

Summer
2019

IM, irwinmitchell
solicitors

Expert Hand. Human Touch.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a black cable-knit sweater and a necklace, is seated in a wheelchair. She is holding a shiny, reflective motorcycle helmet in her lap. Her hands are resting on the helmet, and she is wearing a large ring with a blue stone and purple nail polish. The background shows a bright, sunny outdoor setting with a large window and a green lawn.

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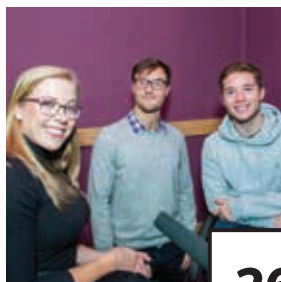
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We hope you enjoy the second edition of our magazine as much as we loved talking to the clients, charities and characters that bring these pages to life.

Everyone has a turning point at some time in their lives and it's our aim to be there to offer expert advice and a helping hand on their journey ahead. The people we meet and work with at various chapters in their lives leave us proud, humbled and with some truly incredible stories to share with you.

Our cover star Nathalie McGloin was just 16 when she was left paralysed from the chest down following a car crash. Her determination not to be defined by this has led to her holding a top job in Formula One. Turn to page eight to find out more.

The role charities up and down the country play in supporting someone with a serious injury or illness is invaluable. A brand new facility providing vital support to those affected by a disability has opened in the UK and you can find out more about Caudwell Children on page four.

The legal industry, like many others, has had to work harder than most to break away from the idea that it is a profession dominated by men. To celebrate 100 years of women in law we sat down with six of our solicitors to find out how far we've come and what more we can do. The interviews begin on page 10.

If you have any feedback on any of our features then we'd love to hear from you at turningpoint@irwinmitchell.com



Stuart

Stuart Henderson

Managing partner of personal injury



Centre of excellence

A new facility providing vital support to disabled children opens in the UK.



Our Medical Negligence team is supporting and working closely with a host of fantastic charities this year including Caudwell Children, which works hard to help disabled children live active and independent lives.

The organisation was established back in 2000 and has supported more than 42,000 children to date with services worth over £40 million. In May this year, it reached a landmark moment with the launch of a state-of-the-art facility, which will take its work to a whole new level.

The £18 million Caudwell International Children's Centre (CICC) is located at Keele University in Staffordshire. It is the first purpose-built centre of its kind in the UK and will focus on multi-disciplinary therapy programmes on childhood disability, as well as research into neurodevelopment conditions like autism.

The charity hopes that the centre will prove to be a safe haven where children and families can feel at home while healthcare professionals provide them with the support they need. Located in the University's grounds, the centre is also expected to lead to collaboration with academics on a host of new projects.

Support for years to come

We've already touched upon how autism will be a priority at the CICC and its range of services will also include a new assessment and intervention pathway.

The charity has received approval from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to provide the innovative pathway and it marks the first time that Caudwell has offered regulated services in its 19-year history.

The move is part of Caudwell Children's long-term strategy to improve its provision of support for children and families. Around 170,000 children in the UK are thought to be affected by autism, while 54% of all people supported by Caudwell Children have a diagnosis of the condition.

Following news of the CQC's approval for the new pathway, the charity's chief executive Trudi Beswick described it as a "momentous occasion".

She added: "I firmly believe that our approach to autism assessment, diagnosis and support can one day become the blueprint for all autism pathways in the UK and elsewhere. We are on the cusp of a new era, not only for the charity, but for the nation's ability to support the estimated 1 in 100 children in the UK who will receive an autism diagnosis."

We know the impact a disability can have on a child and their family and are proud to be working with Caudwell Children at their ground-breaking new centre.

You can find out more about what makes Caudwell Children so unique by visiting caudwellchildren.com



Forward thinking

Thinking about planning for later life is not something any of us find easy. Our research has allowed us to take an in-depth look.

