



# Law Firm Partner Moves in London

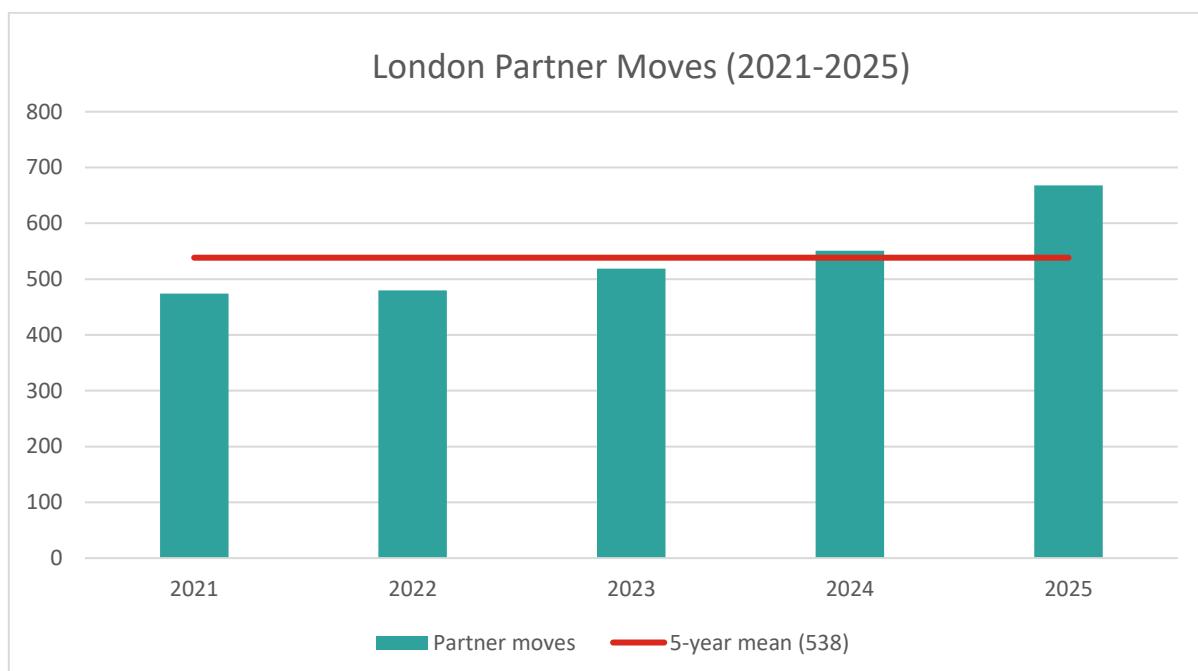
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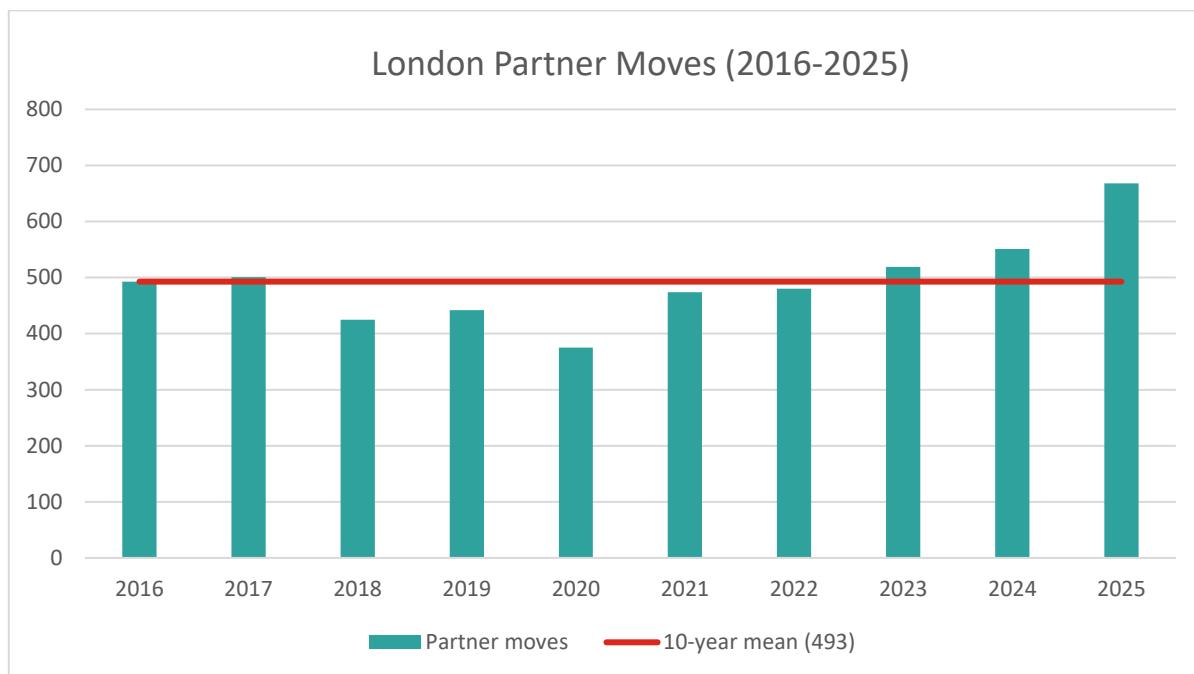
Welcome to the 90<sup>th</sup> edition of Law Firm Partner Moves in London, from the specialist partner team at Edwards Gibson, where we look back at announced partner-level recruitment activity in London over the past two months and give you a 'who's moved where' update. Our records go back to 2007, and this is [our methodology](#). This edition concludes our Law Firm Partner Moves in London for 2025 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 2025

There were **668** partner moves announced in 2025. Our records go back to 2007, and this is by far the highest number ever recorded in a single year – **21%** up on the previous record - **551** - which was set last year, and **24%** and **36%** up on the cumulative five and ten-year averages respectively.

This upward surge continues an escalating three-year bull run of law firm partner hires in London - the cyclical and structural reasons for which we explore in more detail below.





*Figure note: The ten-year rolling graph shows the (then) record years for partner hiring - 2016 and 2017 – these were both significantly higher than any previous years up to that point, due to the market shock created by the collapse of KWM Europe (at the time a Top 20 law firm) in December 2016. Post-covid law firm partner hiring has seen “real term” record hiring every single year, with the last three-years showing exponential acceleration.*

As is often the case in our year-end edition, the most acquisitive firm of the year was **Kirkland & Ellis** which, aided by its scale and “up-or-out” partnership structure, hired **19** partners (albeit only 5 were laterals). Next up was: **Addleshaw Goddard, Baker McKenzie, Fladgate and White & Case** which snapped up **14**, (with nine of the Fladgate joiners being émigrés from the collapsed Memery Crystal); then **Charles Russell Speechlys** which hired **12** partners.

#### ❖ Top partner recruiters in London 2025

Top partner recruiters in London 2025	Total hires	Lateral hires
Kirkland & Ellis	19	5
Addleshaw Goddard	14	9
Baker McKenzie	14	12
Fladgate	14	14

White & Case	14	8
Charles Russell Speechlys	12	7
Proskauer	11	7
Simmons & Simmons	11	9
DLA Piper	10	9
Eversheds Sutherland	10	5
Jones Day	10	9
Shoosmiths	10	8
Stephenson Harwood	10	7
DWF	9	7
Gibson Dunn	9	8
Paul Hastings	9	8
Paul Weiss	9	7
Pinsent Masons	9	9
Squire Patton Boggs	9	6

❖ **Top partner recruiters in London 2025 (partnership to partnership moves only)**

Top partner recruiters in London 2025	Lateral hires
Fladgate	14
Baker McKenzie	12
Addleshaw Goddard	9
DLA Piper	9
Jones Day	9
Pinsent Masons	9
Simmons & Simmons	9
Gibson Dunn	8
Latham & Watkins	8
Paul Hastings	8
Shoosmiths	8
White & Case	8



## ❖ Team hires 2025

The most sizeable multi-partner team move in 2025 was **Flaggate**'s rescue of a mixed nine-partner corporate, finance and real estate team from (the now defunct) Memery Crystal in February. Followed by **DWF** which swiped a quintet of shipping/marine laterals from Kennedys. Meanwhile, three firms hired four-partner teams: **Haynes Boone** (corporate) from Memery Crystal; **Milbank** (infrastructure) from White & Case; and **Orrick** (CLOs and structured finance) from Cadwalader.

