

Underwoods

79 MARLOWES

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Breakdown of work

	%
Employment	25
Costs law	15
Commercial	15
Property	15
Personal Injury	10
Family	10
Local government/administrative and public law	10

Contacts

Senior partner Kerry Underwood
Managing partner Robert Males

Administrative/public law Kerry Underwood
Commercial John Bartholomew
Costs law Michael Cook
Employment Kerry Underwood
Family Elish KcKee
Personal Injury Victoria Tester
Private client Robert Males
Property Maxine Braham

Number of partners 3
Number of other fee-earners 10
Total staff 15

Based in Hemel Hempstead, this innovative firm is prominent in a number of areas, including employment law, family law, civil litigation and personal injury, as well as commercial services. It also handles probate and tax, wills and conveyancing.

The firm: Underwoods was founded in 1991 by Kerry Underwood. It has developed into a highly respected practice in its core areas, through a combination of first-class legal expertise and a belief in close personal relationships with clients, as well as an understanding of their concerns. It does not compromise on standards. It also makes effective use of marketing techniques, becoming the first solicitors firm to advertise on prime-time television in 1991. It is currently running a series of adverts on ITV to promote its family department.

Underwoods is accredited by the Law Society Personal Injury Panel and is a member of the Disability Rights Commission Legal Panel and Equal Opportunities Commission Panel. It has Investors in People accreditation. It has been an innovator in the offshoring of legal work and gives clients secure around-the-clock access to their files on its website. The firm has a branch in South Africa called Underwoods South Africa.

Underwoods is passionate about access to justice and will try to take on a claim whenever it can, but, if a claim is not good enough, it will tell the client.

Kerry Underwood was a part-time chairman of employment tribunals from 1993-2000 and is a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. He is a member of the Employment Appeal Tribunal Advice Scheme and the Equal Opportunities Commission Panel and stood for parliament in the 1979 general election. He appears regularly on radio and television and in the national press in relation to legal topics and is the author of the classic book.

Types of work undertaken: Employment law is a core specialisation of the firm, which acts for major public companies, medium-sized limited companies, family businesses and individuals. It provides services in all areas, in particular litigation in matters ranging from unfair dismissal and discrimination to transfers of undertakings. The firm has experience of work in employment tribunals, the Employment Appeal Tribunal and Court of Appeal and its solicitors frequently appear as advocates.

The firm has unrivalled expertise in costs with Michale Cook, Kerry Underwood and Robert Males all acknowledged experts in this field.

A comprehensive litigation service is provided, covering business disputes including contractual and negligence matters, as well as those relating to land. Advice and representation are provided for companies large and small, whether making claims or defending actions and in respect of enforcement procedures. Partnerships and individuals also instruct the firm.

As members of Resolution, the prime association for family lawyers, Underwoods encourages a constructive and conciliatory approach to legal problems within families. Family law services include a focus on preventive measures such as pre-marital agreements and trusts, cohabitation agreements, pension provision and wills and inheritance tax avoidance or reduction. The firm deals with the full range of matters, including divorce, separation, maintenance and childrens' residence and contact.

Personal injury is a particular specialism. Underwoods has secured compensation for some clients in excess of £600,000 and expertise includes employers' liability, road traffic cases, slips and trips and physical and mental injury from violent crimes.

The firm offers a growing specialised service for commercial clients, from starting a new business to mergers and acquisitions involving major plcs. Advice also includes management buy-outs and buy-ins, shareholder agreements, terms and conditions and joint ventures.

Services are also provided in wills, probate and tax and residential conveyancing.

Other offices: Wellington (South Africa)

UNDERWOODS
SOLICITORS