

Legal project management: A cornerstone in operational delivery of inquiries

24 June 2025  Paul McCannah and Stephanie McGarry

In light of the recent government initiative to pilot locally-led inquiries into child grooming gangs, the role of legal project management (LPM) becomes increasingly important in supporting the delivery of public inquiries.

The solution must be collaborative, as detailed in our [article following the national audit on group-based child exploitation](#).

This approach not only promises a more nuanced understanding of local issues but also demands a robust framework to manage the complexities of such sensitive investigations effectively.

Legal project management can significantly bolster the efficiency and effectiveness of how these inquiries are delivered. By integrating the various principles set out below, our team ensure that our lawyers and our clients, can better plan, execute, and monitor the myriad aspects of these often long-term projects, ensuring that they are conducted within legal frameworks and are capable of achieving their intended outcomes.

Strategic planning and resource allocation

One of the primary benefits of legal project management is its emphasis on strategic planning and resource allocation. For public sector bodies preparing for potential future inquiries, this offers tools and methodologies to map out the entire project lifecycle. This includes defining clear objectives, identifying necessary resources, and establishing realistic timelines to achieve key inquiry milestones.

Risk management

Another critical area where legal project management can add value is in risk management. Inquiries into sensitive areas such as child sexual exploitation are fraught with potential risks, from data breaches to compliance issues. Legal project management provides frameworks for identifying, managing and mitigating these risks. Regular risk assessments, coupled with proactive contingency planning, can help navigate these challenges more smoothly and maintain the integrity of the inquiry process.

Stakeholder engagement, communication and reporting

Effective communication is vital in managing these complex projects, particularly those involving multiple stakeholders. Legal project management emphasises the importance of regular, transparent communication with all parties involved, including the police, victims and survivors, social workers, educators and others who have an interest in the outcome or who can provide relevant evidence.

By employing communication plans and stakeholder management strategies, we can ensure that all participants are informed and engaged throughout the inquiry process, and in so doing fostering a collaborative environment. We then use these tools to support client and wider stakeholder reporting, providing visibility on progress against KPIs etc within cloud-based dashboards, enabling both us and the client to monitor and manage progress against those KPIs and key project milestones proactively.

Continuous improvement and learning

Finally, legal project management encourages a culture of continuous improvement and learning. By systematically reviewing the outcomes and processes of each inquiry, we can identify lessons learned and best practices. This iterative process not only improves the efficiency of future inquiries but also, in the context of the inquiries into child grooming gangs, contributes to the broader goal of enhancing child protection policies and practices at the local level.

Conclusion

As councils gear up for the potential rollout of locally-led [inquiries into child grooming gangs](#), integrating legal project management provides a structured, efficient, and compliant framework into the way Browne Jacobson supports the operational delivery of these types of complex inquiries. By doing so, they not only increase the chances of successful outcomes but also contribute to the broader societal goal of protecting vulnerable children and bringing perpetrators to justice.

Paul McCannah is head of our [legal project management](#) function at Browne Jacobson. Stephanie McGarry is a partner specialising in regulatory law with a particular focus on large and complex public inquiries at UK and Ireland law firm Browne Jacobson and has worked closely with Paul on inquiries and investigations we have delivered for our clients.

Browne Jacobson's legal project management function works closely with our lawyers, including Stephanie, to ensure that all aspects set out above are embedded in the way we deliver legal project management seamlessly as part of our core offering on both inquiry work and other complex, multi-stranded and time-critical projects.

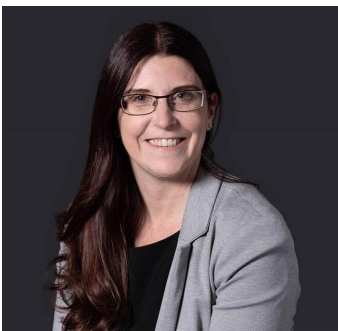
Contact

Paul McCannah

Head of Legal Project Management

paul.mccannah@brownejacobson.com

+44 (0)115 908 4816



Stephanie McGarry

Partner

stephanie.mcgarry@brownejacobson.com

+44(0)115 908 4113

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