

**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**CITY OF LONDON LAW SOCIETY**  
**EMPLOYMENT LAW COMMITTEE**

**At Addleshaw Goddard, London and by videoconference  
on Wednesday 2 March 2022  
at 1.00 pm (meeting from 12.45pm)**

**In attendance:**

Helena Derbyshire, Chair	Skadden, Arps
Damian Babic, Minutes	Skadden, Arps
Matthew Rous	CLLS
Kevin Hart	CLLS
Nick Robertson	Keystone
Rebecca Harding-Hill	BCLP
Colin Leckey	Lewis Silkin
Michael Leftley	Addleshaw Goddard
Paul Griffin	Norton Rose
Jane Mann	Fox Williams

**Apologies:**

Elaine Aarons	Withers
John Evason	Baker & McKenzie
Mark Greenburgh	Greenburgh & Co

1. Apologies were received from those noted as absent.
2. The minutes of the last meeting were approved.
3. Matters arising: new members

The Chair noted that there had been no responses to the CLLS advertisement for new members. However, the Chair has received an application from two individuals.

The Chair confirmed that Kate Brearley will be retiring from the committee.

Given that there had not been any applications to join the committee in response to the advertisement and open process, the committee considered alternative ways to reach out to new members, including contacting law firms and notable individuals directly.

The committee agreed that it would be worth finding new members of different ages to increase diversity on the committee, including involving more junior lawyers in the work of the committee from time to time.

4. Matthew Rous

Matthew Rous (the new CEO of the CLLS) introduced himself to the committee and emphasized his role in helping the committee to communicate externally where needed, including raising the profile of the CLLS more generally.

5. Discussion of the "great return" to the workplace.

*Right to be offline*

The committee considered the right to be offline. Michael Leftley (ML) explained that these types of rights that have been developing in France and Germany in recent years.

The committee considered whether the right to be offline was a result of the current "war for talent" or whether this was a reaction against the practice across the City that developed during the course of the pandemic that employees working remotely worked longer hours than before.

Jane Mann (JM) emphasized the importance of this issue, particularly for employers addressing workplace stress. JM also raised the information security risk posed by remote working – the committee was surprised that many City firms had not properly grappled with this risk. The committee agreed that remote working has elevated these risks. The committee considered the extent to which law firms ringfenced access to matter files that lawyers have not worked on to address the information security risks posed by remote working.

ML raised the issue of online etiquette and the challenges this posed with remote working, particularly for more junior employees and new joiners.

*Retention and remote working*

The Chair noted the great resignation was an issue, with more senior employees choosing to leave work. The committee also agreed that this was an issue with more junior staff deciding to move jobs and take up remote work more readily. Nick Robertson argued that this would ultimately be client driven and working practices would depend on client demands.

The committee considered the risks that remote working could pose for the gender imbalance in senior roles, particularly in law firms. JM noted that it is possible to work remotely and still have visibility in the office in order to take advantage of new flexible working arrangements.

*4 day working week*

The committee considered the 4 day working week "project" and how widespread these practices have become. ML has a number of clients who have moved to a 4 day

working week and kept pay at 100% while analyzing the impact on productivity and profitability.

6. The Chair thanked Kate Brearley for her time on the committee.
7. The Chair confirmed that the next meeting would be on 8 June 2022 at Baker & McKenzie. JM offered Fox Williams to host the committee's meeting in September.