

Legal pioneer clinches top honour: Browne Jacobson partner named Employed Barrister of the Year

17 October 2024

Fiona Butler of UK and Ireland firm Browne Jacobson, has been crowned Employed Barrister of the Year in a Law Firm at the prestigious Bar Council of England & Wales' Employed Bar Awards 2024, cementing her status as a trailblazer in legal innovation.

This accolade recognises Fiona's exceptional 25-year career, during which she transformed Browne Jacobson's legal landscape as the firm's first in-house barrister, going on to establish an in-house chambers offering. Her ground breaking work has redefined how law firms integrate barrister expertise into their service provision.

Fiona leads a powerhouse team of barristers and advocates handling high-stake cases across multiple sectors including:

- Government bodies
- NHS organisations
- Private health providers
- Educational institutions
- Care facilities
- Local Authorities
- Security Regulators

Her impressive track record includes:

- Successfully blocking a Channel 4 'Dispatches' exposé that threatened jury integrity
- Securing crucial injunctions to protect vulnerable children from media exposure
- Representing organisations in notable inquests which have led to necessary change including those of Fiona Pilkington & daughter Francecca Hardwick, Jack Adcock, Karanbir Cheema & the Killamarsh murders;
- Pioneering Browne Jacobson's in-house Chambers, launched in 2010

As a pupil supervisor and appointed as an HM Assistant Coroner in three jurisdictions, Fiona's influence extends beyond case work to shaping the next generation of legal talent.

Richard Medd, Managing Partner at Browne Jacobson, said: *"Fiona's achievement isn't just a personal triumph — it's a validation of our innovative approach to legal services. Her work has revolutionised how we serve our clients, bringing the expert advocacy of the Bar directly into our firm's DNA. This award recognises what we've known for years: Fiona is an exceptional legal mind who's rewriting the rulebook on what's possible in modern law firms."*

Fiona responded to the win: *"I am overwhelmed and thoroughly delighted to have won this prestigious award. It is a powerful endorsement of the quality of work delivered by the employed Bar and its critical role in evolving legal practice. At Browne Jacobson, we've proven that breaking down traditional barriers between solicitors and barristers creates an unbeatable synergy for our clients. I'm immensely proud of our team's pioneering work, which has not only set new standards in legal service delivery but has also opened doors for the next generation of barristers. This recognition fuels our commitment to push boundaries and to continue to deliver excellence in legal advocacy."*

The Employed Bar Awards, established in 2017, spotlight the exceptional contributions of employed barristers across the legal profession. This year's ceremony highlighted the growing importance of in-house advocacy in delivering comprehensive, cutting-edge legal services. Congratulations to all the nominees and winners in this year's awards.

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