



LONDON INTERNATIONAL
DISPUTES WEEK

Reflections on LIDW'26

TRADITION, TRUST AND TRANSFORMATION
IN INTERNATIONAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION



Introduction

Message from LIDW26's co-chairs

As co-chairs of London International Disputes Week 2026 (LIDW26), we're delighted to present this report – a concise review of a hugely successful week that provided the global disputes community with a myriad of opportunities for thought leadership, collaboration and innovation.

This year's theme – **“Tradition, trust and transformation in international dispute resolution”** – encouraged a comprehensive examination of how long-standing legal frameworks must embrace evolution in an era defined by rapid technological advances, profound geopolitical realignments and economic volatility.

Over the course of the week, we welcomed almost 12,000 delegates from – remarkably – 129 jurisdictions. This bringing together of the dispute resolution community from across continents, disciplines and sectors is central to LIDW's mission.

The leading voices in the legal, business, academic and policymaking spheres were at the heart of the debate during the high-profile International Arbitration Day and the Main Conference.

The London legal community then once again rose to the challenge and hosted almost 360 Member-Hosted Events addressing a rich variety of topics across international arbitration, litigation, mediation and beyond. A packed LegalTech Showcase highlighted London's leading place in the legaltech revolution, with many of our valued sponsors demonstrating their products and expertise.

The five-day professional programme was paired with an exceptional itinerary of social events, providing a diverse range of opportunities to meet friends and contacts, old and new alike. We returned to the historic Southwark Cathedral for the Opening Reception and celebrated the seventh LIDW in style with a Bond-themed Gala Dinner at Raffles London at the Old War Office. Alongside this were smaller and more informal events including a Jack the Ripper tour, morning runs, meditation and – a first for LIDW – a karaoke night.

LIDW NextGen (formerly “Young and Young at Heart”) goes from strength to strength, providing fora for younger practitioners and the next generation of law firm leaders to share ideas and socialise. This included the Academy event, Supper Clubs and the ever-popular Social – this year held at a pétanque bar on London's lively South Bank.

LIDW's unique inclusive and collaborative ethos focuses on supporting the entire dispute resolution ecosystem. This report captures not only the key themes and highlights of the week, but also the energy, ambition and commitment of a legal community dedicated to shaping the future of international dispute resolution.

We look forward to continuing this success next year. Professor Loukas Mistelis and Jonathan Cary step down at the end of their respective two-year terms. Emilie Jones very much looks forward to working with the two new co-chairs, Luiz Aboim and Sophie Lalor-Harbord, in planning for LIDW27.

From left to right:
Jonathan Cary,
Emilie Jones &
Professor Loukas Mistelis
co-chairs, LIDW26





A huge thank you to our sponsors

To all our sponsors, both new and longstanding, thank you for helping us deliver our most impactful LIDW to date. Your continued support, collaboration and commitment are central to LIDW's success and its distinct place on the international disputes calendar. Quite simply, it wouldn't happen without you! We very much look forward to welcoming you again at LIDW27.



Our platinum sponsors



Our gold sponsors



Our silver sponsors



"LIDW26 was unprecedented in both scale and quality. It was fantastic to see the global disputes community come together in London, with a year's worth of conversations and events packed into a single week."

Mark Feldner, Crimson
Gold sponsor

LIDW26 attendance

The week in figures



Tube strikes, the Middle East conflict impacting travel and even the rain failed to dampen enthusiasm for LIDW26. We saw an uptick in the number of registrations and delegates attending (including from outside the UK), plus a significant increase in the number of countries represented throughout the week.

129 21.69%
Countries represented across the week (in-person and online)

588
Attendees at opening reception

450
Attendees at main conference

359 41.89%
Member-hosted events

213
Organisations attending the main conference

54
Countries represented at main conference

166 62.74%
Arbitration events

12
Arbitration sessions during International Arbitration Day (plus many more across the week)

10
Mediation events (plus 45 on specific forms of ADR)

Percentage figures compared to LIDW25

Communications coverage

LIDW26 – seen in all the right places

A fantastic year of coverage, thanks to our media advisers Portland Communications, who helped LIDW26 secure strong engagement across both traditional and digital channels – the figures speak for themselves!

