birmingham office as head of property litigation; private wealth and tax lawyer **Nicola Simmons** from Mishcon de Reya, where she was a legal director; and marine insurance lawyer **Jennifer Lavelle** from Clyde & Co, where she was a senior associate. Marsden handles a broad range of property disputes, including dilapidations, tenant insolvency, property fraud, tenant default and forfeiture. Simmons covers personal and corporate tax, trusts and succession planning for entrepreneurs, family offices and trustees. Lavelle advises on coverage instructions and recovery claims arising from charterparties, bills of lading, marine casualties and salvage.

- Sullivan & Cromwell

  Corporate duo **David Avery-Gee** and **Sarah Flaherty** make the jump from disintegrating, now soon-to-be-defunct, fellow New Yorker Weil, where the former was London co-managing partner and head of M&A. Both joined Weil from Linklaters and advise on strategic M&A, joint ventures, capital raisings and corporate restructurings, particularly in the natural resources, energy, consumer and healthcare sectors. Their arrival marks Sullivan & Cromwell's sixth lateral hire from Weil since September 2025, including former Weil leader **Mike Francies**, who was lured from retirement in a move Edwards Gibson noted at the time would likely portend further Weil defections.

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- TLT

A quartet of new faces (three laterals and one vertical) for the Bristol-headquartered firm which welcomes: banking lawyer **Natalie Coates** as head of asset finance and ABL from Blake Morgan; contentious regulatory and investigations lawyer **David Hamilton** from Howard Kennedy, where he led the contentious financial services practice; social housing finance specialist **Jennie Chilton** from Addleshaw Goddard; and data protection specialist **Lorna Cropper** from Fieldfisher, where she was a director. Coates, who previously spent more than seven years in-house at BNP Paribas, advises on receivables financing, leasing and other asset-backed financing arrangements. Hamilton focuses on regulatory investigations and enforcement and financial crime defence. Chilton advises on the real estate and security aspects of social and affordable housing finance transactions. Cropper covers children's privacy and online safety, AI governance, e-privacy and data breaches.

- Travers Smith

Hiring spree! The normally conservative City firm welcomes a quartet of laterals: competition lawyer **Daniel Vowden** from Mayer Brown, where he was head of the UK antitrust practice; international arbitration specialist **Andy Moody** from Baker McKenzie, where he was global chair of international arbitration and London head of dispute resolution; funds specialist **Laura Houët** from CMS, where she was global co-head of ESG; and employment lawyer **Andrew Howard** from Deloitte Legal, where he was head of people law and employee relations. Vowden, who joined Mayer Brown from Herbert Smith Freehills less than three years ago, advises on UK and EU competition matters, merger control, foreign direct investment and national security approvals for cross-border M&A. Moody counsels on international commercial and investment treaty arbitrations, as well as English high court disputes. Houët advises fund houses on alternative strategies and fund structures, as well as taking long-term asset funds through FCA authorisation. Howard advises employers on investigations, whistleblowing, discrimination and workplace disputes, as well as the employment aspects of corporate reorganisations and outsourcing projects.

- Wallace

Commercial property lawyer **Ian Leigh** moves to the London firm from Collins Benson Goldhill, specialising in acquisitions, disposals, funding, landlord and tenant work and asset management

- Weil

One for the road! Before recommending its wind-down, the doomed New York firm announced the hire of private equity specialist **Rebecca Ward** from Freshfields, amid a spate of departures from its London office. Ward, who spent 17 years at Dickson Minto before joining Freshfields in 2022, advises private equity sponsors on leveraged buyouts, acquisitions and disposals, carve-outs, co-investments and restructurings**.** It remains unclear whether Ward, who is still listed on Freshfields' website, will now leave the Magic Circle firm**.**

- Wiggin

Prodigal Son! The media boutique welcomes back privacy specialist **Patrick O'Connell** from Linklaters, where he was a managing associate. O'Connell, who was previously a senior associate at Wiggin, covers data protection, online safety and AI regulation, regulatory investigations and tech transactions.

- Wikborg Rein

Energy, offshore and maritime disputes lawyer **Clare Kempkens** defects to the Oslo-headquartered firm from K&L Gates. Kempkens advises contractors, operators and insurers on the full range of contentious and non-contentious offshore issues, including drilling contracts, EPC

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and supply agreements, and associated insurance cover.

- WilmerHale

  Re-stock! Following the well-publicised clear-out of its London disputes bench, the Washington-headquartered outfit begins a rebuilding process with two hires: **Jeremy Kosky** from Clifford Chance, who arrives as head of London disputes; and **Charlie Lightfoot** from Cooley, where he was head of international arbitration. Kosky specialises in commercial litigation with a particular focus on financial investors, financial institutions, corporate trustee disputes and private wealth disputes. Lightfoot advises on international commercial arbitration, with a focus on investor-state arbitration and disputes under public international law.