In addition, seven firms hired three-partner teams: **Freshfields** (energy & infrastructure from Paul Hastings); **Goodwin** (private equity from Paul Hastings); **Joseph Hage Aaronson & Bremen** (construction disputes from Quinn Emanuel); **Mayer Brown** (private capital from Dechert); **Pinsent Masons** (IP from Deloitte Legal); **Sidley Austin** (private funds from Weil); and **White & Case** (IP from A&O Shearman\* as well as a separate three-partner private equity team from Ropes & Gray).

\* Including one vertical move from A&O Shearman's Belfast office.

**A&O Shearman** and **Paul Hastings** suffered the highest attrition in 2025 – losing **19** serving partners to rivals – followed closely by the collapsing (and now defunct) **Memery Crystal** which lost **18**, and **Kirkland & Ellis** and **White & Case** both losing **15**.

## ❖ Firms with largest attrition in 2025 (partnership to partnership moves only)

Highest partner attrition	No. laterals lost
A&O Shearman	19**
Paul Hastings	19
Memery Crystal	18
Kirkland & Ellis	15

White & Case	15
DLA Piper	11
Kennedys	10
Ashurst	9
Dechert	9
Goodwin	9
Eversheds Sutherland	8
EY Law	8
Stephenson Harwood	8

\*\* Excludes a lateral move from A&O Shearman (Singapore) to Osborne Clarke in London.

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



At first glance it seems puzzling that, despite the UK's lacklustre economy law firm partner hiring has accelerated sharply over the past three years, defying the broader economic drag. The reasons for this seeming paradox are both cyclical and structural.

**(i) Size matters – the need for scale**

Even prior to the rise of generative AI, at the top, Big Law leadership has seen scale—built through organic growth and, frequently, mergers—as critical to winning complex cross border mandates and obtaining (or sustaining) “Global Elite” positioning. The advent of generative AI has catalysed this, reinforcing the view that significant spending on technology and data is now table stakes. To fund this while preserving profitability, upper quartile firms have continued to bulk up and, in parallel, prune lower margin or conflict heavy practices. The result is more concentrated demand for high end partners and intensified movement at the top, while simultaneously creating attractive “cast off” opportunities for firms further down the pecking order to acquire perfectly profitable (albeit lower margin) practices. A version of that same process has been playing out, *mutatis mutandis*, in the mid-tier.

**(ii) Law firm’s sustained bets on private-capital hires**

Edwards Gibson has previously stressed the outsized impact of US law firms [pumping hundreds of millions of dollars into London on private capital related investment hires](#). Despite private equity market fundamentals being comparatively weak, in 2025 US law firms (and many UK rivals) remained locked in this private capital arms race, which continued to fund partner compensation and team build outs. This wave, which has been supercharged since 2023 – has proved remarkably resilient with law firms both doubling down and finding new, relatively under-lawyered, areas for growth. For example, 2025 has seen once niche, sub-sectors, such as private equity real estate (PERE), increase from just one partner hire in 2021, to 15 partners in 2025.

**(iii) Partnership model shifts at elite US firms**

Over the past three years, formerly all-equity US firms have widely adopted two-tier—or otherwise more flexible—partnership models. This has made it much easier for those firms to both hire day-one partners, and to stretch equity to lure rainmakers in London. That same flexibility can also be a push-factor for “lifers” (including non-partners moving for day one partnership elsewhere) who have seen the DNA of their “forever firm” changing, thus loosening their institutional loyalty and increasing churn.

**(iv) English law’s gravitational pull makes London a private capital deals hub**

Regardless of the UK’s domestic economy, London’s role as the world’s second largest law market rests on English law’s gravitational pull for global deals. US private capital has reinforced the centrality of the New York–London axis with US firms rarely investing for UK domestic work alone; rather they are scaling City benches to serve the world’s biggest funds and corporates transacting under English law.

**(v) Litigation funders – Class act(s)?**

The rise of funding and group actions has added oxygen to contentious hiring. While funding cycles track private equity style capital and interest rates, legal changes—unless reversed—may also have begun to entrench a larger structural demand for disputes partners. The UK's collective actions regime (especially in the Competition Appeal Tribunal [CAT]) and the maturation, and potential reform, of third-party funding continue to expand the active docket, even as courts scrutinise funder terms and class representation more closely. 2024–2025 saw milestone settlements and judgements, a busier CAT calendar, and policy attention via the Civil Justice Council's review of litigation funding—all of which have sustained demand for senior contentious talent in competition, securities and ESG adjacent claims.

**(vi) Disruption and instability**

All of the above is causing disruption. As platforms reconfigure (often linked to consolidation and profitability drives), partner mobility spikes—even within otherwise steady practice areas. When firms merge, partner attrition typically rises before and after the coupling as practice overlaps, client conflicts, partner egos and relative-contribution issues play out. For example, in 2025 recently merged **A&O Shearman** recorded the joint highest number of lateral departures – nearly 3% of all moves. Once-rare law firm collapses, for example the [demise of Axiom Ince \(2023\)](#) and [Memery Crystal \(2025\)](#), dumped dozens of hapless partners into the market whose scramble to find new homes has been reflected in the figures. Elsewhere, strategy resets—such as the Big Four accounting firms' (almost) [wholesale retreat from Big Law](#)—have had similar effects. 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.

**Can this bull run last? - our view on sustainability**

Short answer: no—not at the current rate. The cyclical tailwinds (private-capital surges, funding cycles, disruption bursts) will ebb. At the top there are only so many star private equity, debt finance and private funds teams left who have not moved, or can move again. Moreover, beyond a small cadre of super-elite law firms, the economics of star hires is difficult to justify. But several structural factors—tech/data investment needs, consolidation, and flexible partnership architecture—should keep London's run-rate above 10-year averages in the short term, even if hiring moderates into a higher plateau rather than another year of record acceleration.

**What is not (yet) moving the dial**

Private equity investment into law firms themselves has, so far, had only a limited and not yet measurable impact on partner move volumes in London. If it catalyses further structural change —

and with top 20 global firms like McDermott Will & Schulte seemingly giving the model serious consideration, it is clearly something Big Law cannot completely ignore — we would expect that to feed through in future years.

### ❖ Merger Movers - Big Law Year End Tie-Ups

Ever since Clifford Chance merged with New York firm Rogers & Wells back in 2000, legal commentators have predicted a wave of transatlantic law firm mergers. However, while there have certainly been a handful of high-profile tie-ups over the years, most took the form of verein-like combinations (i.e., they did not share a single global profit pool) — which some critics say is akin to cheating.

Then, last year, Allen & Overy hitched up with Shearman & Sterling to form **A&O Shearman** and, earlier this year, Herbert Smith Freehills and Kramer Levin followed suit to create **Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer**. Suddenly, the last two months of 2025 saw the announcement of three more transatlantic tie-ups in quick succession:

- Ashurst with Perkins Coie to form **Ashurst Perkins Coie**;
- Winston & Strawn with (most of) Taylor Wessing to form **Winston Taylor**; and
- Hogan Lovells with Cadwalader Wickersham & Taft to form **Hogan Lovells Cadwalader**.