Alongside established approaches to coverage, our media team introduced more diverse platforms. A spot was secured on legal podcast Legally Speaking – and within a week of release it was in the top 20% of episodes. Meanwhile, a new partnership with influencer Megan Hulme (@itsallhearsay) tapped into her junior lawyer follower base to drive engagement in LIDW NextGen.

Press

362 92%
Articles mentioning LIDW26 across the year

20
Jurisdictions with LIDW26 coverage

15
Media outlets

LinkedIn

17,350 17%
Total amount of followers

281,246
Post impressions across the year

Percentage figures compared to LIDW25

Editorial coverage in...



AUSTRALASIAN Lawyer



CANADIAN Lawyer



GLOBAL LEGAL POST



LEXOLOGY





Fostering trust, embracing opportunities

In its seventh year, LIDW26 felt like a week entering its next phase, with momentum built on last year's successful event – and setting a new standard for global dispute resolution.

On paper, the numbers told a story: almost 33,000 individual registrations and 129 delegate jurisdictions. In practice, the week's significance felt as big as its scale. LIDW26 showed why London remains a premier location for international dispute resolution. The conversations kept moving: from keynote addresses to august panels and glittering receptions, into pubs and clubs, through corridors and cafés, to tech hubs and historic hotels, where introductions quickly became ideas for next year and beyond.

The theme, "Tradition, trust and transformation in international dispute resolution", could easily have sounded abstract. Instead, it became the thread running through the week. As the London Court of International Arbitration put it on social media, "LIDW matters because it tests arbitration in front of the people who use it, decide it and shape where it goes next."

That's the point. LIDW isn't just a showcase. It's where the profession stress-tests its assumptions. Disputes are discussed, not disputed.

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Those sentiments were equally well expressed by Sarah Sackman KC MP, Courts and Legal Services Minister, who told delegates at the Legaltech Showcase: "What we have is not just a culture of innovation and aspiration, but the raw materials. We've got the tradition, the trust in our legal institutions that's shared not just here but around the world, and now we need to embrace the transformation as the next opportunity."



All those themes were expressed at Monday's International Arbitration Day. Lord Neuberger, Karyl Nairn KC and Toby Landau KC gave delegates plenty to discuss, from due process paranoia to overloaded appointments of arbitrators. Nairn deprecated "spurious challenges", while Landau warned against "a new era of self-promotion". The keynotes were sharp, but the mood was collegiate. Velimir Zivkovic of Warwick Law captured that blend, saying: "It was great to catch up with so many in the arbitration community, put faces to names, hatch plans for further events concerning law and beyond." Even as leaden skies gathered over the Opening Reception at Southwark Cathedral, the welcomes were warm, champagne was cold and queues were short.

Tuesday's Main Conference at the QEII Centre widened the lens. Sean West, Co-Founder of The Unruly Corporation, warned: "The rules that we have cut our teeth with in the globalisation era are falling away." His challenge followed naturally: "In an unruly world, what are you doing with the infrastructure that you rely on?" For disputes lawyers, that was an urgent question. New technologies, geopolitical shocks and emerging arenas, from space to the deep seabed, demand faster thinking, but not looser principles, not least in class actions.

The panel discussions focused on how lawyers can adapt to a rapidly changing world without losing sight of the principles that underpin it. As Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd put it, "One must go back to the way in which we have always operated... we have proved surprisingly adaptable", and delegates agreed. Transformation only works when it's anchored in trust.

"A week full of energy and optimism, showcasing the collaborative spirit of legal practitioners from the UK and around the world."

GREAT Legal Services

Jonathan Grigg of Foot Anstey heard the same message, noting "One of the more thought-provoking discussions... wasn't really about AI. It was about evidence, trust and whether the civil justice system can adapt quickly enough to a rapidly changing world."



"One must go back to the way in which we have always operated... we have proved surprisingly adaptable."

**Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd,
President of the Qatar International Court**

The rest of the week proved the point. Wednesday's Member-Hosted Events spanned class actions, enforcement, commercial litigation, arbitration, boutique firms and arbitral institutions. The Gala Dinner at Raffles London at the Old War Office brought the community together, and the social programme mattered too – the NextGen Social swapped conference rooms for pétanque courts, while sound baths and supper clubs helped make the week feel generous, human and alive.

GREAT Legal Services called it "a week full of energy and optimism, showcasing the collaborative spirit of legal practitioners from the UK and around the world".

