

# At the forefront of society's biggest issues - a reflection of our public sector work throughout 2023

27 February 2024

The government sector at Browne Jacobson have been delighted to support the public sector throughout 2023, read more about some of our activity over the last year.

## Wales

We were delighted to further demonstrate our commitment to the Welsh market through the opening of our first office in Wales, located in the Capital City, Cardiff. This has enabled us to continue building strong relationships with our longstanding clients, including Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and Local Government Association Wales. The office launch party took place in October with attendees from Qualification Wales, Senedd and Cardiff Council.

## Freeports

Remaining in Wales, we are proud to be supporting the development of the Celtic Freeport, as sole legal advisers to the Freeport's lead authority and project from OBC and FBC submission through to its operational and delivery phases. The Celtic Freeport is a key strategic proposition in south Wales which will deliver local, regional, and national gains, providing the backbone for a cleaner future based on offshore wind, the hydrogen economy, sustainable fuels, carbon capture and storage, cleaner steel and low-carbon logistics. This appointment strengthens our already established Freeports practice, as recognised experts providing legal advice to a third of the UK's new Freeports.

## The environment

We are keen to help protect our environment, both through our firm values and in the advice we provide. As part of the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference, COP28, we published a series of videos and articles in anticipation and in reaction to the conference. Our legal experts covered the topics of renewables and building development, nature and government and green sustainable finance, and how the decisions made will impact the public and private sector.

## Tender wins and re-appointments

We are at the forefront of society's biggest issues, and this is evident through our appointment and re-appointment to numerous exciting projects and frameworks where we assist clients tackle important issues. We have been successfully appointed by Great Places Housing (a North-West-based registered provider) for property, development, construction and plot sales work. Great Places are a Homes England strategic partner with £240 million of grant funding available to them for the delivery of nearly 5,000 new affordable homes by 2027.

We were appointed to Wiltshire Council's Solicitors' Framework to provide adult social care advisory services. This was the fruit of collaboration between our government and health and social care sectors, and we're excited to have the opportunity to support the Council in this important and growing area.

Furthermore, Browne Jacobson have been appointed to be the sole external legal advisors to the Department for Transport's Legal Advisors (DfTLA) under the CCS framework. We will primarily provide extra capacity to the in-house legal team working on a 'partnership' basis. The matters we are likely to be instructed upon are already proving to be at the forefront of society's biggest issues with some making national news programmes.

Browne Jacobson have won an appointment to the Civil Aviation Panel that issues ATOL licences that protect holiday makers when tour operators go insolvent. We will be advising the CAA on the risks associated with the businesses that are issued ATOL licences.

## Combined County Authority

We pride ourselves in our collaborative approach, further demonstrated in our work on the creation of the first Combined County Authority in the country. We are advising the four councils in the East Midlands Devolution deal and are supporting on all legal aspects of this exciting project.

## Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service

At the central government level, we have won the prestigious role of being the only law firm appointed by the Ministry of Justice to provide a nationwide hotline offering specialist legal advice in social welfare law for organisations providing advice under the Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service. The project was a true proof of collaboration between lawyers and central teams using expertise from our social care, housing, advocacy, management information and finance teams. We provide a legal expertise service for the MOJ in housing disrepair claims and we now have a direct hotline to receive enquiries.

## UK Covid-19 Inquiry

We are driven by work with a strong impact on people's lives, including through supporting the Welsh Government in the UK Covid-19 Inquiry, chaired by the Right Honourable Baroness Heather Hallett DBE. The statutory inquiry was set up to examine the UK's response to, and impact of, the Covid-19 pandemic. Four modules to the inquiry have already begun: Resilience and preparedness (Module 1), Core UK decision-making and political governance (Module 2), Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on healthcare (Module 3) and most recently Vaccines and therapeutics (Module 4) which started in June 2023. Future modules include Government Procurement and the Care Sector.

## Digital disruption

We hosted 'Delivering Modern Digital Public Services: Midlands' in our Birmingham office. This focused on looking at improving digital public services to increase participation, enhance cyber security and learn lessons from pilot projects by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' (DLUHC) Local Digital team and Future Councils.

## Supreme Court judgements

Being at the forefront of society's biggest issues is in our DNA, which is why we were instructed in several cases which were heard by the Supreme Court. We acted for Wolverhampton City Council in HXA and YXA, where the Supreme Court set out its reasons for concluding there was no arguable duty of care in the present cases. We also acted on behalf of London Borough of Croydon in the landmark case of *R(Imam) v London Borough of Croydon* on mandatory relief in public law.

## Awards

We were thrilled that our lawyers were recognised during top awards.

Associate Hannah Collins, who specialises in social care litigation, advisory and public law, was awarded the coveted 'Junior Lawyer of the Year' title at Nottinghamshire Law Society Awards.

In addition, Partner James Arrowsmith in our Social Care team was shortlisted in the Diversity & Inclusion category.

At the firm-wide level, we won the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Programme of the Year award for our ground breaking FAIRE initiative (Fairer Access Into Real Experience).

## Events and training

2023 was a year marked by several successful events and training sessions. We attended the ALARM Conference which focused on sustainability, as well as an Insider Round Table in Birmingham to discuss the Council's vision for 2040. We hosted the Business Services Association roundtable, providing an opportunity for businesses in the West Midlands to hear about the plans that the Labour mayoral candidate has for the area. Numerous training sessions were provided, including on housing loss prevention, preparing for a dispute, the Procurement Reform Act and Welsh local authorities. Our clubs remain popular among our clients, such as Planning Club and Claims Club.

We are proud of the quality of the work that our government team has completed this year, as well as the relationships we have built with clients and the positive impact we have had in our community. We wish to thank our clients for entrusting us with sensitive and complex matters, and look forward to continuing to do so in 2024.

## Contact



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