

Browne Jacobson appoints new Head of Education Employment

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Browne Jacobson has strengthened its education practice with the appointments of a partner and senior associate specialising in [employment law](#).

Polly O'Malley joins the UK and Ireland law firm as Head of [Education Employment](#) after eight years at Stone King, where she was Deputy Head of Education.

Faisal Sameja has also been hired as Senior Associate from the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), where he headed up the in-house legal team as Senior Solicitor.

Polly will offer specialist expertise advising the education sector on a wide variety of strategic, contentious and regulatory matters.

She also has a wealth of experience in staff issues including national terms and conditions, industrial action, trade union liaison, TUPE, restructure and safeguarding matters, as well as advising on equality issues.

In her new position at Browne Jacobson, she will collaborate with Heather Mitchell, Education Employment Partner, to further grow the employment law offering within the 100-strong education practice.

The specialist team provides a full range of strategic, operational and contentious legal and HR support to education clients.

Polly, whose core office is Birmingham but will work with clients across the country, said: "I am hugely excited to be joining Browne Jacobson as Head of Education Employment, having witnessed from the outside the huge growth and success of the education team in recent years.

"The firm has developed a tremendous reputation for its legal and HR services to education clients and it's clear there is a strong appetite from our senior leadership to further grow the employment offering, which has major potential, within this sector."

Faisal was regularly invited to speak at conferences and advised school leaders during his time at ASCL, which is the professional association and trade union for school, college and trust leaders, supporting and representing more than 25,000 education leaders across the UK.

He has experience in advising education employers on issues such as safer recruitment, safeguarding allegations, dismissals, employment tribunal litigation and representation, grievance procedures and restructures.

[Emma Capper](#), head of Browne Jacobson's employment team, said: "We are delighted to welcome Polly and Faisal to our growing employment team. They both have significant experience in the education sector and will have key roles to play with us in further developing our employment team's service to our education clients.

"Our employment law experts, working in close collaboration with our HR services team, are supporting organisations of all shapes and sizes to be at the forefront of society's biggest issues – whether it's the rapidly changing legislative landscape, evolving working practices, or increased focus on diversity, equity and inclusion."

[Nick MacKenzie](#), Head of Education, added: "I am delighted to welcome Polly and Faisal to the team. The recruitment of two high-profile lawyers in the education sector reflects the firm's ambition for our education team, and is another exciting step in the delivery of our strategy to be recognised as a clear market leader right across the education sector.

“Polly was instrumental in setting up Stone King’s Leeds office, developing and delivering its northern and national strategies, and most recently she was Deputy Head of Education. She also brings a strong track record of helping her clients on their most pressing issues. It is a reflection of the strength of the Browne Jacobson team, and our vision for the future, that Polly was excited about our plans and wanted to join us to help lead our employment offering.

“With our latest [School Leaders Survey](#) illustrating how staff recruitment and retention is one of the top three organisational priorities in education, there is a growing demand among schools and academies – as well as further and higher education institutions – for employment and HR services.”

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