We all lead such busy lives that it can be difficult to look ahead to issues like preparing for retirement or ensuring we have a Will in place. It's important to find the time to plan for the future. These are far from the only matters that should be on the agenda, with care being something that increasingly deserves everyone's attention.

Understanding how our care will be funded in the future is vital, yet our own research has shown that few of us are actually taking steps to address the issue.

Delving into the data

Our study with YouGov revealed that 60% of us are not saving for potential care fees in later life and have no plan to do so, with just 9% putting money away. The poll of more than 2,100 adults also found that 70% had no idea of the annual cost of care home support.

Another fascinating insight from the survey was that younger generations were more likely to have considered saving for elderly care than older people. For example, while 54% of those aged 18 to 24 were saving or intending to, 73% of over-55s said they did not and have no plans to.

Our private client expert Kelly Greig suggested the findings once again came down to people feeling uneasy about looking ahead.

She said: "Many people don't want to think about the future or talk about it with their families when there are often more pressing financial issues in the present, such as buying a home and the costs of children and education."

So if you're ready to consider the matter, just how do you get started? Kelly advises that a key first step is to have all of the necessary facts in front of you.

"Gathering as much information as possible is a crucial first step and it can be useful for others too, such as elderly relatives who have moved into care and want to gain a better understanding of it all," she explains.

Kelly adds that it is also important to consider how your care may be funded, as well as whether you may be eligible for some form of financial support due to your personal circumstances or specific healthcare needs.

Another issue which can sometimes go under the radar is the issue of care home contracts, with Kelly urging people to gain legal advice to properly understand the terms of such agreements from the outset.

She adds: "Planning for the future and thinking about the care home support you may require can be difficult, but preparation now can make a huge difference in the long run. "We would always urge anyone with concerns or questions about the issue to seek specialist advice, as this will not only give them peace of mind but also ensure they can look to the future more positively."

Our later life planning packages help anyone managing the affairs of loved ones to make the right decisions when preparing for the future. Whether it's moving into a care home or the need to manage someone's affairs, they highlight the important issues to consider and offer step-by-step guidance and practical and tailored legal advice.

If you'd like to discuss our later life packages in more detail contact our expert at kelly.greig@irwinmitchell.com

Out in front

How Nathalie's determination has led her to a top job in motorsport.

Nathalie McGloin was just 16 when she was left paralysed from the chest down following a car crash. Complications in her recovery meant that she needed to stay in hospital for almost a year, but throughout that time her determination not to be defined by her injuries grew with each passing day.

This early show of defiance against adversity was clear for all to see when she returned to school and completed her A Levels just months after being discharged.

With our Asset Management team overseeing the vital funds secured to assist her recovery, Nathalie was able to focus on getting the best from life. This led her to the world of sport and wheelchair rugby but, sadly, another injury brought her dreams of competing at the Paralympics to an end. It was at this point that a friend encouraged her to try motorsport.

After her accident Nathalie was on a ventilator and couldn't even sit up in bed. Thanks to her incredible determination, hard work and months of rehabilitation she was able to take part in sport again and it felt pretty special.

She explained: "Getting behind the wheel on the track was an amazing feeling and it made my injuries a non-event."

Adrenaline for all

Nathalie quickly fell in love with the fact that motorsport meant she could compete with able-bodied drivers and she became the first woman with a spinal injury to be granted a race licence in the UK. She currently races a hand-controlled Cayman S in the Porsche Club Championship.

Nathalie sees her safety as of paramount importance and has done from the moment she had to prove she could exit the car unaided in under 30 seconds to get her licence.

Away from competing, Nathalie set up the Spinal Track charity to give disabled drivers a chance to experience life on the track and also got involved in Dare to be Different which promotes women in motorsport.

Her work led to her being asked to present a trophy at the British Grand Prix, the first disabled person to do so. However, even this didn't prepare her for an unforgettable moment in 2017 when she was asked to become the president of the FIA's Accessibility and Disability Commission. The organisation is focused on improving accessibility in motorsport, while also ensuring those with disabilities can follow Nathalie's lead and compete safely.