This suggests that the quarter-century-old prophecy may finally be coming to pass. Significantly, if approved, all five of the merged entities will operate as fully integrated global partnerships with single profit pools. So too will the product of Big Law's other notable merger this year — **McDermott Will & Shulte** — which, although not “transatlantic” (as it involved two US-headquartered firms), nevertheless integrated the London offices of its legacy firms McDermott Will & Emery and Schulte Roth & Zabel.

*2025 saw recently merged A&O Shearman suffer the joint highest attrition figures of any firm in London – 19 partners - (12 from legacy Allen & Overy and 7 from legacy Shearman & Sterling).*

The reason law firm combinations are so often followed by spikes in partner moves is that mergers typically trigger elevated partner attrition (some planned) — both immediately before and after the coupling — as practice overlaps, client conflicts, partner egos, and issues around relative contribution almost always come into play. These pressures become exponentially greater when the proposed combination involves a fully integrated partnership with a single profit pool and, where shared geography requires legacy offices to physically integrate.

Indeed, 2025 saw newly merged **A&O Shearman** suffer the joint-highest attrition figures of any firm in London: 19 partners (12 from legacy Allen & Overy and 7 from legacy Shearman & Sterling). Notwithstanding A&O Shearman's public commitment to trim its global partnership by 10% in post-merger cuts, Edwards Gibson estimates that the firm would probably have preferred to retain all but four or five of those who departed (i.e., between 75%–80%).

*— the current wave of transatlantic tie-ups is unprecedented in scope and, given the shift to fully integrated partnerships with single global profit pools (and, in most instances, physical office integration), will inevitably produce more merger-driven partner moves in aggregate.*

As far as London goes, whilst the merits and challenges of each of the combinations mentioned above vary widely — and some firms will experience far greater disruption than others — the current wave of transatlantic tie-ups is unprecedented in scope and, given the shift to fully integrated partnerships with single global profit pools (and, in most instances, physical office integration), will inevitably produce more merger-driven partner moves in aggregate. To the extent this occurs, the figures will, of course, be captured in future editions of *Edwards Gibson's Partner Moves in London*.

### ❖ Poor Hastings

Although **A&O Shearman** and **Paul Hastings** suffered the joint highest rate of attrition (both losing **19** partners to rivals), due to its much smaller London office, the hit to Paul Hastings was proportionally far greater with the Los Angeles spawned firm losing more than a third of its London line-up from the start of the year\*\*\*.

The departures comprised no fewer than five separate teams as well as a number of individuals, some of whom had global or departmental management responsibilities including: the Global Second Managing Partner and Vice Chair of International Tax; the Global Co-Chair of Corporate; the European Head of Funds; the European Head of Real Estate; and most recently, the Vice Chair of Global Private Equity and Head of London Private Equity.

Against this, the firm has made **9** partner hires in London (eight laterals and one vertical), over half of whom joined the firm in the last two months of the year (see full write up below).

\*\*\* According to *The Lawyer*, Paul Hastings had 56 partners in London in 2024.

### ❖ Genesis and Exodus – one US law firm launches whilst another flees London

Over the summer Los Angeles headquartered full-service law firm **Michelman Robinson** [launched a London office](#) (which for some reason only became official in October) and, so far, has hired **5** corporate crime and disputes partners. The firm, which falls outside of the AmLaw 200, is a comparative minnow by Big Law standards. Nevertheless, despite having fewer than 40 partners at launch, it boasts 7 Stateside offices.

By contrast, in January the Kansas-headquartered firm **Shook, Hardy & Bacon** announced the closure of its London office. As part of this realignment, the firm's two managing partners transitioned to **CMS**, bolstering that firm's contentious product liability practice. Never large, the reasonably obscure disputes focused US firm was once known for big-ticket tobacco litigation and, along with (now defunct) **LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene & MacRae**, for having the most carnivorous sounding name in town.

❖ **Memery Loss** - the collapse of a storied London firm also elevated the 2025 figures



In a further blow to the listed law firm model, **RBG Holdings**, the parent company of London firm **Memery Crystal**, and disputes boutique **Rosenblatt**, collapsed. This followed a period of intense speculation and various attempts to source funds. Whilst the eponymous Ian Rosenblatt managed to regain control of his former firm (which, then successfully separated from RBG Holdings as **Rosenblatt Law Limited**), unfortunately, the near 50-year-old storied commercial law firm Memery Crystal did not survive the tumult.

Of its **35** partners, pre-collapse, Edwards Gibson has tracked **26** to new homes although, in accordance with our methodology, only **18** of these lateral émigrés qualified for inclusion in our bi-monthly reports which recorded moves to: **Blake Morgan** (one partner); **Edwin Coe** (two partners), **Fladgate** (nine partners), and **Haynes Boone** (five partners).

In addition, life rafts were provided by **Lawrence Stephens** (which took a four-partner real estate team who joined as non-partners) and alternative law firm **Keystone Law** which also welcomed four.

❖ **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 Law welcomed **33** relevant partners in 2025.

