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Number of partners 3

Assistant Solicitors 6

Other fee-earners 4

The Firm

Underwoods is a highly influential flagship firm and a model for other law firms. It provides a superlative service and with its unparalleled standards of client care Underwoods' glowing reputation is fully deserved. It has an innovative and commercial approach and provides clients with secure websites for 24-7 access to their files. In South Africa the firm operates as Underwoods South Africa. Underwoods specialises in civil litigation and is particularly well known for its employment, commercial, personal injury, costs and public and administrative law work. It is unique in giving clients an appeal procedure to a QC funded by Underwoods Solicitors in the event of a client being unhappy about terms of settlement in a fixed fee or contingency fee case, and in publishing its monthly fee-earner audit results on its website and paying £50 each and every time the firm's four core client care promises are not met.

It is one of the very best firms and now has significant commercial and tax-planning practices. It has Investor in People accreditation. Kerry Underwood leads a team of talented specialist solicitors. The firm is a consultant to Commonwealth governments, government departments, local authorities and law firms large and small, and now has a substantial Costs Law Department. Former Judge Michael Cook (Cook on Costs) is now a consultant, giving Underwoods an unrivalled costs expertise. Kerry Underwood is a member of the Employment Law Advisers Appeal Scheme (formerly the Employment Appeal Tribunal Advice Scheme) and is on the Equal Opportunities' Commission panel of solicitors. The firm is on the Disability Rights' Commission panel of solicitors. Michael Cook and Kerry Underwood are leading authorities on costs. Michael Cook is the author of Cook on Costs and editor of Litigation Letter, general editor of Butterworths Costs Service and was Honorary President of the Association of Law and Costs Draftsmen and was President of the London Solicitors' Litigation Association. He is a former Circuit Judge and High Court Costs' Assessor. He contributes to Cordery on Solicitors. Kerry Underwood is author of the best seller, No Win No Fee No Worries, and of Fixed Costs (2nd edition July 2006). He is editor of the Costs, Funding and Referral Fees section of Butterworths Personal Injury Litigation Service. He also conducts seminars for the University of Cambridge and the Law Society and contributes to radio, television and to legal journals. He is a former Chairman of Employment Tribunals and is a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. Robert Males lectures for a number of concerns and is a member of the Civil Justice Council's Working Party on Fixed Costs, and is a fellow of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies. Robert Males was nominated as Best Trainer at the LawCareers.Net/Trainee Solicitors Group Awards 2005.

John Bartholomew has joined the firm as a partner in the Commercial Department specialising in all aspects of commercial property work as well as general business advice and tax planning for individuals.

Principal Areas of Work

Employment: Work includes unfair dismissal, contractual disputes, redundancy, TUPE, pensions, human rights, all forms of discrimination, maternity, paternity and adoption, EU law, severance agreements, drafting contracts of employment, policy documents and staff handbooks, employment tribunal and employment appeal tribunal advocacy, and benefits.

Litigation: Work includes commercial litigation, personal injury, claimant and defendant (Law Society's Personal Injury Panel), clinical negligence, debt recovery and contractual disputes, costs disputes.

Commercial: Work includes all aspects of leasehold and freehold property, including office, shop and industrial units, advising on contract terms and business agreements and sale and purchase of businesses and business start-ups.

Administrative/Public Law: Work includes judicial review, education, civil liberty matters, discrimination, human rights and local authority work.

Costs Law: All aspects of costs law including conditional fee agreements, contingency fee agreements and fixed costs. Consultant Michael Cook is author of 'Cook on Costs' and a former High Court Costs Assessor. Kerry Underwood is author of the standard textbooks on conditional fees (No Win No Fee No Worries) and fixed costs (Fixed Costs).

Family: Former Designated Family Judge Michael Cook heads up the Family Department, covering all aspects of family law.

Property: Commercial and residential work including office, shop and industrial units as well as development work and agricultural property.

Clients

Underwoods' unmatched service standards attract footballers, actors, barristers and judges as well as major companies (including many plcs). The firm has a significant South African-related practice and a specialist Commonwealth law practice. Its Costs Department is widely used by other firms of solicitors.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Employment	25%
Costs Law	15%
Commercial	15%
Family	15%
Personal Injury	10%
Local Governnt/Administrative & Public Law	10%
Property	10%

CONTACTS

Administrative/Public Law	Kerry Underwood
Commercial	John A Bartholomew
Costs Law	Michael J Cook
Employment	Kerry Underwood
Personal Injury	Victoria Tester
Private Client	Robert Males
Property	Maxine E Braham