She said: "I was lost for words when I was asked about the role but I was delighted to take it up."

"Motorsport is one of the few sports where disabled people can compete effectively against able-bodied rivals and we really feel it is important to celebrative that inclusiveness.

"Being both a woman and a wheelchair user, I think I'm an example of how motorsport really can offer a level-playing field. I have thoroughly enjoyed my work with the FIA so far and am hopeful of spreading this message far and wide for years to come."

If you would like more information on how our Asset Management team were able to help Nathalie please visit imassetmanagement.com

To find out more about Nathalie's charity visit spinaltrack.org





Trailblazers

Marking 100 years of women in law with a spotlight on some of our inspirational solicitors from all areas of our business.

In 2019 we celebrate the centenary of the landmark moment when women were able to become solicitors for the first time. The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 was introduced and finally made it possible for women to enter the profession.

To mark this incredibly important milestone, we asked six leading female solicitors to give us their views on how far the industry has come, what they've learnt along the way and what it takes to be a woman in law.



Victoria Brackett
The CEO of our Business Legal Services division has a wealth of experience in dispute resolution areas, including banking and insurance litigation.

What is your proudest career moment to date?
"I acted for the Society of Lloyd's in the defence of a fraud case during the 1990s and 2000s and had to prepare witness evidence with every chairman from 1979 to 1992. They all gave evidence during the six-month trial – which we won – and I received personal thanks from them all for guiding them through a three-year period of uncertainty."

What does your average day look like?
"Very busy! I get the kids out to school, check which office I'm visiting and then travel. Then it's meetings and catching up with people, more travel, helping with homework, walking the dogs, dinner and finally bed."

How do you view developments in diversity within the legal sector?
"I think that society has forced us to change, but there is still plenty of work to do. Saying that, I think that my employer has a healthy attitude and recognises the benefits of diversity at all levels."

Finally, if you could invite three people to a dinner party, who would they be and why?
"Julie Walters, because she would make me laugh, David Attenborough for a host of great stories. Oh, and Gary Barlow, because I'm in love with him."



Ros Bever

Ros is our first ever female Head of Family Law and the first woman to be appointed regional managing partner of our Manchester office.

What attracted you to law?

“Everything about it. When I started out in law, I did crime and family work as a paralegal working in a legal aid practice where it was incredibly busy. I found the people, the problems and the pace very exciting and I was given a lot of responsibilities.”

What have been your career highlights?

“Without a shadow of doubt, successful appeals in the Supreme Court are special highlights for me. Not only did I

feel that justice was done, but also the experience itself was wonderful.”

What are the challenges still facing women today and how can we overcome them?

“The challenges remain for those who have the desire to have a family as well as to progress at work. While men are more hands-on at home now, there remains a stigma attached to the woman who can’t make events like parents’ evenings - you’re seen as a parent who isn’t interested.

“Ensuring flexibility does not affect career progression is key to tackling this. Changing perceptions is also important, but I know this takes time and we really aren’t there yet.”



Rachelle Mahapatra

Head of Medical Negligence and our new managing partner in our Leeds office, Rachelle has supported a number of clients affected by problems and failings in care.

How do you view developments in diversity during your time in the profession?

“There have been huge changes, as when I started in law there were few women. I am also half-Indian and there were very few people from ethnic backgrounds working in the sector too.

“It has totally changed since and we have a much better balance of people from different walks of life today. Law is much more accessible and, with changes such as firms paying

tuition fees and other maintenance costs, we have a real mix of trainee applicants too.”

What does success look like to you?

“Securing a settlement that will provide vital support to a client and help them live the way they want to.”

If you could go back in time 10 years and give yourself one piece of career advice, what would it be?

“Don’t take yourself too seriously!”

Who inspires you?

“My father came to the UK by sea from a small village in India in 1957. He worked hard and always encouraged us to do the same. He is funny, intelligent, kind and a great role model.”

