

Underwoods Solicitors

79 MARLOWES
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD HP1 1LF
 Phone **01442 430900**
 Email **info@underwoods-solicitors.co.uk**
 Website **www.underwoods-solicitors.co.uk**

Breakdown of work

	%
Employment	25
Commercial	25
Family	10
Local government/administrative and public law	10
Personal injury	15
Wills and probate	15

Contacts

Senior partner Kerry Underwood
Managing partner Robert Males

Administrative/public law Kerry Underwood
Commercial John Bartholomew
Costs law Kerry Underwood, Robert Males
Employment Kerry Underwood, Amanda Dorling
Family Robert Males
Personal injury Amanda Dorling
Private client Robert Males
Property John Bartholomew

Number of partners Figures will be inserted at a later date
Number of other fee-earners Figures will be inserted later
Total staff Figures will be inserted at a later date

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. By offshoring work to South Africa the firm has managed to maintain extremely high standards, both in terms of legal advice and client care, while reducing fees. The firm's service standards are widely recognised to be unmatched by any other firm.

The firm: Underwoods Solicitors 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 2000. Underwoods Solicitors is accredited by the Law Society Personal Injury 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 Solicitors 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 employment tribunal judge from 1993-2000 and is a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. He is a member of the Employment Appeal Tribunal Advice Scheme. 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 *No Win, No Fee, No Worries*. Kerry is listed in De Brett's *People of Today 2009* and the *Dictionary of International Biography* and is a member of the charity the Lord's Taverners. He is widely recognised as one of the country's leading employment lawyers.

Amanda Dorling, Robert Males and Kerry Underwood are contributors to the *Workplace Law Handbook*.

Robert Males has expertise in stress claims and represented the successful claimant in the leading Court of Appeal case of *Dickins v O2*.

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, including litigation, dismissal and discrimination, and transfers of undertakings. The firm has vast 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 law, Kerry Underwood and Robert Males being 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.

Underwoods Solicitors 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 children's residence and contact.

Personal injury is a particular specialism. Underwoods Solicitors has secured compensation for some clients in excess of £1m and expertise includes employers' liability, road traffic cases, and physical and mental injury from violent crimes. The firm is a member of Headway's Personal Injury Solicitors List. Headway is a leading charity that supports people affected by brain injury.

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 buyouts and buyins, shareholder agreements, terms and conditions and joint ventures. Services are also provided in wills, probate and tax and residential conveyancing and the firm has a significant South African practice in these matters.

Other offices: Wellington (South Africa)

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