

Ex-Fox Williams lawyer opens first multi-disciplinary employment law firm in Canary Wharf

London 14th March 2006.... Ex-Fox Williams' partner Clare Murray has set up the first specialist employment law firm in Canary Wharf.

The firm, CM Murray, services both multi-national companies and senior executives in the City and Canary Wharf. In addition to the traditional employment law advice, CM Murray provides a 'one-stop shop' for the management of client reputation with the launch of a new HR Crisis Management service. The service provides not only legal advice, but consultancy in public relations, crisis management and HR. When taking employment law advice from CM Murray, corporate or senior executive clients will have immediate integrated access to advice on the potential HR and media implications of any dispute and how to minimise unfavourable press coverage.

"In our experience, employment disputes can cause tremendous damage to the reputation of businesses and their executives. In the financial sector in particular, your reputation is your greatest asset and, if lost, it can seriously harm your future career – sometimes irreparably. Too often employment law advice is given without regard to the wider commercial interests and reputation of the client. At CM Murray we consider our clients' reputation from the outset – we believe that this is a truly unique proposition."

Murray was previously a partner at one of the UK's leading employment law firms, Fox Williams. Murray brings a breadth of experience in handling sensitive employment law issues, including international employment disputes, senior executive departures, and bonus and discrimination issues. She is chair of XBHR, the leading global forum for cross-border HR experts, www.xbhr.com. XBHR members are drawn from the leading multi-national companies around the world and include in-house HR counsel, HR directors, employment law, tax, immigration and benefits advisers based around the world, all with expertise in cross-border HR issues.

Murray believes that the time is right to establish an employment law practice in Canary Wharf, which is home to over 50 multi-national organisations including HSBC, Citigroup, Allen & Overy, Barclays PLC, BP, Clifford Chance, KPMG, Lehman Brothers, Reuters, Bank of America and McGraw Hill.

“There are currently 70,000 people working in Canary Wharf - a figure which is set to rise to 90,000 over the next three years and to 200,000 by 2014,” said Murray. “The stakes in employment law are higher than ever before. For example, the usual commercial practice of businesses not to put their underperforming senior executives through proper procedures could soon present an extremely nasty surprise.

“Many senior executives who are exited by their employers struggle to find comparable employment elsewhere because of their age and seniority. If they can show they were the victims of age discrimination (the law comes into force later this year), they will be able to recover compensation based on their losses, potentially right up to retirement and without any limit on that compensation. Combine that with the recently introduced penalty for the employer’s failure to follow the statutory dismissal procedures – a potential increase in the age discrimination compensation by up to 50% - and the employer is facing a serious financial payout and a lot of unpleasant questions at the next AGM. Advance planning, careful documentation and sensible advice from your employment lawyer are key to minimising this huge potential liability”

CM Murray have also set up a training arm in Canary Wharf, CW/HR Training, providing tailored training sessions through their employment law trainer, former head of conferences and training at IDS, Darren Newman. Future training sessions include

- TUPE law and practice - making sense of the new rules and understanding the crucial role and responsibilities of HR in the project team
- Reconciling whistle blowing obligations under Sarbanes-Oxley and other US employment rules with UK employment and privacy laws
- Employment Law Refresher for HR managers
- Employment Law for Line Managers

More information about the employment law service at CM Murray and the CW/HR Training sessions can be found at www.cm-murray.com.

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