What’s the biggest change you’ve seen in the legal profession since your career started?

“I think all professions have become more pressured, but it is a joy to be able to have a career in a business which recognises the need to deliver excellence in client service at all times and embeds that into our core values.”



Louise Jenkins

Louise is a Partner in our Sheffield office with more than two decades of experience supporting people affected by a range of serious injuries.

What has been the proudest moment of your career so far?

“Fighting a case at the Court of Appeal to ensure my client could move from a nursing home into his own property. The house was adapted for his needs and he also had access to a care team who could support him and help him get the best from life. It wasn’t the financial settlement that made it a

success; it was giving my client his life back and ensuring he had options and choices for his future.”

If you could go back in time and give yourself one piece of advice, what would it be?

“Recognise and embrace your strengths and channel those into a career you are really passionate about. Be the best you can be every day.”



Alison Eddy

Alison is the managing partner of our London office, having been there since the day it opened over 20 years ago.

If you could invite three people to a dinner party, who would it be and why?

“Michelle Obama, Emma Thompson and Amal Clooney - all because of their passion, style and sense of social justice.”

How do you view developments in diversity during your time in the profession?

“When I went into law women represented 8% of the profession and now it’s 50%, with an even higher percentage at trainee level. No one spoke about diversity and inclusion. Very few law firms had diversity groups even 15 years ago and we were one of the first to set up a Diversity Board in

2008. We have now shifted focus to intersectionality and recognition that diversity and inclusion needs to embrace LGBT+, BAME, disability and social mobility as well as gender.”

What the best bit of advice you’ve been given?

“The secret to a successful career is doing what you love.”

What is your proudest career moment to date?

“All my air punching moments have been achieving great results for clients who have suffered life changing injuries. A while ago I settled a claim for a young woman who suffered a spinal cord injury when she wasn’t treated for a diabetic coma shortly before giving birth. When we settled her claim I will always remember her mother saying to me ‘What an amazing job you have helping people get their lives back’.”



Leena Savjani

Leena is one of our partners in the London Medical Negligence department and heads up a team specialising in all types of cases.

Describe your average day?

“There is no ‘average’ day and the variety is what I like about the job, that and knowing the work we do makes a real difference to people’s lives. I work closely with all members of my team and my days can vary but include court hearings, client visits, conferences and meetings in the office.”

What’s the biggest change you’ve seen in the legal profession since your career started?

“The profession has changed in so many ways – law reform, changing client needs and demands, artificial intelligence, technology, the list goes on. The challenge is to remain agile and dynamic to ensure we continue to meet the needs of our clients and thrive as a business.”

How do you view developments in diversity during your time in the profession?

“We are committed to ensuring that we are a diverse and inclusive firm but this is a challenge not just for us but for the legal profession in general.”

POSSIBILITY

Rugby for everyone

Discover how we're getting stuck into a new sports initiative.



This year's Six Nations served up incredible action and undoubtedly highlighted how few sports can match the excitement and drama that rugby has to offer.

We were delighted to partner with The Times to support both their coverage of the tournament and also The Ruck podcast produced by its sister station TalkSPORT. Now, our team are heading back into the scrum thanks to a new partnership with children's rugby charity, Wooden Spoon.

The charity was established in 1983 with a core focus on changing children's lives through the power of rugby. It has distributed more than £26 million to hundreds of projects, with the Partner Club programme being one of its core initiatives.

The concept gives grassroots clubs involved in both rugby league and union a chance to work with the charity to raise funds to support their clubs, with a specific focus on projects related to disabled or disadvantaged children.

Our team are proud to have been named as the first headline partner of the initiative, which will now be known as the Wooden Spoon Partner Club programme.

The agreement with the charity will also see the creation of the Irwin Mitchell Cup, a special prize which will be awarded annually to clubs in the initiative that have gone above and beyond in their efforts to make rugby as inclusive as possible.

