

Law
Firm
Partner
Moves
in
London

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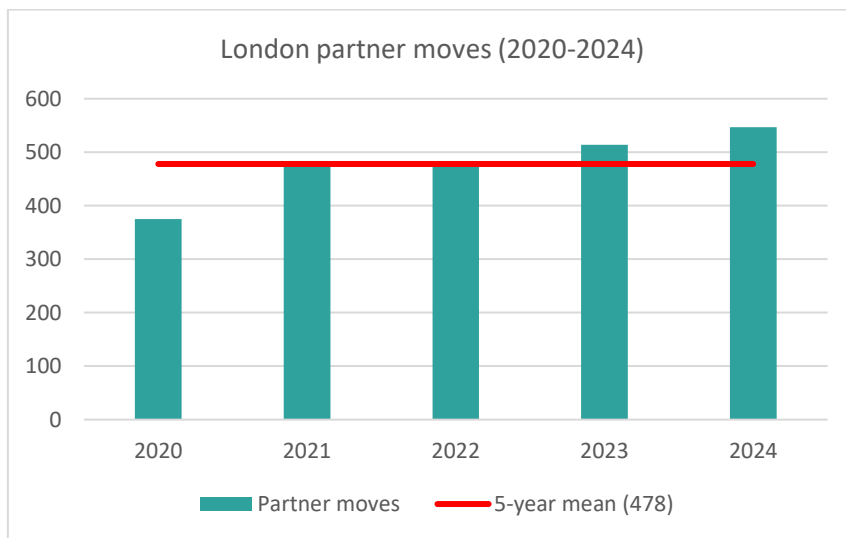
Welcome to the 84th edition of Law Firm Partner Moves in London, from the specialist partner team at Edwards Gibson, where we look back at announced partner-level recruitment activity in London over the past two months and give you a ‘who’s moved where’ update. This edition concludes our Law Firm Partner Moves in London for 2024 and we have included some facts and figures below comparing this year’s partner-level recruitment activity with that over the past ten years.

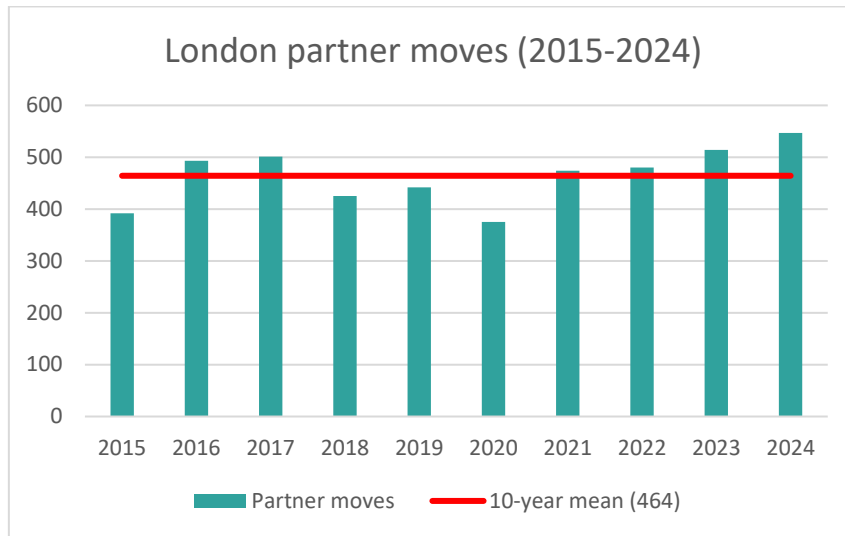
◆ **A summary of 2024**

There were **547** partner moves announced in 2024. Our records go back to 2007, and this is by far the highest number ever recorded in a single year – **6%** up on the previous record - **514** - which was set last year, and **14%** and **18%** up on the five and ten-year averages respectively.

The reason behind this recruitment hyperactivity is in large part due to the continued huge investment bets by US law firms in private capital related hires which, particularly since August 2023, have pumped scores of millions of dollars of additional partner compensation into a relatively closed system.

As has often been the case in our year-end edition, the most acquisitive firm of the year was **Kirkland & Ellis** which, aided in part by its unusual partnership structure, hired **21** partners (albeit only **7** were laterals). Next up was **Simmons & Simmons**, which snapped up **16** partners (**12** laterals), and **Paul Weiss** with **14** partners (**10** laterals).





✦ **Top partner recruiters in London 2024**

Top partner recruiters in London 2024	Total hires	Lateral hires
Kirkland & Ellis	21	7
Simmons & Simmons	16	12
Paul Weiss	14	10
Addleshaw Goddard	13	6
Pinsent Masons	13	10
Charles Russell Speechlys	12	10
Mishcon de Reya	12	7
TLT Solicitors	12	9
McDermott Will & Emery	10	9
Sidley Austin	10	10
White & Case	10	7
DLA Piper	9	8
Greenberg Traurig	9	8
King & Spalding	9	6
Stephenson Harwood	9	3

✦ **Top partner recruiters in London 2024 (partnership to partnership moves only)**

Top partner recruiters in London 2024	Lateral hires
Simmons & Simmons	12
Charles Russell Speechlys	10
Paul Weiss	10
Pinsent Masons	10
Sidley Austin	10
McDermott Will & Emery	9

TLT Solicitors	9
DLA Piper	8
Greenberg Traurig	8
Hunton Andrews Kurth	8



◆ **Team hires 2024**

The two most sizeable multi-partner team moves in 2024 were Bristol headquartered **TLT**'s hire of an eight-partner infrastructure planning and real estate team from BDB Pitmans, [announced in October](#); and **Sidley Austin's** (likely) three-stage acquisition of an eight-partner* finance and US securities team from Latham & Watkins comprising: a sponsor-side leveraged finance hexad ([announced in August](#) with a late joiner in December); and a US qualified high-yield duo [announced in October](#). Meanwhile, Virginia-headquartered **Hunton Andrews Kurth** bolstered its ranks with a six-partner lateral team from EY Law comprising an energy & project finance quartet alongside an asset finance duo. Notably, all six partners share a long history of working together, having been at DLA Piper for an extended period before transitioning to EY.