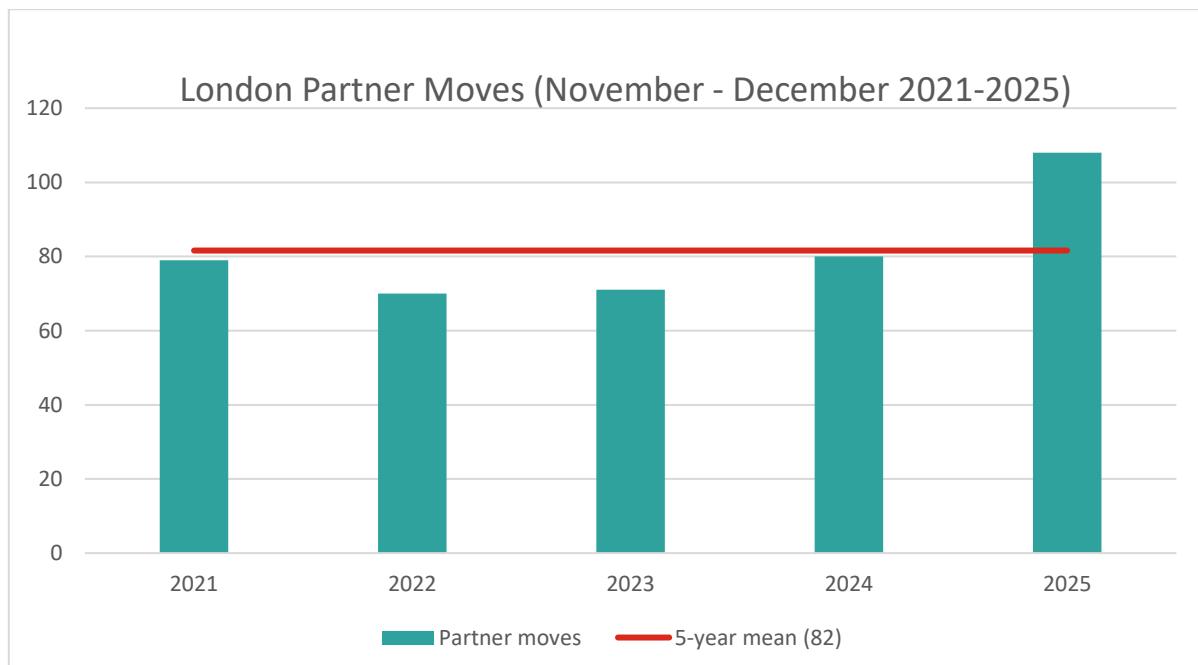
### ❖ Other Fun Facts in 2025

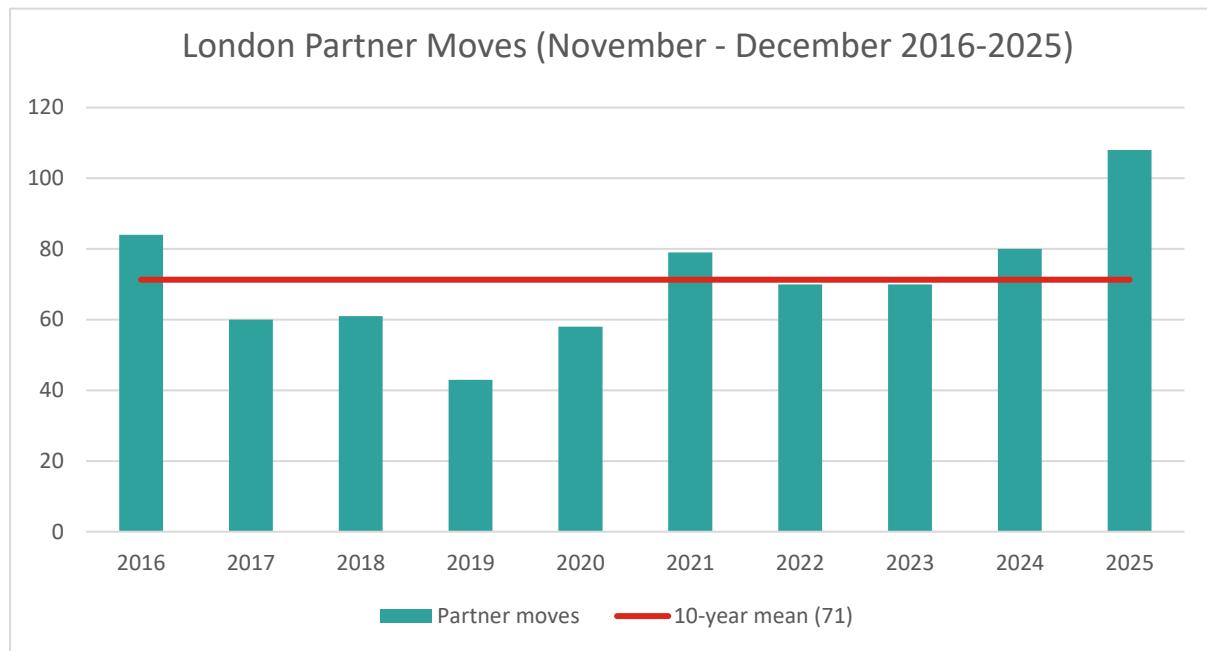
- **31%** of moves this year were female (**205**) – over the past five years this figure has ranged from 26% to 32%.
- **5%** of all hires (**34**) were from in-house or business.
- **21%** of all moves (**141**) were vertical promotions (non-partnership law firm roles to partnership upon moving to another law firm).

### ❖ November – December 2025

This bi-monthly round-up contains **108** partner moves, which is **35%** up on the **80** we saw for the same period last year; **32%** up on the cumulative five-year average (**82**); and **51%** up on the cumulative ten-year average of (**71**) for the same period.

The number comfortably exceeds the previous record for the same period (**84**) set in 2016 following the collapse of KWM Europe (at the time a Top 20 law firm) in December of that year.





The most covetous firms this edition were **Addleshaw Goddard, Baker McKenzie and Paul Hastings**, which each hired **5** partners. They were followed by **DLA Piper, Goodwin, Hill Dickinson, and Kirkland & Ellis** which all hired **4** apiece; then **Charles Russell Speechlys, Eversheds Sutherland and Simons Muirhead Burton**, which hired **3** partners each.

#### ◆ Top partner recruiters in London November – December 2025

Addleshaw Goddard	5	(3 laterals)
Baker McKenzie	5	(3 laterals)
Paul Hastings	5	(5 laterals)
DLA Piper	4	(4 laterals)
Goodwin	4	(4 laterals)
Hill Dickinson	4	(3 laterals)
Kirkland & Ellis	4	(1 lateral)
Charles Russell Speechlys	3	(2 laterals)
Eversheds Sutherland	3	(3 laterals)
Simons Muirhead Burton	3	(0 laterals)

In addition, **12** firms hired 2 partners each: **Akin Gump, Baker Botts, Browne Jacobson, Hamllins, Jones Day, McDermott Will & Schulte, Morrison Foerster, Pillsbury, Proskauer, Reed Smith, Sullivan & Cromwell** and **Trowers & Hamllins**.

On the other side of the coin, following its recently announced merger, **Ashurst** suffered the highest attrition over the same period, losing **4** lateral partners in London, followed by **DLA Piper, Kirkland & Ellis, Morrison Foerster** and **Paul Hastings** each losing **3** partners.

❖ **Firms with largest attrition in November – December 2025 (partnership to partnership moves only)**

Ashurst	4
DLA Piper	3
Kirkland & Ellis	3
Morrison Foerster	3
Paul Hastings	3



❖ **Team hires November – December 2025**

The most sizeable multi-partner team move this round-up was **Goodwin's** hire of a corporate private equity trio from Paul Hastings which included the firm's Vice Chair of Global Private Equity and Head of London Private Equity.

In addition, six firms hired two-partner teams: **Akin Gump** (private equity from Ropes & Gray); **Baker Botts** (projects and energy from Vinson & Elkins); **Baker McKenzie** (equity capital markets from Ashurst); **Eversheds Sutherland** (corporate insurance and tax from DLA Piper); **Jones Day**

(project finance from Gowling WLG); and **Sullivan & Cromwell** (private equity and tax from Kirkland & Ellis).

#### ❖ **Other Fun Facts November – December 2025**

- **31%** of moves this edition were female (**34**).
- **7** firms hired from in-house or business: **Addleshaw Goddard** (from Patron Capital), **Baker McKenzie** (from Citibank), **Browne Jacobson** (from Barclays); **Mishcon de Reya** (from Deloitte), **Reed Smith** (from Leicester City F.C.), **Simons Muirhead Burton** (from The Akuna Group and the Serious Fraud Office) and **Ropes & Gray** (from EQT).
- **34%** of all moves (**37**) 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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**Please click [here](#) to understand our methodology for compiling Partner Moves**

#### ◆ A&O Shearman

Full (magic) circle! Previously a counsel at legacy Allen & Overy, incentives and employment lawyer **Louise Batty** defects to the transatlantic giant from Skadden, where she was a counsel. Batty, who led the executive compensation and benefits practice group at Skadden, advises listed companies, high-growth enterprises and start-ups on executive compensation, incentives, and remuneration.

#### ◆ Addleshaw Goddard

Arriving at the suave new Lothbury offices of the international firm are a quintet of new faces: energy finance lateral **Tomas Gärdfors**, who joins as head of transition finance from Baker Botts; corporate real estate savant **Farhod Moghadam** from private equity real estate fund Patron Capital, where he was senior adviser and lead counsel; projects and social infrastructure lateral **Laura Coates** from Clyde & Co; pensions specialist **Paul Feathers** from Gowling WLG; and corporate crime vertical **Nicholas Queree** from Slaughter and May, where he was a senior counsel. Gärdfors focuses on debt solutions, including debt financing facilities for leveraged acquisitions, project finance, holdco financings and other structured finance transactions, in the European energy transition space. Moghadam, a corporate M&A and JV deals specialist, advises on pan-European private equity real estate and private credit transactions. Coates handles operational PPP/PFI and social infrastructure projects, including PFI disputes. Feathers, a non-contentious pensions expert, specialises in advising insurers and trustees on pension risk transfer matters. Queree counsels corporates on global enforcement and internal investigations as well as sanctions and regulatory compliance.