Craig Marshall, CEO of Personal Legal Services, said: "Rugby is an incredible sport and Wooden Spoon has shown how it can really have the power to change lives. We're delighted to have partnered with the charity and look forward to supporting its fantastic work."

Linking up with Wooden Spoon builds on our existing commitment to support disability sport through our Don't Quit, Do It campaign. The initiative is backed by stars like Hannah Cockcroft MBE and has seen us provide grants and support to a host of different sports clubs and individuals across the UK.

Super exciting news

In August we will once again be supporting the Superhero Series, the UK's only disability sports series offering competitors a chance to run (or walk), cycle and swim around Dorney Lake. But what has that got to do with Wooden Spoon we hear you ask? Well something is stirring, and that something is a special activation space we're creating in partnership with the charity.

Previous years have seen the event include a football and tennis challenge but for 2019 the focus will be egg shaped and we promise everyone attending will have a cracking time.

Find out more about Wooden Spoon by visiting woodenspoon.org.uk

You can sign up for the Superhero Series at superheroseries.co.uk



A cause worth fighting for

Families across England take a stand to help their children access essential special educational needs (SEN) services.

The ultimate wish of any parent is for their child to have the opportunity to reach their full potential. However, what happens if the vital support that they need to achieve that is suddenly taken away?

For the families of five children with SEN in Surrey, the answer was simple – fight back. The families called on our Public Law and Human Rights team after their local county council announced plans to cut more than £10 million from its SEN budget.

Our lawyer Anne-Marie Irwin explains: “This is funding which makes a huge difference to young people’s lives, ensuring they can get access to a range of vital services including speech and language therapy and one-to-one support.

“Removing that funding would therefore have a major impact on many pupils and ultimately affect their learning in the long run.”

Our team successfully applied for a judicial review into the Surrey case and while a hearing concluded that the proposals put forward were lawful, the ruling meant that any cuts were delayed by at least two years. Surrey County Council also confirmed that it intends to discuss any future proposals in detail with the affected families.

The tip of the iceberg

Our team is also preparing for a hearing involving three families from across England who are challenging the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Education on the issue of SEN funding.

The three families, who are from North Yorkshire, Birmingham and East Sussex, strongly believe that current government grants mean councils do not have the funds they need to meet their obligation of providing support to pupils with a range of conditions.

“Anne-Marie added: “How local authorities fund SEN is a major issue nationally and will only become more acute as local authorities continue to feel that they have no option but to further squeeze services in light of continued budget cuts.

“The families we support are understandably concerned and believe the government’s current policy is leaving thousands of pupils across the country in limbo.

“Something simply has to change no matter how challenging - it always feels impossible until it’s done.”

We’ll provide an update on this issue in the next edition of Turning Point.

Ed is able to be independent

Discover how our client and ad campaign star Ed continues to defy the odds in his quest for independence.

During the early days of his recovery from a serious brain injury, Ed Buckley's father would take him to watch his beloved West Ham play at Upton Park. On the way, the parting crowds would wish him well as he passed, unresponsive, in his wheelchair.

Fast forward to 2019 and it is all change. Not only are the Hammers in a new home at Queen Elizabeth Park, but Ed makes the trip on his own to meet his dad and often stops to chat to the familiar faces who greeted him all those years ago. The story is one of several which highlight just how far Ed has come in such a short space of time.

A life-changing moment

Ed was a 20-year-old student with ambitions to become a pilot when he was hit by a speeding taxi in Leeds in 2012. On several occasions in the months afterwards his family were told he may not survive. However, after six months in a coma Ed made incredible progress, including learning how to walk and talk again.

Notable other achievements include completing his degree in Aerospace Technology and even pushing himself to the limit by competing in the Superhero Series triathlon. Now, Ed has reached a new milestone by stepping back into the world of work. The progress he has made means he has been able to take up a part-time role at a retail store and continue to build up his independence.

He said: "I really should be a pilot right now but I got dealt cards where my life went in another direction. I am always just trying to be the best that I can be."