For us, that's the lesson of LIDW26. The speakers, sponsors, moderators, delegates, organisers and co-chairs did more than fill a programme; they renewed shared professional conversations. One session asked, "Who speaks for arbitration?" The answer may well be, "London does – and also for litigation and mediation." More importantly, LIDW26 showed how London can listen. The eighth expression of the week in 2027 will be the best yet.

This article was written by Ben Rigby, a freelance legal journalist and media consultant.

International arbitration day

Three hosts, one vision

LIDW26 opened with its flagship international arbitration day (IAD) – bringing together practitioners, judges and arbitrators, in-house counsel, experts and academics from around the world for a full day of keynote addresses, panel discussions and networking. Three host organisations – Debevoise & Plimpton, Gibson Dunn & Crutcher and 3 Verulam Buildings (the first set of chambers to act as an IAD host) – provided venues within a five-minute walk of one another near the Royal Courts of Justice, allowing delegates to move easily between sessions, choosing from 12 substantive panels and three keynote addresses.

“We have allowed behaviours to creep in that undermine the credibility and legitimacy of arbitration... we must remain vigilant if we wish to retain the virtues of the old system.”

Karyl Nairn KC, Arbitration Chambers

The morning opened with three keynote addresses delivered simultaneously at each venue. Karyl Nairn KC of Arbitration Chambers, Toby Landau KC of Duxton Hill Chambers and The Rt. Hon Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury of One Essex Court delivered robust and provocative addresses, each of which took aim at rogue elements of arbitration practice that, when left unchecked, may undermine trust in this form of dispute resolution.

Among the concerns examined was “due process paranoia” – arbitrators over-emphasising procedure to avoid challenges to awards, leading to increased costs and delay. Other “trust” issues under the spotlight were poor conduct – such as inadequate engagement with submissions and delays in issuing awards – and a culture of online self promotion prioritising visibility over merit.

Panel highlights

IAD sessions tackled some of the most pressing questions facing the arbitration community.

“What Makes a Leading Arbitral Seat?” brought panellists together for a comparative assessment of seat selection.

“Due Process Challenges: Is Arbitration Getting Worse or Are Courts Getting More Activist?” prompted a lively exchange on the tension between judicial oversight and arbitral autonomy.

“The Human Fight Back in Arbitration: Why AI Doesn’t Have All the Answers” examined where technology falls short and why human judgement remains indispensable.

“Arbitrating Defence Sector Disputes: Confidentiality, Sovereignty and Strategy” explored a fast-growing area of practice.

Other sessions included panels addressing enforcement issues, developments in ISDS, the extractives sector, energy arbitrations and the future direction of international arbitration.

A session focused on the arbitrator’s perspective provided a big draw, and the end users of arbitration (the parties) provided vital perspectives during the day.

IAD concluded with networking drinks hosted by Gibson Dunn before delegates headed to LIDW26’s Opening Reception at Southwark Cathedral.



 **LIDW26**

International Arbitration Day

Navigating a rapidly evolving disputes landscape.

“Trust is under threat, but we cannot transform successfully unless we maintain quality in the individuals in the process itself.”

Toby Landau KC, Duxton Hill Chambers





The main conference

Tradition, trust
and transformation

The LIDW26 main conference brought together leading judges, arbitrators, practitioners and in-house counsel to explore how dispute resolution is responding to an increasingly complex and fast-changing global environment.

Keynote speech

Setting the tone for the day was the keynote address from Sean West – co-founder of geopolitical AI company The Unruly Corporation and legal tech company Hence Technologies, and author of *Unruly: Fighting Back when Politics, AI and Law Upend the Rules of Business*.

Drawing on his concept of an “unruly” world, West examined the convergence of law, technology and geopolitics, highlighting the increasing risk of regulatory fragmentation and the use of legal frameworks as instruments of state power. He also underscored the impact of artificial intelligence in lowering barriers to litigation and reshaping evidentiary processes.

West’s central message was that lawyers must move beyond reactive analysis and adopt a more strategic, forward-looking role, while continuing to support the institutions underpinning the rule of law.

He ended his keynote with a thought-provoking question for delegates: “In an unruly world, what are you doing to sustain the infrastructure that you rely on?”

