

Open to question

Adam Makepeace



Adam Makepeace is Practice Director at Duncan Lewis & Co. the largest legal aid civil practice in the country.

How did you get here

today? It's fair to say it has been by the long route! I did legal aid at the beginning of my career, but subsequently did conveyancing, employment and then commercial litigation and international arbitration. However, I was always more interested in the way law firms worked than working in a law firm. I did an MBA and then started looking for a job. There aren't many real management jobs in law, certainly not for someone without experience. Duncan Lewis took a punt on me – and me on them.



What do you feel will be the biggest changes to the way law is practised in the next few years? This is too big a question to answer. I am clear in my mind that the 'worst case scenarios' in terms of the reductions of the number of solicitors and the reductions of the number of solicitors' firms are probably conservative estimates.

Is the future of legal services providers 'corporate'? Without doubt, yes. The big issues to do with consolidation, financing, marketing and IT all require a combination of skills and cash that are not in abundance in law firms. The corporate model

facilitates these. The legal market is too large for 'corporates' to ignore and traditional law firms are too weak to put up any concerted resistance.

What makes you get out of bed each morning?

Screaming children. My screaming children I hasten to add – and it isn't really the morning, more like the middle of the night.

What's the best business advice you've ever received?

I heard the DJ Chris Evans say the other day that mid-thirties was a good age because your two lines of energy and experience converge to mean that you are at your most effective. Good job really – as my energy is about to start to wane.

What advice would you give to anyone considering joining a Legal Aid practice? Join a big one.

Given a magic wand, what changes would you make to Legal Aid in England and Wales? I would like to conjure up a blank piece of paper and a group of people focused on achieving the best possible outcome for those who need, but can't afford, legal advice and the power to implement the changes in the face

of understandable but unhelpful existing vested interests.

AFC Wimbledon or MK Dons?

AFC. It is a long way still to go for another FA Cup triumph, but League football next year is a distinct possibility.

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What can't you live without? Two Blackberries.

What aspect of modern life would you like to be rid of? I have read the Slow Manifesto and I can see that we are clearly bonkers in terms of the pace at which we live our lives, but to be honest it suits my personality so I am not going to wish the modern world away.

Who are your heroes? They are all sporting heroes. My first real memories are of 1981: the Headingley Ashes Test. Botham and Willis tend to get the plaudits, but my abiding memory of the game is Graham Dilley getting his 50. I am therefore in the peculiar position of having

Graham Dilley as one of my all time batting heroes.

How much is diversity (or the lack of) still an issue for the law? I am a bit out of the loop on this issue. Duncan Lewis is easily the most diverse work force of any law firm in the country so it is certainly not anything that's an issue for us.

Are we becoming a more litigious society? Certainly there seems to be an assumption that if there is an undesirable outcome to anything that there is someone to blame. I think that most people would like to see the pendulum swing back a little. If anyone can define what 'common sense' actually is – then a dose of that wouldn't go amiss.

How's your work/life balance? Depends who you ask. I think it is fine. My wife disagrees.

Do you still have ambitions you've yet to fulfil? I want to be the Chief Operating Officer of the largest law firm in the world. Either Duncan Lewis has a lot more growing to do or I will have to wait by the phone for the call from Clifford Chance...! ☑