Also noteworthy was Atlanta headquartered **King & Spalding's** recruitment of a five-partner funds finance team from Cadwalader; and **Latham & Watkins'** hire of a four partner lender-side leveraged finance team from Cahill (3 laterals and 1 vertical).

In addition, eight firms hired three-partner teams: **Addleshaw Goddard** (corporate and US securities) from Pinsent Masons; **Akin** (corporate) from Cooley; **Freshfields** (finance and restructuring) from Weil; **Greenberg Traurig** (construction disputes/ international arbitration) from Pinsent Masons; **Katten** (tax and financial services) from Curtis; **Kirkland & Ellis** (leveraged finance and US securities) from A&O Shearman*; **Proskauer Rose** (leveraged finance and acquisitions) from Cahill; and **Simmons & Simmons** (technology transactions and regulatory compliance) from Deloitte Legal.

*Whilst Edwards Gibson cannot be certain all the hires in these moves were linked, it is probable that they were.

Latham & Watkins suffered the highest attrition in 2024 – losing **13** serving partners to rivals – followed by **EY Law** and **Pinsent Masons**, which lost a dozen laterals apiece, then **Linklaters** and **Sidley Austin** which both lost **11**.

◆ **Firms with largest attrition in 2024 (partnership to partnership moves only)**

Highest partner attrition	No. laterals lost
Latham & Watkins	13
EY Law	12
Pinsent Masons	12
Linklaters	11
Sidley Austin	11
BDB Pitmans	10
Deloitte Legal	10
Eversheds Sutherland	9
Kirkland & Ellis	9
A&O Shearman**	8
Goodwin Procter	8
Paul Hastings	8

**This figure includes attrition from A&O Shearman as well as attrition from (pre-merger) Allen & Overy in 2024. There was no attrition from legacy Shearman & Sterling in London during this period.

◆ **Paul Weiss - The invasive species that upset the London Big Law ecosystem**

To a large extent all ecosystems are shaped by their apex predator and, since August 2023, it is indisputable that the London Big Law biome has been profoundly impacted by the European re-launch of **Paul Weiss** and its (significantly more than) \$100 million investment in an English law offering. The Wall Street raptor’s aggressive hiring strategy has been partly facilitated by the abandonment of its (once sacrosanct) all equity partnership, along with the adoption of “black box” partner compensation – peppered with some stellar top-end offers to laterals of (reportedly) up to \$20 million p/a.



Although Paul Weiss was only the third most coveted firm in London in 2024, it actually hired the same number of partners this year (**14**) as it did last year when it took the top slot for laterals. Since August 2023, its Air Street office has hired **28** partners – **24** of whom were laterals. Although impressive, the number belies the multiplying impact these hires have had on the market as a whole – both peer and near-peer rivals have scrambled to restock by poaching laterals from other firms. As many of these knock-on hires have been “distressed purchases” they have come with significantly inflated compensation. The ripple effect of this has often been to force tertiary firms in the chain to make their own losses good through a mix of external recruitment and associate battlefield promotions; an ongoing process that will continue well into next year. Indeed, in a boon for head-hunters, in some instances the arrival of a single Paul Weiss lateral has ultimately led to three, or even four, collateral re-stock hires.

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Even before Paul Weiss, US law firms were already heavily investing in private equity and debt finance in London. Over the past 18 months, the combined impact of: (i) existing pre-planned set-piece investments by US firms; (ii) Paul Weiss’ own unprecedented expenditure; and (iii) forced collateral re-stock hires as a result of (ii), has pumped scores of \$millions in additional annual partner compensation into a relatively closed system. This has, unsurprisingly, had an inflationary impact on top-end partner compensation.

This London specific issue has coincided with, and possibly contributed to, a stream of fundamental changes in historically *über* conservative partnership structures at other elite US law firms. The widespread abandonment of all-equity partnerships, and the corresponding rise of non-equity partnerships, has enabled firms to free up partnership points and upwardly stretch their top of equity to attract and retain star rainmakers. In the longer term, those firms (including Paul Weiss itself) which have added a non-equity cadre of partners to their ranks will find that it both elevates recruitment and increases partner attrition.

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Whilst the ripple effect of Paul Weiss’ London hires will continue to impact the market well into next year, now that it has reached critical mass, it is unlikely that the Wall Street firm will continue its own hiring spree at the same breakneck speed – at least for transactional lawyers. Indeed, in general, Paul Weiss’ partner hires of 2024 were of less market significance than those of the previous year, with four of the new joiners being verticals or from in-house.

Paul Weiss does appear to have picked up some genuinely significant English law mandates, and it has already likely established itself as a permanent London alternative to its arch-rival Kirkland & Ellis. However, it is doubtful that its work winning success has yet covered its enormous outlay and eventually its New York management will want to see a proper return on their eye watering expensive investment.

Indeed, history tells us that Stateside partners often fall out of love with bankrolling a shiny new London office right around the time they find out they can no longer afford that boat they'd set their sights on. Wayback in 1998 another US law firm – **McDermott Will & Emery** – launched in London to much fanfare advertising the (then) unheard of sum of £1 million to laterals. After a few short years of dominating the news cycle with impressive lateral hires and gaining a cornucopia of top directory rankings, the (then) management, purportedly frustrated with the lack of return, pulled the plug and the firm quickly retrenched into relative obscurity for more than a decade.