#### ◆ Akin Gump

The Texan born firm bolsters its private equity offering, pinching corporate duo **Dan Oates** and **Angela Becker** from Boston spawned Ropes & Gray, where Oates was global co-head of the

private equity industry group. The pair, who previously moved together from Fried Frank in 2022, handle cross-border acquisitions and leveraged buyouts, disposals, public-to-private transactions and minority investments.

#### ◆ Arnold & Porter

In a vertical move, life sciences specialist **George Jenkins** arrives at fellow Washington DC headquartered outfit from Covington & Burling, where he was a special counsel. Jenkins advises life science and digital health entities on commercial and regulatory matters including: joint ventures, IP licensing and co-development arrangements.

#### ◆ Ashfords

Private client lawyer **Thomas Middlehurst** joins the Exeter headquartered firm from Blake Morgan. Middlehurst advises high-net-worth individuals, executors, trustees and charities on contentious trusts, probate and property ownership disputes.

#### ◆ Ashurst

Ahead of its announced transatlantic merger with Perkins Coie, the international firm elevates corporate private equity lawyer **Amy Barker** from Linklaters, where she was a managing associate. Barker counsels financial sponsors on acquisitions, JVs and divestments as well as portfolio management, and general corporate governance.

#### ◆ Baker Botts

Texas two-step! A two-partner energy team, led by **Alexander Msimang** and accompanied by **Nadine Amr**, jump ship from fellow Houston headquartered outfit Vinson & Elkins. Msimang, who was managing partner of Vinson & Elkins' London office for 13 years, and Amr advise on global energy M&A with a focus on project development and regulatory advisory work.

#### ◆ **Baker McKenzie**

Five hires for the global verein which nabs: equity capital markets duo **Simon Bullock** and **Stuart Rubin** from Ashurst, where Bullock was head of equity capital markets, and New York qualified Rubin, was co-head of US securities; energy and infrastructure specialist **Elisabeth Moseley** from McDermott Will & Schulte; real estate finance lawyer **Luke Harber** from Citibank, where he was a director; and data/cyber vertical **Adele Harrison** from Orrick, where she was a senior associate. Bullock and Rubin, who are amongst Ashurst's first lateral departures since its recently announced transatlantic tie-up with US firm Perkins Coie, advise underwriters, issuers and investment funds on a range of equity capital markets transactions including IPOs, rights issues and equity placings. Moseley handles M&A, in the oil & gas and mining, energy and natural resources sectors. Harber's practice focuses on real estate finance, structured lending and capital market transactions across Europe. Harrison advises on cybersecurity matters, including data breaches and regulatory investigations.

#### ◆ **BCLP**

Swiping its second finance lateral from Taylor Wessing this year, the Anglo-American firm welcomes **Fiona Coady** to its corporate & finance transactions department. Coady advises lenders and borrowers on an eclectic range of banking and finance matters including: margin lending, fund finance, acquisition finance, receivables and asset-based lending.

#### ◆ **Browne Jacobson**

Double Adam! Joining the national firm's financial & professional risks team are: lateral **Adam Culy** from Stephenson Harwood; and in-house lawyer **Adam Berry** from Barclays, where he was a legal counsel. Culy advises on professional indemnity claims and regulatory investigations defence as well as risk management advice for accountants. Berry covers FCA/PRA enforcement actions and

regulatory enquiries including supervision, authorisation and internal investigations.

#### ◆ **Charles Russell Speechlys**

A trio of hires (two laterals and one vertical) for the London headquartered firm which welcomes: intellectual property lateral **Robert Lundie Smith** from boutique IP firm EIP, where he was head of UK patent disputes; corporate real estate specialist **Edward ("Ed") Morgan** from Fladgate; and tax vertical **Vadim Romanoff** from Clifford Chance, where he was a legal director. Lundie Smith advises on patent litigation with a focus on patent infringement and validity disputes. Morgan advises on corporate real estate including JVs and M&A transactions for corporate wrapped real estate assets. Romanoff focuses on UK and international tax matters, including the structuring of private investment funds, family offices, and corporate transactions.

#### ◆ **Clarke Willmott**

The Bristol headquartered national firm adds corporate lateral **Oksana Howard** from Thames Valley outfit Blaser Mills Law, where she was head of corporate and M&A. Howard advises owner-managed businesses, entrepreneurs, high-net-worth individuals, and SMEs on management buy-outs, M&A, JVs and reorganisations and investments.

#### ◆ **Cleary Gottlieb**

Competition litigation specialist **Raif Hassan** decamps from fellow New York firm White & Case. Although Hassan has broad commercial litigation experience, in his new role, he will primarily focus on anti-trust disputes drawing on his extensive experience of competition follow-on, standalone, and class action matters.

#### ◆ **CMS**

A vertical hire for the verein-like international firm as transition finance specialist **Rowena van de Grampel** joins from HSF Kramer, where she was of counsel. Van de Grampel advises on

project financing in the energy transition and infrastructure project sector, focusing on decarbonisation, clean energy, and electricity interconnectors.

#### Cooley

Financial services regulatory lateral **Charlotte Witherington** makes the move to the Silicon Valley spawned outfit from Taylor Wessing. Witherington's non-contentious financial services practice spans a range of sectors, with a particular angle on fintech, payments and financial technology.

#### DAC Beachcroft

In a vertical hire, the insurance flavoured national firm adds corporate insurance lawyer **Marcus Gwyer** from A&O Shearman, where he was a senior associate. Gwyer acts for both life and non-life clients on an eclectic range of matters including M&A, Part VII transfers, structured (re)insurance arrangements, pension de-risking and regulatory advice.

#### Doyle Clayton

Prodigal Daughter! The employment boutique welcomes back employment lawyer **Naomi Sansom**, who rejoins her former firm from EY Law, where she was a director. Sansom advises on HR projects and investigations for corporates but also has historic expertise in contentious employment matters.

#### DLA Piper

A quartet of laterals for the global firm which welcomes: structured finance and fintech specialist **Paul Landless** from Clifford Chance in Singapore; leveraged finance lawyer **Richard Hughes** from Goodwin; corporate lawyer **Markjan van Schaardenburgh** from Ashurst; and private funds specialist **Oliver Crowley** from Pinsent Masons. Landless, who was co-head of fintech at his former firm, counsels a wide range of market participants on cross-border transactions and regulatory challenges, including

structured finance, derivatives, structured notes and securities financing. Hughes advises sponsors, portfolio and other companies on leveraged finance transactions across various sectors, including technology, healthcare and life sciences. Schaardenburgh covers downstream private equity and M&A across Europe and sub-Saharan Africa. Crowley specialises in LP fund representation, advising large institutional investors on their private market portfolios including primaries, secondaries, restructurings and GP stakes.

#### DWF

The once-listed, now private equity owned, firm strengthens its insolvency bench with the addition of vertical **Rory White-Andrews** from HSF Kramer, where he was a senior associate. White-Andrews counsels a wide range of market participants on restructuring, insolvency and related finance matters.

#### Eversheds Sutherland

Three laterals for the Anglo-American outfit which welcomes: a two-partner team from DLA comprising corporate insurance specialist **Laura Marcelli** and insurance flavoured tax lateral **Matt Davies**; as well as corporate lawyer **Simon Arlington** from Morrison Foerster. Marcelli covers transactional risk insurance (TRI) including warranty and indemnity and tax liability insurance. Davies, a DLA lifer, focuses on international tax, M&A structuring and reorganisations. Arlington handles M&A, investments and private equity transactions, with a particular angle on technology-driven deals.

#### Fenchurch Law

Poacher turned gamekeeper. The policy holder insurance boutique, recruits insurance litigator **Christopher (Chris) Wilkes** from DAC Beachcroft. Wilkes covers product liability, property damage, construction and professional indemnity and, until now, has acted for insurers.

