

INSIDETRACK

Leading North East Law Firm announces ninth STEP solicitor



Photo: Jennifer Quayle, Kelly Maguire, Natalie Palmer, Elizabeth Armstrong, Daniel Williams, Andrew Way, Nadine Kilvington, Gillian Ibbotson, Luke Busbridge

Latimer Hinks Solicitors now has one of the most highly qualified specialist private client departments in the North East. Another two members of its team, Daniel Williams and Nadine Kilvington, have recently qualified as full members of STEP, the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners specialising in wills, probate, the administration of trusts and estates, succession and tax planning.

The 14-strong team now has nine STEP qualified lawyers, with one more due to qualify later in the year. Membership is achieved through a combination of existing academic and professional qualifications, a series of technical exams and a minimum of two years' practical experience – a path which in total can take several years to complete.

As part of its commitment to offering the highest levels of service and advice to its clients, the Darlington based company supports the lawyers within the team in undertaking the extra training required to secure full STEP membership. The objective is for Latimer Hinks to provide experienced, qualified lawyers and specialised legal services usually associated with city-based firms.

Anne Elliott, Chief Executive of Latimer Hinks Solicitors, who was one of the first members of STEP said: "Forward succession and tax planning is one of the most



Anne Elliott, CEO at Latimer Hinks

"The STEP qualification and the STEP continuing development programme ensures that our team is fully equipped to do just that. We have the knowledge, experience and confidence to ensure that our clients are reliably advised in even the most complex of matters."

Daniel, a solicitor who has been with the firm for eight years, recently achieved a distinction in his final exam. He said: "Ultimately, in your professional training and development you want to attain the highest level. The experience of working at Latimer Hinks, coupled with obtaining full membership to STEP has, I hope, put me on the path to achieving this."

Nadine, another solicitor who has been with the firm for ten years added: "The best thing about so many of us being full members of STEP is that it gives clients confidence in our ability to undertake private client matters to the highest possible standard."

In the same way that clients wish to see a "hallmark" when instructing a

plumber and electrician, with our qualification they can see that we are the best at what we do."

Latimer Hinks solicitors offer the whole range of Private Client work, for more information visit: <http://www.latimerhinks.co.uk/sector/you-and-your-family/>

STEP is the global professional association for practitioners who specialise in family inheritance and succession planning. We work to improve public understanding of the issues families face in this area and promote education and high professional standards among our members.

STEP members help families plan for their futures, from drafting a will to advising on issues concerning international families, protection of the vulnerable, family businesses and philanthropic giving. Full STEP members, known as TEPs, are internationally recognised as experts in their field, with proven qualifications and experience.

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Latimer Hinks
SOLICITORS

Latimer Hinks Solicitors boosts local scanner appeal with charitable donation

Latimer Hinks has continued its programme of local charitable activities by contributing towards the installation of two MRI scanners.

The firm has donated £7,500 towards the Darlington and Bishop Auckland Hospitals MRI Scanner Appeal, a fundraising initiative launched to bring the latest state-of-the-art MRI scanning technology to our communities.

The appeal, which is being run by the Charity of County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, aims to raise £2.5m for the scanners which will provide much improved scan images and a better experience for patients.

The £7,500 donation will go towards the £648,000 raised towards the installation of the scanners. The specialist facilities that will house Darlington's scanner are still under construction, but the Bishop Auckland's scanner is already being put to use.

Latimer Hinks' contribution has been made through its County Durham Community Foundation fund, which it recently increased by £20,000 after its 125th year fundraising efforts.

The team have chosen to support the Darlington and Bishop Auckland MRI Scanner Appeal in honour of colleague Helen Thomas who sadly died from cancer in July 2016.

Anne Elliott, Chief Executive of Latimer Hinks, said: "We have made it our mission



Dr Elizabeth Loney, Consultant Radiologist and Scanner Appeal Clinical Lead, Andrea Tobin and Anne Elliott of Latimer Hinks

in our 125th year to support local charities, especially those that did so much to help Helen.

"Having the most up to date technologies in place will aid the early detection of diseases, including cancer. We hope that our donation goes some way to help achieve the total needed, and just as important encourage others to donate."

Pat Chambers, Charity Manager for County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We were over the moon with the incredible generosity of the team at Latimer Hinks Solicitors. Knowing that so many people have contributed towards raising this phenomenal amount is very humbling.

"We've already had donations from people happy with the care they or a loved one has received, regardless of whether they had a scan.

We'd love the whole community, including individuals, companies, schools, sports clubs etc, to support us because every penny counts. After all, you never know when you or a loved one might need a scan."