Panel discussions

The panel on **AI, Authenticity and the Future of Evidence: Trust in a Synthetic World**, featuring Richard Blann (Lloyds Banking Group), Sophie Nappert (3VB), the Rt Hon Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd (President of the Qatar International Court) and Gregory Mostyn (Wexler), focused on the practical implications of AI for dispute resolution, including the rise of low-cost, AI-generated claims and the resulting asymmetry between those able to generate disputes at scale and those required to respond. Particular concern was evidential integrity, with the panel agreeing that human judgement will remain indispensable in assessing credibility and resolving disputes.

In the **Rise of Mass Claims: Balancing Confidence with Access to Justice**, Sophie Thompson (BT), Seema Kennedy OBE (Fair Civil Justice), Kimberley Phillips (Shell), Campbell Jackson (EY), Shazia Yamin (Mishcon de Reya) and Nicholas Gibson KC (Matrix Chambers), under the stewardship of Simon Duncombe (Freshfields), examined

the evolving role of collective redress mechanisms. While mass claims can enhance access to justice, the discussion highlighted persistent concerns regarding the distribution of recoveries, the influence of funders and the potential chilling effect on business investment.

Panellists Mark Evans (President of the Law Society of England and Wales), Rachael O’Grady (Mayer Brown), Alison Macdonald KC (Essex Court Chambers), Toby Fisher (Matrix Chambers) and Terence McCulley (McLarty, an Ankura company) explored the challenges of regulating areas such as space, deep sea resources and Antarctica in **Law at the Frontiers**. The discussion contrasted cooperative international models with more fragmented approaches, emphasising that effective regulation will depend on both political consensus and practical enforceability.

“The world will not go backwards... the legal community needs to find ways to make itself relevant in the new world order – to adapt and change.”

Sir Geoffrey Vos, Master of the Rolls



LONDON INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES WEEK

In the **Great Costs Debate**, Paula Hodges KC (Independent Arbitrator), Carsten van de Sande (Hengeler Mueller) and Aseel Zimmo (Independent Arbitrator and Mediator) examined how arbitration and litigation can deliver more cost-effective outcomes through thoughtful and proactive case management between clients, counsel and decision makers.

Sharif Shivji KC (4 Stone Buildings) and Yasmin Waljee OBE (Hogan Lovells) emphasised the growing importance of **pro bono work** in the context of diminishing legal aid. They highlighted its role not only in maintaining access to justice, but also in reinforcing the ethical foundations of the profession and ensuring that legal systems remain responsive to those most in need.

The increasing pressures faced by legal systems in a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape were explored in **The Intersection of Law and Politics – the Rule of Law Under Pressure**. Panellists Fiona Hill CBE (Future Resilience Forum), David Gauke (Macfarlanes), Dan Feldman (Covington & Burling) and Maeve Hanna (A&O Shearman) looked at the impact of populism, shifting political priorities and declining trust in institutions, noting that the rule of law is increasingly perceived – wrongly – as an obstacle to political objectives.

From an **in-house perspective**, the GC Perspective session saw Clare Wardle (former General Counsel, Coca Cola Europacific Partners) in conversation with Hilton Mervis (McDermott Will & Schulte). The discussion highlighted the evolving expectations placed on external counsel, with legal advice judged not only on technical quality but also on its commercial relevance, clarity and strategic value.



The **Access to Justice Internationally** panel, bringing together Sir Geoffrey Vos (Master of the Rolls), Dr Emilia Onyema (SOAS), VK Rajah SC (Duxton Hill Chambers), Kathleen Donnelly KC (Henderson Chambers) and Dr Dhananjaya Chandrachud (former Chief Justice of India), drew together many of the day’s central themes, including the dual impact of technology: while AI and digitalisation offer opportunities to reduce cost and improve efficiency, unequal access risks exacerbating disparities between jurisdictions.

In his closing remarks, Sir Geoffrey Vos reinforced the overarching message of the conference: that legal systems, long characterised by cost and complexity, are now facing unprecedented technological and societal change. The challenge for the legal community is to harness these developments to improve accessibility and efficiency, while preserving the fundamental principles of fairness, truth and integrity.

Overall, the LIDW26 main conference demonstrated both the scale of the transformation underway and the depth of engagement within the profession. More than in previous years, there was a clear sense that the disputes community is grappling with change in real time. The central conclusion is clear: the future of dispute resolution will depend not on resisting change, but on shaping it – ensuring that innovation strengthens, rather than undermines, access to justice and the rule of law.