#### ❖ Fox Williams

Corporate lawyer **Nicola (Niki) Evans** re-emerges at Fox Williams after a 15-month career break following her departure from Eversheds Sutherland last year, where she was co-head of the international corporate reorganisations group. Evans advises on M&A, joint ventures, reorganisations and restructurings, as well as broader corporate advisory and governance matters.

#### ❖ Freshfields

The magic circle firm elevates private funds lawyer **Nick Kagan** from Debevoise, where he was a counsel. Kagan advises institutional and independent sponsors of buyout, credit, real estate and infrastructure funds on a broad range of matters, including fund formation and ongoing operational matters, co-investments, internal reorganisations and secondary transactions including end-of-life liquidity solutions.

#### ❖ Gibson Dunn

Employment lawyer **Robbie Sinclair** defects to the West Coast firm from A&O Shearman. Sinclair, who was a partner at legacy Allen & Overy, advises on contentious and strategic advisory employment matters with a particular focus on litigation, crisis management and investigations in the financial services and technology sectors.

#### ❖ Gilson Gray

Following its recent London launch, the Scottish firm continues its City build-out with employment specialist **Steven Eckett** from London disputes boutique Summit Law. Eckett, who joins as head of employment for England, advises on an eclectic range of employment related matters.

#### ❖ Goodwin

A quartet of private equity laterals for the Boston-spawned outfit which nabs: a three-partner team from Paul Hastings comprising **Anu Balasubramanian**, who was head of London

private equity and vice chair of global private equity at her former firm, **Jamie Holdoway** and **Chetan Sheth**; as well as corporate private equity lawyer **Emmie Jones** from White & Case, where she was co-head of the fast-growth practice. The Paul Hastings trio handle leveraged buyouts, corporate M&A and portfolio advice across a variety of sectors including technology, software, retail and services. Jones focuses on acquisitions, disposals and management equity deals across multiple sectors, with a particular angle on technology and fast-growth companies.

#### ❖ Gowling WLG

The Anglo-Canadian firm (briefly) welcomed energy infrastructure projects specialist **Caroline Gregson** from Osborne Clarke in Bristol. According to Companies House, Gregson joined the firm on 1 September 2025 and retired from the partnership on 31 October 2025 (see Jones Day entry below in this edition) and was hired to advise on debt financed projects across renewable energy, natural resources and infrastructure.

#### ❖ Greenberg Traurig

In a vertical hire, corporate tax lawyer **Matthew Birchall** joins the global firm from Goodwin, where he was an associate. Birchall, who has a particular niche in the real estate sector, handles tax matters relating to private investment funds with a focus on fund structuring and formation, private equity M&A, secondaries, and associated financings.

#### ❖ Hamlins

Two real estate flavoured laterals for the London firm which adds: direct real estate lawyer **Kay Evans** from Cripps; and property disputes lawyer **David Crockford** from the Dorset office of Steele Raymond, where he was head of property disputes. Evans focuses on land acquisition and disposals, collaboration agreements, and estate development, with a sub-niche in planning and infrastructure matters. Crockford counsels on

development, landlord and tenant and rights of light disputes.

#### ✓ [HCR Law](#)

The national firm hires commercial property lawyer **Paul Alger** from Cripps. Alger (who only moved to Cripps from Shoosmiths [last year](#)) counsels investors, developers and occupiers on a broad range of direct real estate matters including investment, development and landlord and tenant.

#### ✓ [HFW](#)

Jumping ship: marine lawyer and master mariner **Stephen Angove** climbs aboard the international firm from shipping and international trade boutique Campbell Johnston Clark, where he was a managing associate. Angove, who will initially be based in HFW's London office before relocating to Piraeus in early 2026, specialises in marine casualty.

#### ✓ [Hill Dickinson](#)

A quartet of fresh faces for the national firm which adds: corporate tax specialist **Charlotte Fallon** from Addleshaw Goddard; employment lateral **Helen Foley** from Duane Morris; commercial and insurance lawyer **Gary Parnell** from Stevens & Bolton; and real estate vertical **Simon Tager** from Irwin Mitchell, where he was a consultant. Fallon, who joins as head of corporate tax, covers a broad range of direct and indirect tax, with a particular focus on private equity and financial services matters. Foley, who features in our Partner moves edition [for the second time this year](#), handles workplace investigations, HR case-handling audits, and workplace culture reviews. Parnell's eclectic practice spans TMT, data privacy, IP and advertising, as well as insurance related commercial advice. Tager, a former SJ Berwin and Addleshaw Goddard partner, advises on all aspects of real estate investment and development.

#### ✓ [Jones Day](#)

The global firm welcomes energy infrastructure and projects duo **Nathan (Nath) Curtis** and **Caroline Gregson**, from Gowling WLG. According to Companies House, Gregson joined Gowling WLG from Osborne Clarke in Bristol on 1 September 2025 and retired from the partnership on 31 October 2025, and then re-surfaced, with Curtis, at Jones Day. Both Curtis and Gregson advise on debt financed projects across renewable energy, natural resources and social infrastructure.

#### ✓ [Kingsley Napley](#)

A vertical hire for the London firm as it elevates insolvency lawyer **Tristan Cox-Chung** from Clyde & Co where he was a legal director. Cox-Chung advises on both contentious and non-contentious matters with a focus on the former.

#### ✓ [Kirkland & Ellis](#)

A quartet of new faces (one lateral and three verticals) for the Chicago-spawned powerhouse which welcomes: anti-trust duo **Nafees Saeed** and **Chris Thomas** from Weil, where Thomas was a counsel; restructuring lawyer **Varun Natteri Mangadu** from Milbank, where he was a special counsel; and financial services regulatory specialist **Charlotte Chopping** from Clifford Chance, where she was a senior solicitor. Saeed and Thomas advise on all aspects of EU and UK competition law, with a particular focus on merger control and foreign investment reviews. Natteri Mangadu represents sponsors, corporates and financing providers in restructuring, special situations lending and liability management exercises. Chopping covers the regulatory aspects of asset management, ESG and M&A in the financial services sector.

#### ✓ [Latham & Watkins](#)

Private equity real estate (PERE) veteran **Jeremy Kenley** defects to the global leviathan from fellow Los Angeles spawned outfit, Gibson Dunn. Kenley advises sponsors and investors across real estate

M&A, asset and debt acquisitions, joint ventures and equity and debt funds.

#### ◆ Mayer Brown

Strengthening its energy and infrastructure capabilities, the global firm elevates corporate energy lawyer **Steven Wilson** from Vinson & Elkins, where he was a counsel. Wilson focuses on cross-border energy M&A and liquified natural gas (LNG) transactions.

#### ◆ McCann FitzGerald

The Dublin headquartered firm adds corporate vertical **Stephen Tallon** from Orrick, where he was an of counsel. Tallon, who joins the firm's London office before relocating to Dublin in mid-2026, specialises in venture capital, advising companies, founders and investors at all stages of the corporate journey.

#### ◆ McDermott Will & Schulte

The recently merged US firm welcomes two fresh faces in the form of litigation lawyer **Hilton Mervis**, from Arnold & Porter, and financial services regulatory specialist **Karen Butler** from DLA Piper. Mervis, who was head of European dispute resolution at his old firm, advises financial institutions, funds and corporates on commercial litigation, partnership disputes and regulatory investigations. Butler, who joins the transactions practice group, counsels banks, fund managers and corporates on non-contentious UK and EU financial services regulation and implementation.

#### ◆ Michelman Robinson

Continuing its London build-out, the recently opened office of the Los Angeles headquartered firm elevates disputes lawyer **Akshay Sewlikar** from Linklaters, where he was a managing associate. Sewlikar, who is dual English and Indian qualified, counsels corporates, financial institutions and sovereigns on international arbitration, litigation and regulatory investigations, with a particular focus on the financial services sector.