To donate visit CDDFT Charity MRI Scanner Appeal "justgiving" website at www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/cddft/mriscannersappeal

To view a video with further information visit <https://tinyurl.com/ya2bm66u>

Solicitor donates hair to Little Princess Trust

A Director at Latimer Hinks Solicitors, a Darlington based law firm, cut her hair after growing it for almost two years in aid of the Little Princess Trust.

Natalie Palmer, a senior member of the Private Client Department, chopped off 24 cm of her hair for the charity that makes wigs for children who have lost their own hair due to cancer treatment and other illnesses.

Natalie's decision to grow and cut her hair was as a result of the death of her friend and colleague, Helen Thomas, who died from cancer aged 33. Natalie learned of the cost of making real hair wigs when accompanying Helen to one of her appointments and, after losing Helen, decided she wanted to grow and cut her hair for charity.

As part of the firm's fundraising group, Hel's Angels, Natalie has been involved in a number of charitable activities last year that raised more than £5,000 in Helen's memory.

Natalie, who has been at the firm for nearly 20 years said: "It was heart breaking to learn

that a wig made of real hair can cost nearly £400. Donating my hair to the Princess Trust was the least I could do to try return some normality to the life of a child going through an unimaginably tough time.

"What is even more heart warming is that my nine year old niece called to tell me that she thought what I was doing was brilliant and was inspired to do the same.

I am so proud of her getting involved as well; I know that it is a big commitment, particularly for someone of such a young age."

Latimer Hinks Solicitors marked the culmination of its 125th year celebrations with a charity ball in November, which raised £36,000 for St. Teresa's Hospice Darlington and Bishop Auckland MRI Scanner Appeal as well as a number of smaller local charities

To learn more about the Little Princess Trust, visit: <http://www.littleprincesses.org.uk>



Natalie Palmer with niece Jessica Bowman



Latimer Hinks' partnership with County Durham Community Foundation delivers £36k for local charities

Latimer Hinks has boosted its long-standing partnership with a local charitable foundation with a £20,000 donation.

The firm has been working with County Durham Community Foundation since 2006 to support good causes in local communities.

The money was raised at the Latimer Hinks Charity Ball which took place on 22nd November 2017 in the Grand Marquee at Wynyard Hall. The black tie event attracted 400 guests and marked the culmination of the firm's 125th anniversary year. To recognise the milestone and the contribution that Latimer Hinks makes to the community, County Durham Community Foundation has been able to contribute to the money raised, making £36,000 available to support local groups.

The first grants that Latimer Hinks' staff have chosen to award are to support St Teresa's Hospice and the Darlington and Bishop Auckland MRI Scanner Appeal in honour of colleague Helen Thomas who sadly passed away from cancer in July 2016. Future grants will be awarded to other local community groups where the money will make a great deal of difference.

Anne Elliott, Chief Executive of Latimer Hinks, said: "Although we always put a fun twist



Andrea Tobin, Anne Elliott, Michelle Cooper (County Durham Community Foundation) and Natalie Palmer

on it, we take our fundraising activities very seriously. There are some brilliant causes in our area that do exceptional work, but are in desperate need of funding. That is why we set up our charitable donation fund with County Durham Community Foundation, which advises us on how to support great charities as well as recommending causes worthy of funding.

"We are grateful to County Durham Community Foundation for adding to our latest donation. This is a considerable gesture to mark our 125th anniversary, and we know the money will reach causes close to our hearts in the local area.

County Durham Community Foundation manages charitable funds donated by local individuals, families, businesses and trusts, building up a source of long-term support for the community and acting as the vital link between donors and local needs, enabling people to achieve far more than they could by themselves.

Michelle Cooper, CEO of County Durham Community Foundation, said: "Latimer Hinks is a great example of a local company positively choosing to give something back to its local communities."

To view a video with further information please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/ydegpmef>

Property Department bucks trend with strong conveyancing performance

Latimer Hinks has maintained a strong level of activity in its Commercial and Residential Property Departments despite challenges in the market.

The Darlington-based practice saw a rise in total activity in 2017, including a 48 per cent increase in the value of mortgages and remortgages dealt with by the firm, up to £4.1m. This reflects an increase in the number of mortgage and re-mortgage instructions during the year.

Overall the department, at the Legal 500 and Chambers UK recognised firm, handled more than £145million-worth of residential and commercial property transactions over a 12 month period from January to December 2017, including 18 transactions in excess of £1m which themselves totalled almost £48million. During that same period, the North East property market saw a two per cent drop in property value.

Martin Williamson, a Director and Head of Residential Property at Latimer Hinks Solicitors, said: "Although the UK has seen a decline in house sales, partly due to a slowdown in take up of the Help-to-Buy scheme, our sales and purchases have held up well.