To be clear, there is no suggestion that Paul Weiss has overstretched – but any slowdown in its predations is good news for Big Law rivals who, to paraphrase Winston Churchill, can at least hope that, if this is not the end, and not even the beginning of the end, it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.

◆ Ever decreasing Magic Circles

2024 saw the Magic Circle quintet cumulatively hire **16** partners in London, this is broken down as: **A&O Shearman (7)**; **Clifford Chance (3)**; **Freshfields (5)**; and **Linklaters (1)**. As usual **Slaughter and May** neither hired nor lost any laterals. By historic standards, beyond the last three years, this level of recruitment would be very high for the fivesome.

However, against this, cumulatively the Magic Circle lost an astonishing **28** serving partners to rivals (nearly 50% up on the previous record (**19**) and more than two thirds higher than the rolling 10-year average (**17**)). Although the 28 included one transfer between two Magic Circle firms, the overwhelming majority of losses were to more profitable private-equity-led US law firms.



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Following its loss of a dozen partners in 2023, **Linklaters** once again stood out as having by far the greatest attrition in the group – losing **11** laterals in 2024.

◆ Latham's London Leak

Latham & Watkins, renowned for its expansive network and profitability, has for years been the poster child for the Big Law global elite, however, 2024 saw a wave of unexpected partner departures. Since January the firm has lost **13** serving partners to rivals in London. More than half of these were to **Sidley Austin** which took **8** (including Latham's former London managing partner and two former co-chairs of the London finance practice) specialising in leveraged finance and US securities. The other losses were to: **Paul Hastings** (a disputes and corporate crime duo); **Greenberg Traurig** (US securities); **Milbank** (structured products/CLOs); and **Skadden** (IP).

The trend was not confined to London. Latham's European offices, particularly in Germany, have also experienced unusual levels of attrition.

There has been much commentary around the reasoning behind Latham's recent departures and whether this is a result of changing priorities for the firm in Europe. Nevertheless, despite the disruptions, the Los Angeles headquartered outfit itself welcomed **8** partners (**6** of whom were laterals) in London in 2024.

◆ A Cahill Struggle...

Another victim of US law firm-on-US law firm internecine warfare was New York firm **Cahill**, which at one point saw its London partner count shrink 75% after suffering a series of high-profile defections to rivals. The Wall Street firm lost seven leveraged finance/high yield lawyers who have taken partnership at rivals (four to **Latham & Watkins**, two to **Proskauer Rose** and one to **White & Case**), initially leaving its London outpost with just two disputes partners. Cahill has already begun the process of restocking its non-contentious bench with a New York qualified high yield lateral from **Clifford Chance**, however, despite its phenomenal Stateside reputation in leveraged finance, the recent high-profile hires by peer and near peer rivals in that space will make the process of replacement an up-hill struggle.

New York firm Cahill ... at one point saw its London partner count shrink 75% after suffering a series of high-profile defections to rivals.

◆ Pinsent Masons and Sidley Austin – easy come easy go ...

Pinsent Masons and Chicago-born **Sidley Austin** stand out as being both amongst this year's top partner hirers whilst also simultaneously suffering the highest levels of lateral predation to rivals. In 2024 Pinsent Masons welcomed **13** partners (**10** of whom were laterals) and lost **12** serving partners to rivals. Similarly, Sidley Austin hired **10** laterals and lost **11**. After all that recruitment downtime, Pinsents saw a net gain of just one partner, whilst Sidley Austin ended the year down one.

◆ **Genesis and Exodus – one US law firm launches whilst another flees London**

Seattle-based technology-focused outfit **Perkins Coie** (re) [launched its London office in May](#) with an eclectic partner quintet of former (and serving) White & Case corporate lawyers comprising: a retired storied rainmaker; two in-house General Counsel; and two lateral hires from **White & Case** in Prague. In contrast, in August, it was announced that St. Louis-headquartered **Armstrong Teasdale** would be [closing its London office](#). The City outpost, which opened in February 2021 following the acquisition of the 16-partner firm Kerman & Co, had dwindled to just 10 partners, most of whom specialised in IP, by the time of the announcement. Subsequently it has transpired that the London office has been subject to insolvency proceedings and (reportedly) linked to regulatory investigations.

◆ **Accounting for lost laterals - the (not so) Big Four**

The Big Four accounting firms (**Deloitte**, **EY**, **KPMG** and **PwC**) hired no partners at all in London in 2024, however, relative to the number of lawyer partners, the level of attrition at the quartet has been dramatic. Whilst **PwC** and **KPMG***** lost just three partners between them, **Deloitte** and **EY Law** have experienced a surge in partner defections losing **10** and **12** partners respectively. A high proportion of Deloitte émigrés were former **Kemp Little** lawyers who joined following the (seemingly problematic) acquisition of the 27 partner City TMT boutique in 2021.



*** Includes a Partner who sat in a tax, rather than legal services, team but who moved as a lateral to McDermott Will & Emery.

◆ **Another trans-Atlantic tie-up**

One of the most significant events in Big Law this year was the announcement in November that Anglo-Australian outfit **Herbert Smith Freehills** (HSF) and New York headquartered **Kramer Levin** had agreed to merge. If approved by the partners, the tie-up will create a truly global law firm with combined revenues of over \$2 billion and more than 2,700 lawyers.