#### ◆ Mills & Reeve

The Cambridge born national firm adds private client lateral **Jonathan Colclough** from Broadfield (formerly BDB Pitmans). Colclough advises UK and international clients on UK tax, trusts, estate and succession matters, with a particular focus on cross-border issues, offshore trustees and family offices.

#### ◆ Mishcon de Reya

In a vertical move, share schemes specialist **Liron Cohen** makes the switch to the London firm from Deloitte, where she was an associate director. Cohen, who joins as head of incentives and remuneration, advises on equity and cash-based incentives including LTIPs, HMRC tax-advantaged schemes, management incentive plans, all-employee share schemes and phantom plans.

#### ◆ Morrison Foerster

A brace of laterals for the tech flavoured US firm which bags: corporate lawyer **Eleanor Shanks** from HSF Kramer, where she was head of international private equity, and financial services regulatory specialist **Dan Jones** from Orrick. Shanks, who rejoins private equity partners Ambarish Dash and David D'Souza who left HSF Kramer for Morrison Foerster in London earlier this year, advises private equity sponsors, investors and funds on transactions - including M&A and JVs - across a range of industry sectors. Jones, who has a particular niche in fintech, counsels fintech companies and financial institutions on a wide range of industry specific non-contentious regulatory advice, along with M&A regulatory due diligence and transaction support.

#### ◆ Norton Rose Fulbright

The global verein elevates employment lawyer **Jonathan Newman** from Simmons & Simmons, where he was a managing associate. Newman, who is a Barrister, handles both contentious and non-contentious employment matters, with a

particular focus on cross-border issues affecting financial institutions and the technology sector.

#### Paul Hastings

Restock! Following a slew of lateral departures in 2025, the LA headquartered firm welcomes five fresh faces as it replenishes its corporate tax team with the addition of **Jenny Doak** from Weil and **Catherine Richardson**, who re-emerges after decamping from Cadwalader in March this year; and adds: share schemes lawyer **Stephen Dosi** from Mishcon de Reya, where he was head of employee incentives; structured finance specialist **Thomas (Tom) Picton** from Ashurst; and fund finance lateral **Jennifer Passagne** from Haynes Boone. Doak advises on the tax aspects of restructurings, M&A, joint ventures, financings, capital markets and structured finance transactions, with a particular focus on the energy, infrastructure and TMT sectors. Richardson covers a wide range of direct and indirect tax, with an angle on structured credit and CLO related matters. Dosi, who joins his new firm as head of remuneration and incentives, advises on employee share plans, management incentive plans and executive remuneration arrangements. Picton, who had been on garden leave since November 2024, handles a range of securitisation and structured private credit transactions with an emphasis on auto ABS, RMBS and covered bonds. Passagne counsels alternative investment funds on a wide range of fund finance solutions, including NAV and hybrid facilities, GP support lines, and capital call facilities and also brings lender-side experience in leveraged and acquisition finance.

#### Paul Weiss

Swiping its sixteenth lateral partner from the London office of rival Kirkland & Ellis since its August 2023 English law re-launch, the Wall Street firm welcomes corporate private equity lawyer **Francesca Storey-Harris**. Storey-Harris advises private equity sponsors and corporate clients across a broad range of transactions, with

a focus on private and public company M&A and cross-border deals.

#### Pillsbury

A brace of laterals for the New York headquartered firm which bags: intellectual property specialist **Steven James** from Morrison Foerster; and aviation finance lawyer **Peter (Pete) O'Hare** from K&L Gates. James, who covers both contentious and non-contentious soft IP, advises technology-driven and venture-backed businesses on the protection, management and commercialisation of their intellectual property. O'Hare handles aircraft acquisitions, financing and leasing transactions, as well as workouts, in the aviation sector.

#### Pogust Goodhead

The controversial claimant disputes boutique swipes litigation lateral **Jonathan Wheeler** from Morrison Foerster, where he was London co-managing partner. Wheeler, who has broad experience of commercial litigation, civil fraud, asset-tracing and contentious insolvency, has been hired to lead the £36 billion Mariana group claim against BHP, following well publicised issues between Pogust Goodhead and its litigation funder on the matter.

#### Proskauer

Two additions (one lateral and one vertical) for the New York firm which welcomes: restructuring and special situations specialist **Andrew Payne** from the Singapore office of Linklaters; and finance lawyer **Sean Darling** from Ropes & Gray, where he was a counsel. Payne advises creditors and debtors on distressed asset acquisitions and disposals, restructurings, special situations and private equity. Darling advises on leveraged, acquisition and infrastructure finance with an emphasis on the real assets sector.

#### Quillon Law

The London disputes boutique welcomes litigation lawyer **Neil Dooley** from US firm

Steptoe. Dooley covers a range of disputes but focuses on civil fraud and white-collar investigations, with a particular angle on matters touching Eastern Europe and the CIS region.

#### Quinn Emanuel

The US disputes powerhouse strengthens its specialist offering with the addition of litigation veteran **Andrew Savage** from McDermott Will & Schulze, where he founded the London disputes offering. Savage, who also covers international arbitration, specialises in cross-border commercial litigation for private capital clients, often involving fraud, corruption, global asset tracing, and international enforcement.

#### Reed Smith

A brace of hires for the global firm which bags: financial services regulatory specialist **Damian Carolan**, who re-emerges following his departure from A&O Shearman in November last year; and in-house media and sports lawyer **Matthew Phillips** from Leicester City F.C., where he was general counsel. Carolan, who was onetime head of financial regulation services at legacy Allen & Overy, advises a range of market participants on wholesale markets and market infrastructure including cross border structuring and governance, operating model design, financial institutions M&A, and the build out and launch of new regulated platforms and products. Phillips, a former Olswang partner, covers sports regulation, media rights, sponsorship, intellectual property exploitation, and a range of other commercial, financial and operational matters.

#### Ropes & Gray

Swedish-qualified in-house corporate private equity specialist **Paul Dali** joins the Boston headquartered blue-blood from Stockholm headquartered private equity powerhouse EQT, where he was Group General Counsel. Dali, who joins the private capital transactions practice, will advise on asset management M&A and investments.

#### Shepherd and Wedderburn

The Caledonian firm nabs direct real estate lawyer **Marcus Wright** from listed law firm Gateley. Wright advises investors, developers and landlords and tenants on real estate investment and development matters.

#### Sheridans

In a vertical move, corporate tax lawyer **Elizabeth Emerson** is elevated by the West End media outfit from DLA Piper, where she was a senior associate. Emerson advises on both transactional and advisory tax matters, in particular M&A, structuring and restructuring as well as warranty and indemnity insurance and tax risk insurance policies.

#### Shoosmiths

Real estate vertical **Jasvinder (Jas) Sahotay** makes the move to the national firm from Steptoe, where he was an associate. Sahotay advises on acquisitions and disposals, development projects, and joint venture arrangements with a focus on the senior living and data centre sectors.

#### Simmons & Simmons

In a very rare lateral defection from Slaughter and May, structured finance and derivatives specialist **Oliver Wicker**, makes the switch to the international firm. Wicker, who was the magic circle firm's head of derivatives, advises lenders and borrowers on structured finance, derivatives and debt capital markets matters.

#### Simons Muirhead Burton

Three additions for the West End firm which welcomes: media specialist **Joel Cohen** from The Akuna Group, where he was general counsel; corporate crime lawyer **Tim Harris** from the Serious Fraud Office, where he was an investigative lawyer; and commercial music vertical **Liam Alt** from SSB Solicitors Limited, where he was a senior associate. Cohen advises

on media and entertainment, IP, licensing, and commercial matters. Harris handles white collar criminal defence, including internal and regulatory investigations, regulatory enforcement and financial crime compliance. Alt advises artists, managers and corporates on commercial agreements in the music industry.