A star in the making

Once we found that Ed was working at John Lewis and loving every minute of his regular interaction with customers, we knew that he was perfect for our 'I am able' campaign.

The campaign highlights the progress that five of our clients have made after sustaining serious injuries and illnesses.

Focusing on ability and not disability, we're shining a light on the things our clients are able to do, not what they are not. We're proud to have played a small part in their lives by helping them access the support, rehabilitation, and adaptive equipment needed. Ed really has gone from strength to strength and as well as starring in a nationwide advertising campaign, he also features on a podcast that you can read about on page 26.

Whether it's watching West Ham forever blowing bubbles or helping a customer buy a bedside table, Ed's journey has been a remarkable one and we can't wait to see what his future holds.





Appy days

A new app has been launched which could change lives.

Whether we like it or not, there is no denying that so much of our time is spent on our mobile phones. Apps are part of our everyday lives and have become an easy way for many of us to pass a few spare minutes or even hours.

However, rather than casually scrolling through pictures and posts, wouldn't it be amazing if one of those little software programmes had the power to change a life?

Our London office has close links with the Royal London Hospital's Major Trauma Centre, with many of our clients accessing vital recovery and rehabilitation support at the site. Since the start of this year, the centre has been testing a new prototype app which could change the game when it comes to recovering from a serious injury.

Called AfterTrauma Recovery, the app is thought to be the first of its kind in the UK and has been designed to provide trauma survivors and their carers with advice and support as they look to regain independence and get the most from life.

Thinking outside the box

The world-leading Centre for Trauma Sciences and developers SODA built the app for iOS and Android thanks to a grant from the Barts Charity. Based on the idea of supported self-management, it is aimed at educating trauma survivors about their conditions, as well as helping them look after themselves in the best way.

Key elements of the app include information on symptoms and how they can be managed and details on rehabilitation plans. App users can also work with their doctors to set goals for their recovery and, perhaps most importantly, have the chance to connect with others who have similar injuries so they can share their stories and support each other.

Sofie Toft, a serious injury expert at our London office, said:

“Some truly incredible work is being undertaken to support those affected by traumatic injuries and we think an app could be a huge help to many of our clients.

“We turn to smartphones and tablets for so much these days, so providing vital information and support through that route makes sense on so many levels.”

Despite the AfterTrauma Recovery app still being in the development stage, the creators remain keen for any feedback as they look to make improvements. You can download it now from both the Google Play store and the Apple Store.

Flower power

Find out how sunflower lanyards are bringing hidden disabilities and conditions into focus.

So many of us wear lanyards, often in an effort to keep those all-important ID cards or door passes used at work safe and secure. The recently launched sunflower lanyards also serve an important purpose, but in a very different way.

The bright green, sunflower print lanyard is fast becoming the established symbol of hidden disabilities in the UK. The lanyard has been designed to discreetly let staff know that customers have a condition such as autism, dementia or hearing or visual impairments.

Recently organisations including supermarkets, train operators providers and airports have embraced the idea, with the lanyards acting as a discreet sign to alert staff to an individual who may need additional assistance while shopping or travelling.



A blooming brilliant idea

Our legal experts have welcomed the move as a positive step forward for awareness and understanding of autism, dementia and other conditions.

Mathieu Culverhouse is an expert lawyer in our public law team and has regularly campaigned for improved support and help from public services.

He said: “The concept is a simple and could make a huge difference to many people’s lives. Through our work we have seen situations where people have faced issues on public transport or in other environments due to a misunderstanding or lack of awareness about specific conditions.

“These lanyards are a way of showing the wider world that there may be more for them to consider than they first realise.”

Over 10,000 lanyards have been handed out so far and you can pick yours up from a local Sainsbury’s or at airports up and down the country.

In the hot seat

How Phil King's years of policing have influenced his dual role.



We're lucky to have a wealth of experience and knowledge in our teams. Newcastle-based associate paralegal Phil King is a great example of this.