There has been much commentary on the merger which has been generally positive. However, when law firms enter merger discussions there is often elevated partner attrition at both legacy outfits because practice overlaps, client conflicts, partner egos and issues around relative contribution nearly always come into play. Happily, because Kramer Levin had no presence in London, on a local level at least, most of these issues will be side-stepped so there should be very limited direct attrition from HSF (and, by definition, zero attrition from Kramer Levin) in London. Nevertheless, because both firms have decided to fully integrate their profit pools – (i.e. not “cheat” by using a Swiss Verein-type structure) – the financial gymnastics will be challenging because Kramer Levin is so much more profitable than HSF. Creating a “one size fits all” equity spread for a firm with three sizable (and very different) global profit centres will be fraught and, if management gets it wrong, then the relative contribution issues will cause disgruntled partners at both legacy HSF and Kramer Levin to defect to rivals. To the extent that this occurs in London, it will of course be reflected in future editions of Edwards Gibson’s Partner Moves.

◆ The Travails of Travers Smith continue ...

Throughout 2023 we reported on the high attrition at **Travers Smith**. At the time we estimated that, ignoring promotions, the 80 something partner private equity focused firm lost over 12% of its partnership to competitors – 10 partners – in one year. In 2024 the firm continued to lose a disproportionately high proportion of its partnership (7 laterals) to competitors, this time to: **Goodwin Procter** (two partners); **Latham & Watkins**; **Linklaters**; **Sidley Austin**; and pensions specialist, **Sackers**. Against this Travers Smith hired two partners (one lateral from **Watson Farley Williams** and one in-house lawyer from **Backstone Credit and Insurance**).

◆ Alternative Law Firms

As per [our methodology](#), Edwards Gibson only records hires by law firms with conventional partnership (or corporate) structures. As such, we do not record hires to “alternative law firms”; the way they are structured, and the difficulties in confirming a given lawyer’s location at these entities, make like-for-like comparisons with conventional law firms challenging. Nevertheless, it should be noted that were we to do so, **Keystone Law** would likely feature at the top of the rankings above - on a rough reckoning, **Keystone** welcomed **24** relevant partners in 2024.

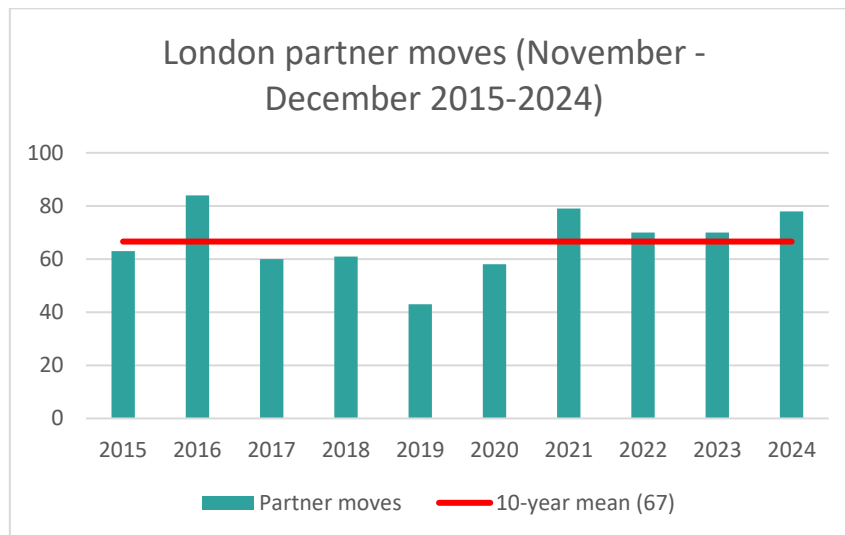
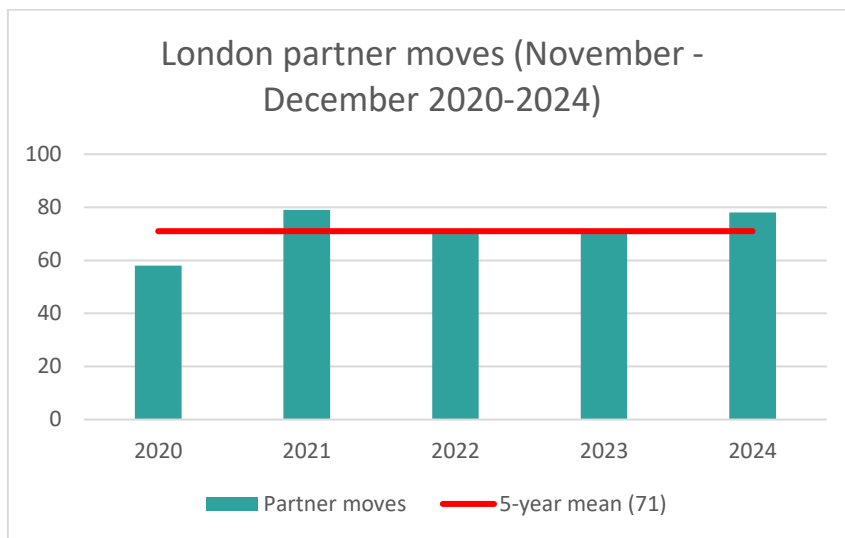
◆ Other Fun Facts From 2024

- **31%** of moves this edition were female (**167**) – over the past 5 years this figure has ranged from **26%** to **31%**.
- **6%** of all hires (**31**) were from in-house or business.
- **23%** of all moves (**125**) were vertical promotions (non-partnership law firm roles to partnership upon moving to another law firm).

November – December 2024

This bi-monthly round-up contains **78** partner moves - **10%** up on the 71 we saw for the same period last year. In keeping with the rest of 2024, partner recruitment remains at very high levels - **10%** up on the cumulative five-year average (**71**); and **17%** up on the cumulative ten-year average of (**67**) for the same period.