Member-hosted events

Bigger and better than ever!

This year saw the biggest-ever member-hosted events (MHE) programme, with members joining forces to host 359 events on a broad range of disputes-related topics, from arbitration to AI; sanctions to sports disputes; force majeure to fraud. A whopping 10,000 delegates from 129 jurisdictions joined at least one MHE, with 26,972 individual registrations across the three days – an almost 10% increase on last year.

As always, the requirement for two or more members to host each event brought together law firms, chambers, experts and legal services providers – enhancing event quality, building relationships and promoting collaboration across the London disputes sector.

“A simply brilliant LIDW debate... one of the best of the last seven years in my view.”

Tim Constable, Capital Law
Attended an event at Pinsent Masons



“A genuinely fascinating and timely conversation.”

Paul Martenstyn MBE, Prosperant
On a Stewarts discussion on the Middle East and Africa

A new approach to the timetable, including one-hour breaks between each session, made it easier for attendees to travel from one event to another. The success of this formula was demonstrated by record attendance across the three days.

As well as panel discussions on a wide range of topics, the three-day programme included practical skills sessions like “The Cinderella Files: A cross-examination workshop”. This hands-on event offered younger arbitration practitioners the chance to hone their skills under the direction of the International Advocacy Academy and experts from Gold sponsor Ankura. As always, the MHE calendar also offered ample opportunity for relaxed networking at the IDRC and IAC networking hubs.

Wednesday

The MHE programme made a strong start on Wednesday, with 166 events. Platinum sponsor EY and Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer hosted a fascinating session on Insurance Disputes in the Cyber Era. Speakers offered insights into hot topics in insurance disputes, including trends in cyber insurance claims and coverage disputes in light of the rapid growth and increasing complexity of cyber-related losses.



Thursday

As always, this year’s MHE programme offered sessions on every hot topic in our field. Top of the list was AI and its impact on disputes. Wexler, another Platinum sponsor, brought together lawyers and legaltech leaders for a candid conversation about what is – and isn’t – working in litigation AI. Thursday also saw separate events on AI in mediation, investigation and data privacy mass actions. This was just a small selection of the 164 MHEs that members hosted on Thursday.



Friday

Traditionally a quieter day for MHEs, Friday provided significantly more events than last year, with strong attendance across the board. The final day offered sessions with regional, sector and procedural focuses, including panels on enforcing arbitral awards, climate change and the energy transition, litigation funding and managing investigations. Gold sponsor BRG partnered with Skadden, Arps and HKIAC to host a sold-out panel on the geopolitics of natural resources and the risks for global resource majors in the new world order of weaponised supply chains, sustained sanctions and the rising tide of ESG litigation.



Games, grazing and a great vibe

Building on the momentum of previous years, LIDW NextGen (formerly known as “Young and Young at Heart” or “YAYAH”) had a strong and visible presence at LIDW26, delivering three successful events across the week. Together, the events reflected what NextGen does best at LIDW: creating space for practical learning, lively discussion and genuinely enjoyable networking.

NextGen academy

A sellout with 80 attendees, the academy opened on Tuesday with “Gaining confidence in using AI tools in dispute resolution”, co-hosted with Jus Mundi. Speakers in the lively discussion included Alexandre Vagenheim (Jus Mundi), Eliza Jiang (Lawdify), Eimear McCann (TrialView) and Omar Puertas Alvarez (Harvey), who explored the practical use of AI legaltech in contentious work, including where it’s already proving valuable and where caution is still needed.

After a networking break, the academy shifted into an Oxford-style debate on the motion “This house believes that experts are hired guns”. Moderated by Nadja Al Kanawati (WilmerHale) with a panel featuring Reanne MacKenzie (Henderson Chambers), Nicholas Leah (3 Hare Court Chambers), Michael Laming (HKA) and Julia Prater-Rushton (EY), the interactive format offered an entertaining and thought-provoking debate on expert evidence.

“Seeing barristers and experts go head-to-head on the motion was a fantastic experience for attendees of disputes advocacy in action.”

William Crossley, CMS



NextGen supper clubs

On Wednesday evening, eight sold-out supper clubs were hosted simultaneously across London in collaboration with the London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA) Young International Arbitration Group, London Very Young Arbitration Practitioners (London VYAP), Young ICCA, CLF Associates, Young ITF, Young Energy Arbitration Club and JLSLA.