Here he outlines how his three decades in the police force have influenced his work supporting victims of serious injury and lead him to be our National Police Co-ordinator.

Q What did you do before you joined Irwin Mitchell?

A "I served with Northumbria Police for over 33 years. I had a host of different roles initially, working in areas including 24/7 response and the underwater search unit. However, the last 22 years of my service were focused on roads policing.

"I became a senior investigating officer for road death and serious injury collisions, while I also trained as a family liaison officer and co-ordinator. The roles meant I attended the scene of a range of serious road traffic collisions and provided support to many families affected by them."

Q How has this influenced your role today?

A "My experience in policing means that I'm acutely aware of the effect that incidents like road collisions have on those affected. It can be an incredibly difficult time for everyone involved and I completely understand the importance of providing the right support.

"My experience means I've been able to take up a specialist role within the company to help improve its relationships with police forces across the UK."

Q What does your usual working day look like?

A "It depends! I spend a lot of time staying in touch with contacts from a range of forces, and I also organise the police events being held at our offices.

"I also assist colleagues with case work related to scene visits and statements, while I often attend criminal court cases for my clients. I am very fortunate to be able to call on my training as a family liaison officer for this and a court visit is of course another chance to catch up with officers."

Q What events do you run?

A "Our training days allow us to showcase the support we provide to those affected by road traffic collisions.

"The events have improved our level of contact with police forces up and down the UK, helping us to build a strong relationship with the officers."

Q How does your role help our clients?

A "We hope this work helps in a number of ways. Maintaining close links to forces and individual officers means that families who require legal advice can be pointed in the right direction and get the support they require.

"This relationship with officers means we can closely follow the progression of any criminal cases. This can be vital as we look to ensure our clients are able to access the financial support they often need to assist with their recovery and rehabilitation."

Let's Talk About It



Our new podcast series 'Let's Talk About It' is out now. We were lucky to be able to call on three big personalities to help us kick the series off in style.

Paralympic champion Hannah Cockcroft MBE took time out of her busy training schedule ahead of Tokyo 2020 to take part. While grand slam winning tennis player Alfie Hewett had a break from preparing for this year's Wimbledon where he is once again targeting success in both the singles and doubles events. Joining the pair was aspiring athlete Ed Buckley who you can read more about on page 18.

The guests provided a fascinating insight into how sport has affected them, with Hannah explaining that she found it tough not being able to join in when she was younger. She said: "PE was always the one thing I was taken out of at school, so I always felt my disability then. But once I found sport it made me accept it a little bit more and see that it is okay."

Alfie provides a different perspective as, unlike Hannah, he was not born with his disability. He talks candidly on the podcast about being diagnosed with Perthes Disease.

He said: "I was on my feet every day playing football at seven-years-old and then I had a life-changing thing happen to me. The transition was tough, but sport was my way out and helped me through it."

Ed reveals how sport was a key part of his recovery from a serious brain injury. He was in a coma for six months but has made remarkable progress, not only taking up rowing but also completing two triathlons.

He said: "It is so easy to just sit on your Xbox or PlayStation and do nothing for a whole day, but the reason I have recovered so well, considering how bad I was, is because I've stayed very active."

A total of six podcasts are planned for our 'Let's Talk About It' series, which is focused on many of the issues which relate to living with a disability. Future episodes are set to look at themes from home life and children to travel and managing money.

You can download the first episode or subscribe to the entire series by searching for Irwin Mitchell or 'Let's Talk About It' on iTunes, Spotify and all of the other major podcast providers.



A change for the better



Our expert asbestos-related disease solicitor, Ian Bailey, explains why the legal world may have to change to keep up with the developments in cancer treatment.

In the last two years immunotherapy has become the most significant factor affecting asbestos litigation.

The treatment for mesothelioma is not currently available on the NHS which is why seeking funding to ensure our clients can access it has become a core part of our work.