"But we have seen a significant rise in mortgages and remortgages. People are tending to borrow money for repairs or improvements to



Martin Williamson and Nicola Neilson, Directors at Latimer Hinks Solicitors

their current properties instead of purchasing new homes. These often complicated transactions are something that this department handles with great professionalism, so we are pleased with these figures."

Nicola Neilson, Commercial Property Director at Latimer Hinks, said: "The team has been working incredibly hard to ensure a high level of service on every transaction, and we are pleased with these results at a time when the rest of the market is facing challenges."

Contacts and services

You & your family

An understanding approach to all your personal legal requirements – from buying and selling your house, your wills, trusts and powers of attorney to tax, long term care, succession planning and retirement issues.

Private Client (Wills, Trusts, Probate, Tax Planning, Long Term Care, Succession Planning and Retirement Issues) **Team:** Anne Elliott, Andrew Way, Elizabeth Armstrong, Natalie Palmer, Jennifer Quayle, Gillian Ibbotson, Luke Busbridge, Daniel Williams, Nadine Kilvington, Kelly Maguire, Toni-Ann Galvin, Nikita Noël, Claire Conway, Julie Porter.

Residential Conveyancing Team: Nicola Neilson, Martin Williamson, Rosanne Tweddle, Jonathan Sturgeon, Laura Richardson.

Business & commercial

Advice on commercial property, employment and contract law, buying and selling a business and succession planning.

Commercial Team: Nick Poole.

Commercial Property Team: Neil Stevenson, Nicola Neilson, Adam Wood, Tim Haggie, Rosanne Tweddle, Jonathan Sturgeon, Laura Richardson.

Farms & estates

Expertise in land sales and purchases, option agreements, tenancy agreements, succession planning, diversification schemes and renewable energy developments.

Agricultural Team: Anne Elliott, Neil Stevenson, Nicola Neilson, Elizabeth Armstrong, Martin Williamson. Adam Wood, Tim Haggie, Rosanne Tweddle.

Private Client Team: Anne Elliott, Andrew Way, Elizabeth Armstrong, Natalie Palmer, Jennifer Quayle, Gillian Ibbotson, Luke Busbridge, Daniel Williams, Nadine Kilvington, Kelly Maguire, Toni-Ann Galvin, Nikita Noël, Claire Conway, Julie Porter.

Residential Conveyancing Team: Nicola Neilson, Martin Williamson, Rosanne Tweddle, Jonathan Sturgeon, Laura Richardson.

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Questions galore for Bank of Mum and Dad

First time home buyers often resort to the Bank of Mum and Dad for help in order to get on the property ladder.

However, this course of action is not just restricted to first time home buyers. There has been a noted rise in people looking to move up the property ladder, otherwise known as 'second-steppers', with the help of family members.

When buying a property with help from family, there are a number of potential issues that might arise in the process.

It is important to establish from the outset whether the help being given and received from a parent or others is by way of a gift or in the form of a loan. It is surprising how often there is a misunderstanding between the giver and the receiver as to what is really intended.

It is important to be aware that mortgage lenders have requirements when family members or third parties are contributing to a purchase price.

If the help is in form of a gift, a mortgage lender will often require the person providing the funds to confirm in writing that it is an unconditional and non-refundable gift and that the person giving the funds will have no interest in the property.

If the parents or person contributing the funds intend this to be in the form of a loan, they will need to take legal advice from a solicitor independent from those acting for the buyers as to how their contribution may be protected perhaps in the event for a relationship breakup, insolvency or some other unforeseen eventuality. They may wish to contemplate protecting their interests by means of a charge over the property, or a restriction noted at the Land Registry on dealing with the property without their consent.

It should be noted that in many cases mortgage lenders will not be happy with the situation where a financial contribution is in

the form of a repayable loan and is protected by some form of security.

Solicitors are required by law to check the source of funding for property purchase transactions. If the contribution is being made during the course of the solicitor dealing with the purchase, it is not enough to tell them that a substantial amount of the monies are being gifted by parents. If the funds are being received from anybody other than from the buyers themselves, the solicitors will need to check the source of funding and carry out due diligence money laundering checks.

If parents intend a gift towards the purchase monies of a property to be for the benefit of only one purchaser, perhaps their own child only, when that child is buying with their partner is it then advisable that the property is purchased on the basis that the buyers hold as tenants in common rather than joint tenants and they have drawn up a Declaration of Trust detailing the respective shares of each buyer in the property. If marriage is on the cards, then a Pre-Nuptial Agreement is another means by which unequal contributions towards the purchase price can be noted and protected.



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