The smaller-group format once again proved hugely successful: the secret venues, relaxed atmosphere and mix of peers from across the disputes world created the perfect setting for great conversation, new introductions and stronger professional relationships. In particular, the collaborative nature of the evening stood out, showing how effectively LIDW NextGen can bring together different corners of the disputes community in an informal, welcoming and genuinely engaging way.



NextGen social

We closed in style on Thursday evening with the NextGen social. Back for its fifth year in a new South Bank setting at Boulebar, the event, which saw over 220 tickets sold, combined conversation with pétanque, street food and cocktails, giving guests plenty of opportunities to mingle in a lively but relaxed environment. It was a fitting reminder that some of the best LIDW connections are made when people are enjoying themselves as much as they are talking shop.





Social events

Singing, sound baths and Shakespeare

LIDW26 offered a standout lineup of social events that featured a 007-inspired black tie dinner, a walk through the shadows of Victorian London, quiet meditation and lively karaoke. We can honestly say our social programme had something for everyone!

Opening reception

Southwark Cathedral once again served as the historic backdrop to the opening drinks reception on Monday evening. Industry experts, peers and thought leaders from across the disputes landscape mingled to the melodic tunes of a string ensemble, and the Very Rev'd Dr Mark Oakley gave a reflective and thought-provoking talk on the importance of dispute resolution in our current political climate.

Bringing together one of LIDW26's key themes, "Tradition", and the cathedral's links to Shakespeare, guests enjoyed a **Bard-inspired menu** including spiced crispy mutton canapés, wild boar sausage rolls and ox cheek and bone marrow pie. 'Twas a truly memorable evening!

Walking tours

Beginning at Southwark Cathedral, the guided **Shakespeare Walking Tour** was an opportunity to explore Bankside's riverside streets, visiting the historic sites of the Globe and Rose theatres and uncovering stories of the actors who shaped Shakespeare's theatrical world. A perfect way for attendees to connect, unwind and immerse themselves in London's cultural heritage.

On the immersive **Jack the Ripper Walking Tour**, attendees were invited to step into the shadows of Victorian London. The group spent an evening exploring the dark history of the East End, visiting locations where the crimes took place and learning about the six known victims. A grisly but gripping evening for true crime enthusiasts.

Gala dinner

To acknowledge LIDW turning seven this year, we celebrated in true 007 style at our gala dinner. The exclusive black tie event was set within the iconic Raffles London at The OWO, a venue steeped in the spirit that inspired Ian Fleming's legendary Bond.

Bringing the disputes community together in style, **the evening provided a licence to connect**, uniting peers and like-minded experts for a night of intrigue, elevated networking and 007-inspired food like Quantum of Kohlrahi, From Raffles with Truffle and Treacle Royale. Entertainment was provided by a magician and silhouette artist.

To end the evening, guests were sent on their own mission to locate the covert 007 speakeasy, where they could enjoy Martinis – shaken not stirred, of course.



Back for its third year, the Fieldfisher Run Club hosted the Rise and Run. The 5.5km social run took attendees through the heart of London, passing some of the city's most iconic landmarks.

Singing and sound baths

This year for the first time the social programme included the **LIDW26 Karaoke Night**. Thirty attendees warmed up their vocal cords and stepped into the spotlight with fellow delegates for a fun evening of singing. In an altogether more serene environment, Trowers & Hamlins hosted a morning **sound bath and meditation**. Using intention cards to guide reflection, attendees were immersed in breathwork, visualisation and sound – allowing them to pause and reset ready for a busy LIDW programme ahead.

Rise and run

And finally, back for its third year, the Fieldfisher Run Club hosted the **Rise and Run**. The 5.5km social run took attendees through the heart of London, passing some of the city's most iconic landmarks – including St Paul's Cathedral – along the way. Back at base, runners enjoyed a light breakfast and refreshments.

Legaltech showcase

Quick-fire pitching and a candid fireside chat

The legaltech showcase, held at The Line on Victoria Embankment, drew around 80 attendees and brought together UK and international practitioners, some deeply embedded in legaltech and others simply keen to understand what's coming next.