A recent case on accessing immunotherapy support has highlighted some very important matters that could mean it is time for a rethink on how such issues are handled.

The costs

The case related to a man who was diagnosed with mesothelioma in 2017 and secured a settlement from the insurer involved in February 2018. As part of the agreement the insurer agreed to meet the costs of immunotherapy and the man went on to have six sessions paid for through his claim.

Towards the end of the treatment, the man's condition deteriorated but he continued with the sessions. Sadly, just weeks after his final appointment, he passed away. The insurers refused to reimburse payment for the final treatments, amounting to almost £30,000 until just days before a trial, when they agreed to honour the earlier agreement to pay.

The implications

A case of this nature highlights how issues can still arise in an asbestos-related disease case even after a settlement has been agreed. It also demonstrates why legal experts must ensure clients are advised of such risks and emphasise the need to gather proper evidence on oncology issues from experts involved in a specialist field like immunotherapy.

Perhaps most importantly though, it is just the latest in several cases to hint that current approaches used to resolve legal cases may not be suited to such fast-developing areas of medicine.

The solution?

Introducing some form of float or trust agreement could address this issue, with such a system providing safeguards to both mesothelioma sufferers and the insurer assessing whether a payment should be made.

Most importantly, it could prevent mesothelioma sufferers facing a treatment delay while insurers determine whether such support is required. While the court currently has no power to impose such an agreement, with more people seeking this treatment than ever before, it is clear that a change may have to be considered very soon.

Whatever happens, the system must ensure that payments are made promptly to mesothelioma sufferers, when an oncologist has recommended this treatment as being in the best interests of the patient.

When it comes to a complicated and emotive subject such as this, expert advice is essential. If you'd like to find out more contact Ian today.



Ian Bailey
Partner, Personal Injury

E: ian.bailey@irwinmitchell.com

Waking up

to brain injury fatigue

Find out how Headway's Action for Brain Injury Week put a spotlight on the forgotten impact of tiredness.

We have close links to charities across the UK, from smaller community-based initiatives that our local offices support to others who have a nationwide outlook.

One national organisation which our serious injury lawyers work with up and down the country is Headway, a charity that helps people get the best from life after they have been affected by a brain injury.

Headway are involved in a host of fantastic initiatives, but their biggest campaign is undoubtedly Action for Brain Injury Week.

Held annually, the awareness week puts a spotlight on the effects of brain injury and each year it revolves around a different theme. Previous campaigns have included You, Me and Brain Injury, which looked at how such injuries affect individuals and those around them, and A New Me, which considered how they change people. This year's Action for Brain Injury Week, which launched on 20 May, was all about a forgotten symptom of such injuries – fatigue.

Tired of misconceptions

So many of us lead busy lives and feel tired from time to time, but fatigue after brain injuries is not only hugely significant but also, sadly, misunderstood.

It is one of the most commonly experienced effects of a brain injury, with those affected often tiring quickly and needing more time to recharge and recover. In fact, Headway revealed that it is a symptom reported by around 11,000 callers to its helpline every year.

This is why the charity's Action for Brain Injury Week theme for this year was 'Brain Drain – Wake Up to Fatigue!', a concept aimed at raising awareness of the issue and also breaking any stigma related to it.

Neil Whiteley heads up our serious injury team and knows, from the cases he's worked on over the years, how serious a subject it is.

He said: "Our brains are incredible and complex things and – like any other part of our bodies - it can take time and energy for them to recover from an injury.

"Fatigue is a completely understandable symptom and it's great that Headway has highlighted how and why we should all be more aware of it. The seven-day initiative has become a crucial fixture in the calendar and shines a spotlight on so many vital issues."

To find out more about the great work Headway do visit their website at headway.org.uk



I am able to be happy

Our client, Kit



Irwin Mitchell Solicitors understand the impact of a personal injury. That's why we'll help you receive the best possible financial settlement, medical care, rehabilitation and support, whatever your illness or injury. **So you are able to get the most out of life.**

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08000 28 29 30

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