- Withers

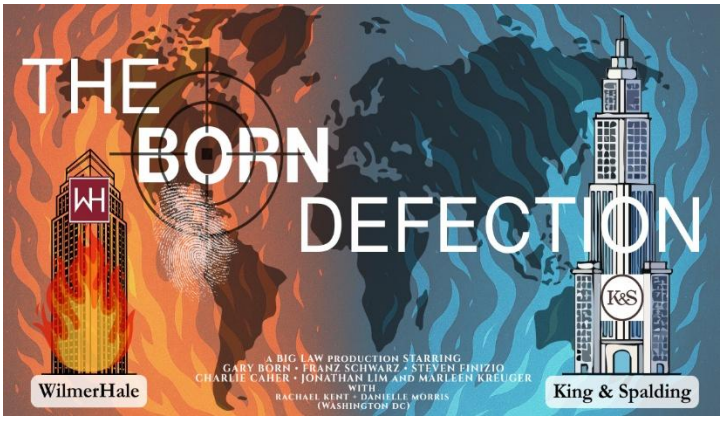
  A brace of immigration lawyers for the international firm which bags: **Sophie Barrett-Brown** from boutique Laura Devine Immigration, where she was head of the UK practice; and **Tom Marsom** from global mobility business Vialto Partners, where he was a director. Barrett-Brown advises across the full spectrum of UK immigration law, with a focus on matters for UHNW individuals, family offices, entrepreneurs and international families. Marsom specialises in settlement, naturalisation, EEA, investor and ancestry applications.

- Womble Bond Dickinson

  The verein-like Anglo-American outfit adds public procurement specialist **Brendan Ryan** from Clarke Willmott, where he was head of procurement. Ryan advises on tender processes, direct awards, qualification and debarment, consortium bidding and contract modifications, as well as public law and international trade matters.

Edwards Gibson Partner Round-Up – click here to read our methodology

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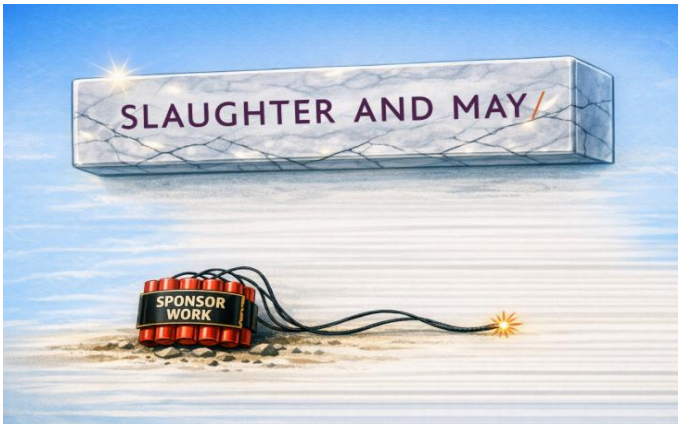
- WilmerHale – The Born Defection



- Uno Reverse - Kirkland vs Paul Weiss



- Year End Big Law Tie Ups – and the standout is Hogan Lovells Cadwalader



- The maybe (not-so) inviolate Slaughter and May



- Two Big Law Summer Weddings … and an Anniversary

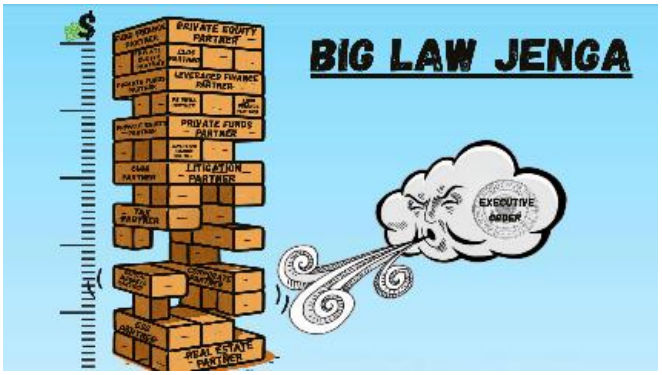


- What's behind the escalating three-year bull run in Big Law Partner Hires in London and is it sustainable?

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- "To: Cc or not Cc" – Clifford Chance's subversive new branding



- Big Law Jenga: How Private Capital Stars Are Marking Elite Firms Unstable



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- Freshfields' Non-Share Home Turf Handicap



- Big Law's Brave "Few"



- Paul Weiss – The Invasive Species!

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- "Memery Loss" London Law Firm Memery Crystal Sinks



- The financial success of Big Law is predicated entirely on the Rule of Law



- Linklaters – Welcome to the "Hotel California" of Big Law



- Paul Weiss – Blackjack!



- Parallels in Peril



- Breaking The Circle – Freshfields Pay Bonanza

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- [Paul Weiss - Happy Birthday to BigLaw's Apex Predator]



- [The Pecking Order at MIPIM]



- [A lawyer's progress to partnership...it's closing]



- [So, it's A&O Shearman!]



- [And you thought $20 million was a lot for a lawyer…]



- [Kirkland & Ellis and Paul Weiss Exchange Blows]

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