The most covetous firms over the past two months were **Addleshaw Goddard**, which hired five new partners, and **Clyde & Co** and **Kirkland & Ellis** who both hired four; followed by: **Freshfields**, **Mishcon de Reya**, **Simpson Thacher**, **Stephenson Harwood** and **White & Case** which hired three new partners apiece.



✦ **Top partner recruiters in London November – December 2024**

• Addleshaw Goddard	5	(4 laterals)
• Clyde & Co	4	(2 laterals)
• Kirkland & Ellis	4	(1 lateral)
• Freshfields	3	(1 lateral)
• Mishcon de Reya	3	(2 laterals)
• Simpson Thacher	3	(3 laterals)
• Stephenson Harwood	3	(2 laterals)
• White & Case	3	(2 laterals)

Three firms hired from in-house this edition: **DWF** (from Cleantech Cadre), **Mishcon de Reya** (from SeedLegals) and **Mantle Law** (from Arup).

✦ **Market Outlook**

For the second year running the growth in the partner hire market has been turbo-charged by unprecedented investment by US law firms into private capital related hires. Over an 18-month period scores of \$ millions in additional partner compensation has been pumped into the system, which has caused lateral pay at elite firms to spike - facilitating movement on a scale never before seen in London. Star debt finance (and especially leveraged finance), corporate M&A and private funds specialists have been the main focus of this largess, but it has also extended to support areas such as tax, anti-trust and financial services.

On the non-transactional side, litigation funding has continued to be a contributor to partner hire activity. Moreover, thanks to the gift of English law, London has benefited as the venue of choice for high stakes disputes, in particular, the rise in global class-actions. Not only has litigation funding assisted the business cases of those laterals who have direct relationships with funders, to a lesser extent, it has also elevated demand for disputes partners as a whole.

It is unlikely that the law firm partner hire market of 2025 will witness quite the same frenetic levels of activity as we saw in 2024. On the transactional side, there are only so many “star” private equity, debt finance and private funds teams left who have not moved. Moreover, beyond a small cadre of super-elite law firms, the economics of star hires is difficult to justify, and we are already hearing that there is pushback from some Stateside partners at US firms about the eyewatering costs of recent London recruitment.

In addition, as we mention in our report, now that it has reached a critical mass, that arch-disruptor of the London legal biome since August 2023 - **Paul Weiss** - is unlikely to make too many more market distorting hires in that space. Paul Weiss, and other elite US firms, will of course continue to hire, and

indeed, Edwards Gibson is aware of a number of Paul Weiss related re-stock hires by other firms still working their way through the system, but the pace of these hires is likely to slow.

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Despite an anaemic UK economy, Big Law market fundamentals actually improved in 2024 – both UK and European M&A were up and, in the last quarter of the year, even direct real estate teams were reporting increased activity. Nevertheless, economic uncertainty, especially following the recent US election, makes predictions going forward particularly problematic. On the one hand, deregulation and tax cuts in the US are expected to unleash an M&A boom – at least some of which will likely benefit London law firms, on the other, accelerated deglobalisation and inflationary policies – such as trade tariffs - could slow the economy and cause interest rates to spike.

If so, that will be a particular problem for Big Law because its more than decade long dynamo - the private capital industry - is almost entirely predicated on low interest rates. For law firms, any long-term return to high, or even historically “normal”, interest rates will severely curtail transactional private equity, debt finance and (often forgotten by law firms themselves) litigation funding. In the medium term this would likely have a disproportionately negative impact on US law firms in London.

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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.

Scott Gibson, Director scott.gibson@edwardsgibson.com or +44 (0)7788 454 080

Sloane Poulton, Director sloane.poulton@edwardsgibson.com or +44 (0)7967 603 402

Please click [here](#) to understand our methodology for compiling Partner Moves

✦ **A&O Shearman**

The recently merged firm welcomes incentives lateral **Mahesh Varia** from Travers Smith, where he was head of the incentives and remuneration group. Varia acts for companies, directors, trustees and employees on remuneration and incentive matters in the context of both corporate transactions and on an advisory basis.

✦ **Addleshaw Goddard**

A quintet of new faces for the international firm as it welcomes: a three-partner corporate/capital markets team from Pinsent Masons -comprising **Julian Stanier**, **Gareth Jones** and **Roberta Markovina**; a finance lateral **Alasdair McKenzie** from Gowling WLG; and a financial services regulatory specialist **Grace Wyatt** from Hogan Lovells, where she was a senior associate. Of the Pinsent Mason's arrivals, Stainer and Jones specialise in corporate finance and public and private M&A, the duo [previously moved together](#) from BCLP to Pinsent in 2017. Markovia, who is US qualified, and joins her new home as head of US securities, advises on US equity and debt capital markets. McKenzie focuses on debt finance covering leveraged finance, acquisition finance, emerging markets and early-stage debt matters. Wyatt has a particular angle on payments and crypto currency matters.

✦ **Bird & Bird**

The technology focused outfit hires vertical **Andrew Dean** from Clifford Chance where he was the (non-partner) head of procurement and public law. Dean advises on a range of procurement and public law matters with a focus on regulated sectors such as: energy, rail, defence, water, healthcare and telecoms.

✦ **Blake Morgan**

Competition and international trade specialist **Anthony Woolich** arrives at the national firm from HFW. Woolich advises on a wide range of predominately trade related matters – including

those related to regulation, sanctions, subsidies, bribery and corruption.