#### ❖ **Squire Patton Boggs**

US qualified finance lawyer **Heather Rees** decamps to the international firm from K&L Gates. Rees, who splits her time between the UK and the US, advises on a range of debt finance matters including: private equity sponsor-led financings, high-yield debt, leveraged buyouts, syndicated lending, bridge facilities and investment grade bonds.

#### ❖ **Stephenson Harwood**

The international firm bolsters its tax offering, with corporate tax lawyer **Gerald Montagu** from leading French firm Gide, where he was a senior counsel. Montagu, who advises on direct and indirect tax issues connected with finance, funds, private equity and reorganisations, also covers tax disputes and negotiations with tax authorities.

#### ❖ **Sullivan & Cromwell**

Following its [heavyweight hires in September](#), the super elite New Yorker continues its London build out with a two partner-team from Kirkland & Ellis comprising: corporate private equity lawyer **Aprajita Dhundia** and corporate tax specialist **Ian Ferreira**. Dhundia advises private equity sponsors across corporate transactions, spanning leveraged buyouts and disposals, JV/consortium structures, management incentives, hybrid capital, and distressed M&A. Ferreira counsels sponsors on tax across asset-management deals, fund raisings, GP liquidity/secondaries, manager structuring and global carry/co-invest planning.

#### ❖ **TLT**

The Bristol headquartered outfit elevates financial services regulatory lawyer **Jack Houslander** from Addleshaw Goddard, where he was a managing associate. Houslander advises fintech's and other market participants on the regulatory aspects of payments.

#### ❖ **Trowers & Hamlins**

Two laterals for the international firm which welcomes: equity capital markets lawyer **James Wilson** from DWF; and environmental specialist **Georgie Messent** from Squire Patton Boggs, where she was head of environment. Wilson advises on ECM transactions across the main market of the London Stock Exchange, AIM and Aquis, covering: IPOs, dual listings, reverse takeovers, secondary fund raisings and corporate governance. Messent handles ESG regulatory matters, including carbon regulation along with related litigation.

#### ❖ **Watson Farley & Williams**

After retiring from Linklaters - where he was a partner in Dubai - in November last year, project finance specialist **David Miles** re-emerges at the international firm. Miles advises borrowers and sponsors, export credit agencies and procurers on cross-border financings in the energy and infrastructure sectors, covering project, leveraged and Islamic finance.

#### ❖ **Wedlake Bell**

Private client lateral **Owen Byrne** joins the City firm from Broadfield (formerly BDB Pitmans). Byrne advises high net worths and family offices on estate and tax planning, wills, succession and the administration of estates and trusts.

#### ❖ **White & Case**

In a vertical hire, the New York firm elevates employment lawyer **Tabitha Al-Mahdawie** from Macfarlanes, where she was a senior counsel. Al-Mahdawie works across all aspects of employment law, from corporate transactions,

employee reorganisations and large-scale redundancies to contentious matters such as restrictive covenant disputes and employment tribunal claims.

**Corrections:**

*In our previous edition (September–October, Issue No. 89), Edwards Gibson incorrectly included the hire of Natalia Kubrik who joined Debevoise from Goodwin. Though we clarified that at the time of publication, it was unclear whether Ms. Kubrik would be based in the London or New York office, it has become evident that Ms. Kubrik has in fact joined Debevoise's New York office. As such, and in accordance with our methodology, Ms. Kubrik should not have been included in our report.*

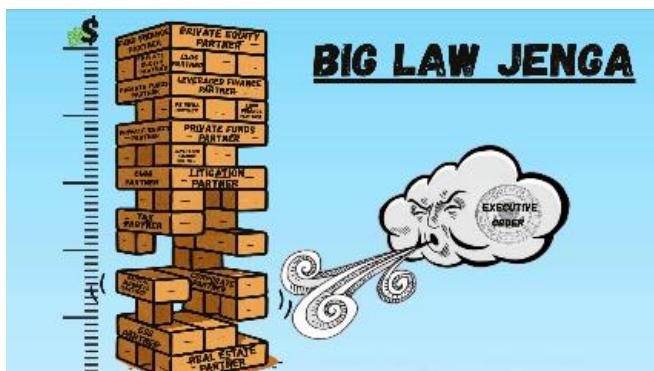
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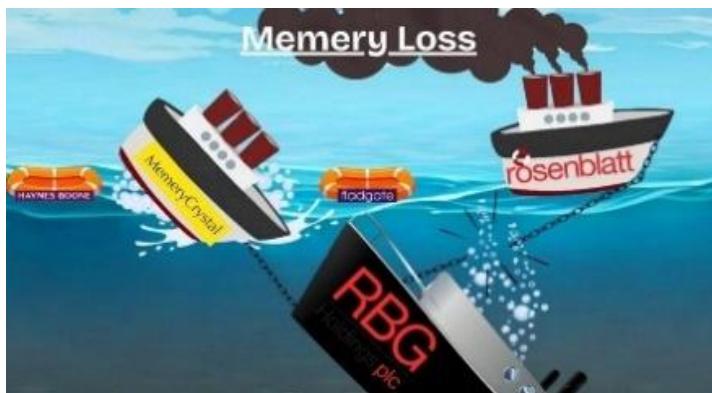
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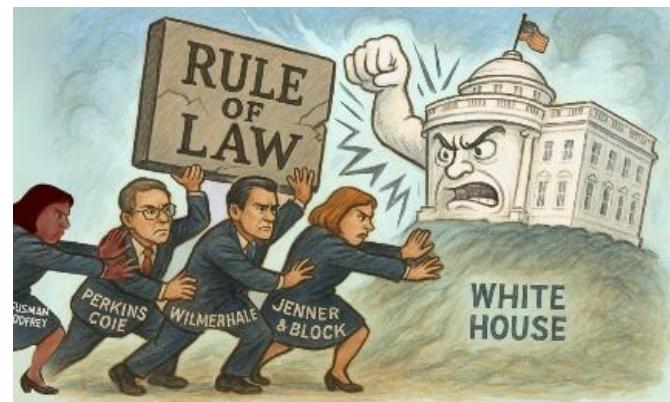
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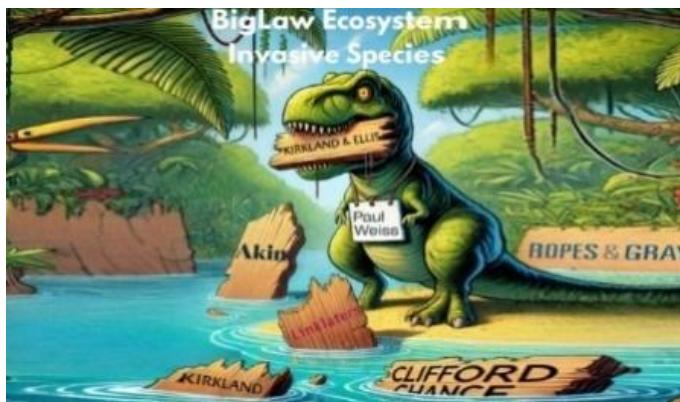
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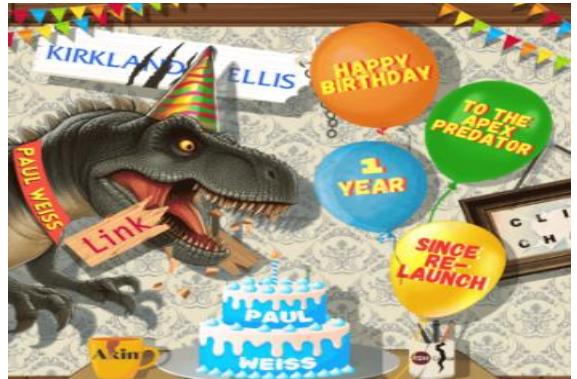
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