Opening the event was a fireside chat between Sarah Sackman KC MP, Minister of State for Courts and Legal Services, and Shruti Ajitsaria, Partner at A&O Shearman and Head of the firm's tech innovation space, Fuse. It was refreshing to have a Minister at the heart of legal services engaging in an unscripted and open conversation, and the result was a substantive and candid exchange that addressed difficult questions head-on rather than deflecting them.

The conversation was framed around LIDW26's three guiding themes of tradition, trust and transformation.

Having all seen the headlines – lawyers leaning on technology only for errors to surface in court documents, AI hallucinating case authorities, and submissions reaching judges that nobody had properly checked – Shruti asked the Minister what could be done to ensure that trust in the legal profession isn't lost. The answer was unequivocal:-

“Regulation, procedures and confidence in our practitioners, regulators and judges all need to keep pace with the technology – not as three separate problems, but as three interlocking ones.”

And the stakes, the Minister argued, are high. The integrity of English law is, she noted, “a vital economic asset”, underpinning both our economy and our standing in the world – and that asset is only as strong as the trust that sustains it.

On tradition, there was genuine pride in the independence of our judiciary and the stability of English law – precisely the qualities that draw parties from across the globe to resolve their disputes here. The Minister noted that, even when decisions go against them, parties accept the outcome, knowing it has been reached without fear or favour. In a volatile world where rule of law is under pressure in many jurisdictions, that integrity becomes not just a point of professional pride but a genuine strategic asset – one worth fighting to protect and champion.

On the topic of transformation, the Minister agreed with Shruti's observation that we're still “nibbling around the edges” of what's possible with legaltech – and that a significant shock may be coming for the profession, one it isn't yet properly prepared for. With law firms likely to become, if they're not already, more like tech companies with lawyers attached to them rather than law firms with tech bolted on, the Minister spoke about the importance of developing tech skills within legal education.

The Minister acknowledged that government doesn't have all the answers, but believed that the conversation between public and private sector – in rooms exactly like this one – is where those answers will begin to take shape.

“What skills will young people need? Are we helping convene the link with universities and other training providers to make sure people have those skills? And how do we make sure that upskilling is happening not just in the heart of London but regionally, right across the country?”

And the real opportunity, both speakers suggested, lies not simply in using technology to do what we've always done more efficiently, but in using it to reimagine those processes altogether. A new way of thinking – genuinely creative, questioning, willing to challenge inherited assumptions – is what the profession needs to cultivate, and quickly.

Pitching and networking

The legaltech showcase took the form of rapid-fire three-minute pitches from established providers and ambitious start-ups alike, featuring Ankura, Array, Crimson, SettleIndex, TrialView, Legal Asset Servicing, Jigsaw, pinQDR, Cimplifi and Libra Law.

The pitches spanned a broad range of needs – from pro bono support to legal funding – reflecting the diversity of the legaltech market as it stands today. The presentations were split either side of a networking lunch, giving attendees time to absorb what they'd heard, visit the exhibitors' stands and compare notes. One attendee from a regional high street firm noted that the event had given him a valuable opportunity to better understand the developments reshaping how legal services are delivered.

The conversations didn't stop with the last pitch. They continued well beyond the formal programme, with new introductions being made and a number of attendees identifying potential synergies between what different exhibitors were offering. In several instances, providers discovered that their respective tools might complement one another in ways worth exploring further.



Pro bono at LIDW26

Promoting access to justice for all

LIDW26 once again demonstrated that the international dispute resolution community is about more than commercial outcomes. Alongside discussions about cross-border commercial arbitration, litigation and mediation sat a further theme central to the trust placed in our professions and institutions: the role of pro bono work in ensuring effective access to justice and upholding the rule of law.

London occupies a vital position in the pro bono landscape. Home to some of the world's leading law firms, barristers' chambers, experts, not-for-profit legal organisations and a thriving in-house pro bono community, the city has long been a driving force in expanding access to justice both domestically and internationally. LIDW26 recognised this, ensuring that pro bono voices were represented during the week's programme.

“Are we building a culture where the law exists for everyone?”

Sharif Shivji KC, Chairman of Advocate

A particularly compelling moment of the Main Conference came during a dedicated pro bono address that featured two outstanding advocates for the cause, sharing their own experiences of pro bono work. Sharif Shivji KC, Chairman of Advocate – the pro bono charity of the Bar of England and Wales – delivered a powerful challenge to the room, asking: “Are we building a culture where the law exists for everyone?” He reminded the assembled audience of dispute resolution leaders of the potential impact of their remarkable skill sets and spheres of influence.