✦ **Brown Rudnick**

Commercial real estate lawyer **Angus Ford** makes the switch to the Boston spawned outfit from Eversheds Sutherland. Ford, who joins his new firm as the head of UK & European real estate, advises on investment and development matters, sale and leaseback transactions and commercial property acquisitions.

✦ **Cadwalader**

Structured finance lateral **Richard (Rick) Hanson** arrives at the New York firm from Morgan Lewis. Hanson advises alternative investment funds, asset managers, insurance companies and banks on structured finance, securitization and bespoke financing solutions.

✦ **Charles Russell Speechlys**

Two additions to the international firm which welcomes: financial services regulatory specialist **Charlotte Hill** from Taylor Wessing, where she was head of the financial services regulation and fintech team; and private client lawyer **Jonathan Burt** from Harbottle & Lewis. Hill provides financial services regulatory advice in relation to FCA and PRA matters, with a particular niche covering fintech. Burt advises trustees, beneficiaries and high net worth families on tax and succession planning.

✦ **Clifford Chance**

The magic circle outfit poaches Willkie Farr's chair of European competition, **Philipp Girardet**. Dual Brussels and England & Wales qualified, Girardet advises on EU and UK anti-trust law covering cross-border merger control, FDI and antitrust/cartel defence cases as well as market investigations and behavioural matters.

✦ **Clyde & Co**

Four hires (two laterals and two verticals) for the global firm which welcomes: project finance lateral **Alex Blomfield** from Simmons & Simmons; data protection and privacy specialist **Isabel Simpson** from KPMG Law; aviation claims lawyer **Charlie Röbin** from Kennedys, where he was a legal director; and energy regulatory specialist **Marianne Anton** from Watson Farley Williams, where she was counsel. Blomfield, who advises on international project financings in the energy, infrastructure and resources sectors, is set to focus on energy transition and carbon markets at his new home. Simpson covers information technology and data law with a particular niche in freedom of information, data protection compliance and arrangements involving personal data. Robin advises airlines, helicopter operators, airports and handling agents on all aspects of aviation liability and insurance. Anton, an energy regulatory and commercial specialist, advises on both contentious and non-contentious matters including electricity and gas licensing and electricity market reform.

✦ **CMS**

Professional indemnity and dispute resolution lawyer **Hannah Cane** joins the verein-like international firm from Womble Bond Dickinson. Cane's area of expertise lies in construction professional indemnity defence and coverage, acting for insurers and their insureds including contractors.

✦ **Covington & Burling**

Third time's the charm! Corporate lawyer **Phil Cheveley** joins the Washington DC founded firm from Sidley Austin; his third lateral move in as many years having left Travers Smith for Shearman & Sterling [in 2021](#) and Shearman & Sterling for Sidley Austin [in 2023](#). Cheveley specialises in public company M&A and disposals, as well as primary and secondary equity issues.

✦ **Cripps**

The South-East headquartered firm welcomes private wealth lawyer **Kitty Sokol** from private client boutique The Burnside Partnership. Sokol advises on UK and international estate planning.

✦ **DAC Beachcroft**

Technology specialist **Andy Lucas** joins the national firm from Dentons. Lucas focuses on IT outsourcing and technology projects, frequently advising the public sector and UK government departments.

✦ **Davis Polk**

The elite New Yorker launches a European restructuring practice with a two-partner team comprising Sidley Austin's restructuring co-heads **Mark Knight** and **Jifree Cader**. The pair, who commenced their careers at DLA and Addleshaw Goddard respectively, advise creditors, debtors, sponsors and enforcing agents on European restructurings and special situations.

✦ **Dentons**

A brace of laterals for the global firm as it bags: New York qualified high yield lawyer **Colin Chang** from Linklaters; and corporate tax specialist **Neil McKnight** from Morgan Lewis. Chang advises underwriters, issuers and sponsors on high yield offerings, bridge-to-high yield finance deals and restructurings in both European and US markets. McKnight covers corporate tax encompassing: M&A, tax structuring, financial transactions (including securitisation and structured finance) and real estate tax.

✦ **DLA Piper**

Restructuring specialist **Adam Plainer** decamps to the international firm from Dechert where he was global co-chair of its financial restructuring group. Plainer advises distressed investors, junior and senior lenders and insolvency practitioners on an eclectic range of restructurings and formal insolvencies.

◆ **DWF**

Two new faces for the private equity owned firm as it welcomes: ESG energy lawyer **Steven McNab** from his own legal services provider Cleantech Cadre Limited; and planning lawyer **Alistair Paul** from Herbert Smith Freehills where he was a senior associate. McNab, who joins his new firm as head of decarbonisation and energy projects, covers the environmental elements of ESG, focusing on renewables and low carbon strategies. Paul advises on planning for energy and infrastructure projects, mixed-use developments and highway matters.

◆ **Eversheds Sutherland**

The Anglo-American outfit elevates planning specialist **Robert Gowing** from Hogan Lovells, where he was a senior associate. Gowing covers all aspects of town and country planning, advising on urban developments and national infrastructure projects.

◆ **Freeths**

Commercial property duo **Daniel Abrahams** and **Craig Jones** make the switch to the Nottingham headquartered outfit from Memery Crystal. The pair cover a wide range of direct real estate with a focus on investment and development.

◆ **Freshfields**

The magic circle firm raids US rival Weil for a private capital trio (one lateral and two verticals) comprising: **Paul Stewart** who is set to become Freshfields' global co-head of private credit and capital solutions; along with **Mark Davis** and **Nick Fortune**, who were both counsel at their former firm. Stewart and Davis advise credit funds, financial institutions and other investors on (predominately) leveraged finance loan products, with a particular angle on the private credit and capital solutions spaces. Fortune covers restructurings and insolvency transactions with a focus on creditor and ad hoc group representations.

