

Browne Jacobson's Fiona Butler shortlisted for Employed Bar Award

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We are delighted to announce that Fiona Butler, head of our in-house barrister team at Browne Jacobson, has been shortlisted for the esteemed Bar Council's Employed Bar Awards. This recognition is a testament to the exceptional talent within our firm and our commitment to delivering high-quality legal services to our clients.

As the leader of our in-house barrister team, Fiona brings over 25 years of experience in managing complex legal matters, particularly inquests. She frequently represents NHS organisations, private health providers, educational institutions, care facilities, local authorities, and regulatory bodies in highly sensitive cases. Fiona's expertise shines in complex, high-profile cases involving Article 2, where she often appears before a jury. She is currently involved in a significant case before the Chief Coroner.

Recognising excellence: The Employed Bar Awards

The Employed Bar Awards celebrate outstanding legal advice and the invaluable contributions of employed barristers to their organisations and the broader legal profession. With winners to be announced later this week, we are thrilled that Fiona's work is being acknowledged at this prestigious event. To mark this achievement, we asked Fiona about what being shortlisted means to her and her thoughts on the evolution of the employed bar.

The Importance of the awards

"These awards shine a light on the high calibre of work conducted by employed barristers," Fiona explains. "They celebrate the varied and impactful work we do and emphasise that the quality and significance of our contributions are on par with those of self-employed barristers. The only difference is in our employment structure, not in our capabilities or the value we bring to our clients and the legal profession."

What does being shortlisted mean?

When asked what being shortlisted meant to her, Fiona said: "It sounds like a cliché, but there are certain pivotal moments in a career, and this is one of them for me. I've always been proud of the work I do and the contributions I make but being shortlisted is recognition of that effort—it's humbling and deeply gratifying."

Evolution of the employed bar

Reflecting on her career, Fiona notes the positive changes she's witnessed: "The perception of employed barristers has evolved significantly. When I was training for the Bar, there was a misconception that employed barristers were somehow second best—a view that hugely underestimated the talent and expertise at the employed bar. This perception has changed substantially. The introduction of in-house pupillages, such as those offered by Browne Jacobson, has helped demonstrate the quality and importance of the work we do. Today, working as an employed barrister is recognised as a rewarding career path that offers unique opportunities for professional growth and impact."

Opportunities at the employed bar

When asked about the benefits of a career at the employed bar, Fiona shared her insights: "The opportunities at the employed bar are vast. Employers like Browne Jacobson are flexible, supportive, and genuinely invested in the development of their people. The junior barristers in my team work on complex, high-quality cases early in their careers, all while being fully supported by the firm. I've been able to shape my career, make meaningful changes, and be seen as an equal among my peers, whether they are self-employed or part of the judiciary. The employed bar has allowed me to enhance my skills not just as an advocate but also in management and leadership, which ultimately makes me a more well-rounded barrister."

Looking forward

As we await the award results, we are immensely proud of Fiona's achievement in being shortlisted. This recognition reflects her dedication to representing clients with expertise, as well as her role in reshaping perceptions about the employed bar. At Browne Jacobson, we are proud to have a team that stands at the forefront of legal representation while also helping to define the future of our profession. We remain committed to our innovative approach, combining the expertise of solicitors and barristers to offer our clients a comprehensive and effective legal service.

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