Yasmin Waljee OBE, International Pro Bono Partner at Hogan Lovells, spoke with similar passion, encouraging practitioners to think about their wider purpose. Waljee referenced a memorable quote attributed to Mark Twain: “The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.”

London has long been a driving force in expanding access to justice both domestically and internationally.

Later in the week, some of LIDW26's Member-Hosted Events brought focused, expert discussion to some of the most pressing issues at the intersection of law and society.

The National Pro Bono Centre co-organised a timely session entitled “Pro Bono – Preventing and Addressing Climate Change and Environmental Harms”, reflecting the growing role of pro bono lawyers in tackling the climate crisis. Meanwhile, the British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL) co-hosted “AI in Arbitration: Promises and Pitfalls”, at which the Master of the Rolls, Sir Geoffrey Vos – who had also participated in a standout panel on access to justice internationally at the Main Conference – raised important questions about equitable access to AI tools globally and the rule of law impacts of depriving people of final human judicial decisions about their legal rights.



With pro bono a growing pillar of the LIDW programme, we hope that the week's events encouraged those attending to reflect on the vital role of this work in upholding trust in the dispute resolution community and sparked ideas for further engagement.

Sir Geoffrey Vos raised important questions about equitable access to AI tools globally.

Charitable giving

Alongside its commitment to promoting pro bono work and access to justice, LIDW supports a number of charities whose work helps widen opportunity and strengthen communities. In the last year, LIDW has made charitable contributions to the National Pro Bono Centre, the Sutton Trust, the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law, BAILII and Citizens Advice at the Royal Courts of Justice. These organisations play an important role in improving access to legal support, advancing social mobility, and helping individuals navigate complex challenges, reflecting LIDW's broader commitment to access to social responsibility and public benefit.



Thanks & acknowledgements

From all of us to all of you

On behalf of LIDW, co-chairs Emilie Jones, Professor Loukas Mistelis and Jonathan Cary would like to thank:

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Our members

Too many to list individually, but each of whom contributed to the success of the whole.

Our media partners

Thank you to our media partners for their contribution to LIDW - Law Society Gazette, CDR, GLP, The Bar Bulletin, The LAW, Bar and Bench, SCC Times, Africa Legal, Law360 and Wolters Kluwer. We also thank our influencer partner, Megan Hulme (@itsallhearsay), the GC100 and GREAT Legal Services.

Thanks also to...

All the speakers, panellists and participants
– for the sharing of insights and knowledge.

And finally...

We couldn't have done this without our LIDW26 team – the LIDW Strategy Group, its subcommittees, TMB Events and Portland. We also gratefully acknowledge the kindness of the International Dispute Resolution Centre and International Arbitration Centre for allowing delegates to use their premises as networking hubs.





Looking forward to 2027

Message from next year's co-chairs

We're looking forward to welcoming colleagues and friends from around the world to London for LIDW27, taking place from **7 to 11 June 2027**.

LIDW27 will continue to represent all forms of dispute resolution, reinforcing London's role as a global centre for arbitration, litigation and mediation. With continuing and evolving pressures on businesses, it has never been more important that this community delivers effective international dispute resolution in whatever form it may take – and that we should all learn from each other to develop cross-border solutions for the benefit of the clients we support.

LIDW, a not-for-profit organisation, is inclusive and collaborative. At LIDW27 we aim to bring even more international disputes communities and practitioners into the fold – hoping to broaden the programme even further. In addition to an international outlook, we'll place a renewed and sustained emphasis on pro bono work and diversity, reflecting LIDW's commitment to social responsibility and inclusion.

We're excited to work with our Strategy Group and wider stakeholder base to put together a programme for LIDW27 that showcases the breadth of the work that London delivers alongside the global legal community.

“We're proud that LIDW continues to be a place where strong and lasting professional relationships are formed beyond borders, helping to connect the global dispute resolution community.”

LIDW27 co-chairs

We're carefully reviewing all feedback generously shared by delegates to ensure that LIDW27 once again offers an outstanding experience and reinforces London's position as the place to be each June.

We look forward to seeing you in 2027.



From left to right:
Luiz Aboim,
Sophie Lalor-Harbord
& Emilie Jones
co-chairs, LIDW27



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