◆ **Gateley**

Property disputes lateral **Martin Thomas** arrives at the listed law firm from Gowling WLG, where he was head of property litigation. Thomas, a solicitor advocate, advises on all aspects of property disputes with a sub-specialism in telecoms related matters.

◆ **Gibson Dunn**

Jones Day lifer **Will McDonald** decamps to the mergers & acquisitions team at the Los Angeles headquartered set-up. McDonald, a corporate finance lawyer who, as an associate, spent a two-year stint seconded to the UK takeover panel, has a particular specialism in public law M&A.

◆ **Greenberg Traurig**

US securities and capital markets lateral **Fritz Ernemann** defects to the global firm from Latham & Watkins. Ernemann, who is New York qualified, advises on capital markets and securities regulation matters with a particular focus on high-yield debt securities.

◆ **Hausfeld**

A competition catch for the US-based disputes boutique as it elevates **Daniel Hunt** from Freshfields, where he was a counsel. Hunt covers a wide range of contentious antitrust matters, with particular experience in collective actions.

◆ **HCR Law**

The national firm (formerly Harrison Clark Rickerbys) welcomes litigator **Dipti Hunter** from London boutique Keidan Harrison. Hunter advises on an eclectic range of disputes including commercial litigation, arbitration and asset tracing.

◆ **HFW**

The shipping-flavoured outfit elevates litigator **Anna Fomina** from Clyde & Co, where she was a legal director. Fomina advises on international trade, dry shipping and commercial disputes

encompassing the oil, gas, petroleum, chemical products, and metals sectors.

◆ **Hunton Andrews Kurth**

The Virginia headquartered outfit continues its year-long rolling raid on EY Law swiping its 5th and 6th laterals from the big four outfit this year in the form of energy & project finance duo **Harry Brunt** and **Simon Collier**. The pair team-up with two other energy & projects laterals – **Charles Morrison** and **Dimitri Papaefstratiou** (whose moves were reported in our [79th edition](#)); as well as asset finance specialists **Alan Cunningham** and **Richard Skipper** (reported in our [83rd edition](#)). All six defect from EY Law and share a long history of working together – before joining EY Law the sextet worked at DLA Piper for an extended period.

◆ **JMW Solicitors**

Private client specialist **Jonathan Kropman** arrives at the Manchester headquartered outfit from Trowers & Hamlins where he was head of private wealth until March this year. Kropman works across all aspects of private wealth including privacy, family holdings structures, family governance, the impact of regulation, information exchange and tax transparency.

◆ **K&L Gates**

Restructuring specialist **Sonya Van de Graaff** arrives from fellow US firm Katten. Van de Graaff advises on cross-border restructurings, distressed debt, special sits and non-performing loan auctions.

◆ **Kirkland & Ellis**

Four additions (one lateral and three verticals) for this year's most prolific hirer as it welcomes fund finance partner **Andrew Husdan** from Clifford Chance and elevates: corporate lawyer **Merih Altay** from Millbank, where he was a counsel; corporate lawyer **Jeremy Wilkins** from A&O Shearman, where he was a senior associate; and debt finance specialist **Alexander Bond** from

Cahill, where he was an associate. Although part of the general banking team at Clifford Chance, Husdan specialises in fund finance, advising both sponsors and borrowers on syndicated and bilateral matters. Altay and Wilkins advise private equity sponsors and their portfolio companies on M&A and other corporate matters across the investment cycle. Bond, covers a range of debt finance with a particular angle in leveraged finance.

◆ **Mantle Law**

The Abu Dhabi headquartered construction and arbitration disputes boutique welcomes in-house lawyer **James Pratt** from global built environment collective Arup, where he was UKIMEA general counsel.

◆ **Mayer Brown**

Corporate lateral **Ross Montgomery** makes the switch from fellow global firm Dechert. Montgomery advises on M&A, fund raisings, reorganisations, joint ventures and other corporate matters with a particular focus on the financial services, insurance, TMT, sports, hospitality and leisure sectors.

◆ **Mishcon de Reya**

Three hires for the London firm as it adds: TMT lawyer and new head of video games **Nick Allan** from Lewis Silkin, where he was head of interactive entertainment; product liability lateral **Shazia Yamin** from Leigh Day; and technology specialist **Toby McCrindle** from online scale-up platform SeedLegals, where he was the chief legal officer. Allan advises on commercial contracts and the IP and regulatory issues surrounding the video games and other interactive entertainment sectors. Yamin specialises in large scale product liability matters, largely acting for claimant and consumer groups. McCrindle joins the innovation department where he will predominately advise new and developing technology companies.

✔ **Osborne Clarke**

IP lateral **John Linneker** joins the Bristol headquartered firm from rival Fieldfisher. Linneker predominately focuses on IP disputes related to trademarks, copyright designs and confidential information.

✔ **Paul Hastings**

The West Coast firm welcomes IP litigator **Alex Morgan** from international IP boutique EIP. Morgan, a solicitor-advocate, covers patent litigation and strategy across a range of industries including telecoms, electronics and pharmaceuticals.

✔ **Payne Hicks Beech**

Two hires from Withers for the Lincoln's Inn firm as it welcomes commercial property lawyer **Peter Lamb** and elevates private client lawyer **Phineas Hirsch**, who was a senior associate at his former firm. Lamb advises on both real estate investment and development as well as some larger residential property schemes. Hirsch assists high net worth families and trustees with succession and tax planning and the creation and management of trusts.

✔ **Pillsbury**

International arbitration and disputes specialist **Laurence Lieberman** is welcomed by the US firm from Taylor Wessing. Lieberman, who previously led Taylor Wessing's India group, predominately advises on disputes relating to life sciences, technology, fintech and crypto.

✔ **Pinsent Masons**

Double-tap! The international firm adds real estate duo **Tim Webb** and **Emma Maher** from K&L Gates. The pair, who previously moved together from Greenberg Traurig [in 2019](#), cover a range of commercial and mixed-use real estate, with a particular angle advising investors in the residential build-to-rent sector.

✔ **Proskauer Rose**

The New York firm makes two finance additions: structured products savant **John Goldfinch**, who re-emerges after departing from A&O Shearman earlier this year; and leveraged finance/high yield specialist **Courtland (Court) Tisdale** from Cahill, where he was a counsel. Goldfinch specialises in structured finance, with a focus on collateralized loan obligations (CLOs). New York qualified Tisdale, a vertical hire who started in September, is part of a team move with laterals **Jake Keaveny** and **Warren Newton** reported in our [July-August edition](#).

✔ **RPC**

Corporate technology lateral **Andrew McMillan** joins the insurance flavoured firm from Dentons. McMillan advises on a wide range of corporate M&A and data governance matters in the TMT sector.

✔ **Russell-Cooke**

The London-based firm poaches **Conor Brindley** from EY Law where he was onetime head of the law tax team. Brindley advises on both corporate and real estate tax matters.

✔ **Shoosmiths**

Professional negligence and contentious financial services lawyer **Peter Richards-Gaskin** joins the financial services disputes and investigations practice at the national firm from TLT. Richards-Gaskin advises on commercial professional negligence and contentious financial services matters.

✔ **Sidley Austin**

A brace of laterals for the Chicago outfit which welcomes: TMT disputes lawyer **Clive Gringas** from CMS, where he was head of TMT; and leveraged finance specialist **Tania Bedi** from Latham & Watkins, where she co-chaired the London finance team. Gringas, who joins the commercial litigation and disputes practice, advises on contentious TMT, investigations,

related anti-trust and a range of AI and cyber matters. Bedi covers debt finance and restructuring, with a particular focus on leveraged finance. Bedi is the eighth lateral from Latham & Watkins to join the Illinois firm this year in what is (likely) a staggered team move comprising a sextet of sponsor-side leverage finance specialists and a pair of US securities laterals.

◆ **Simmons & Simmons**

A vertical hire for the City blue-blood as it welcomes construction lawyer **Marianne Toghill** from Clifford Chance where she was the (non-partner) head of UK real estate construction. Toghill covers non-contentious construction matters with a focus on those relating to urban regeneration, data centres, healthcare and life sciences.

◆ **Simpson Thacher**

Chain reaction... Following the loss of its two-partner leverage finance team - comprising **Ian Barratt** and **Sinead O'Shea** - to Kirkland & Ellis [last year](#) (a gap which Kirkland & Ellis had to fill after itself [losing a storied leverage finance team](#), to the [then] newly re-launched Paul Weiss); Simpson Thacher has, at last, fully restocked. This edition sees no fewer than three new leverage finance laterals join the elite New Yorker which welcomes: a two-partner Sidley Austin team comprising **Bryan Robson** and **William Gwyn**; and a Linklaters lateral – **Dan Peach**. The Sidley duo - who previously moved to Sidley Austin together from Kirkland & Ellis in 2016 - cover leveraged finance, specialist credit opportunities and distressed investing. Peach advises private equity funds, borrowers and portfolio companies on acquisition financing along with other leveraged finance transactions.

◆ **Skadden**

IP lateral **Deborah Kirk**, decamps to the Wall Street firm from Latham & Watkins, where she was head of transactional IP in London. Kirk specialises in intellectual property and technology transactions, with a particular focus on tech-related matters specifically with e-commerce and consumer brands.

◆ **Stephenson Harwood**

Three new faces for the international firm as it welcomes: planning and environment lateral **Feroze (Fez) Abbas** from K&L Gates; corporate lateral and China specialist **Jay Ze** from the (now defunct) Beijing office of Eversheds Sutherland, where he was the managing partner; and TMT lawyer **Sally Samadi** from Clifford Chance, where she was a senior associate. Abbas, who will head up the planning and environmental law practice at his new firm, has a mixed planning and environmental practice covering public sector governance and vires, as well as housing regulation. Ze, who joins his new firm in London before transferring back to Asia, advises Chinese state-owned enterprises, sovereign wealth funds and privately-owned companies on in-bound and out-bound China related M&A, investments and projects. Samadi, who joins the IP, tech and data practice, advises on a range of technology agreements including outsourcings, commercial contracts, data protection and cyber security.

◆ **White & Case**

Three hires (two laterals and one vertical) for the New York firm as it welcomes: corporate M&A specialist **Richard Browne** from A&O Shearman, where he was one-time global co-head of legacy Allen & Overy's corporate practice; finance lateral **Emma Russell** from Haynes Boone, where she was London head of finance; and technology lawyer **Michael Evans** from Clifford Chance, where he was a counsel. Although Browne specialises in public takeover bids (both hostile and recommended) he also has extensive

experience of private M&A, joint venture and equity capital markets transactions. Russell covers loan finance, with a particular focus on fund finance. Evans deals with the technology aspects of corporate transactions as well as tech regulation, IP/IT, data and commercial contracts.

[Edwards Gibson Partner Round-Up –
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The Specialist Partner Team



Scott Gibson
Director
scott.gibson@edwardsgibson.com
+44 (0) 7788 454080



Sloane Poulton
Director
sloane.poulton@edwardsgibson.com
+44 (0) 7967 603402

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Please contact us on +44 (0) 20 7153 4903

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