
MSB Solicitors presents

Issue 2 - Spring 2023

Highlight

*Business in the
community of
the North West*



Communities in action

Showcasing the charities across our city region doing incredible things in their communities

Delivering Excellence

An insight into the world of private landlords

Legal advice

How to deal with a relationship breakdown in a shared tenancy

Contents

04

Making Waves

A profile on Net Zero North West

06

Communities in action

Showcasing charities across our city region who are doing incredible things in their communities

08

Delivering Excellence

An insight into the world of private landlords

10

Home is where the heart is

An insight into Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse

14

Liverpool's future tennis stars

The evolution of The Qube

16

Legal Advice

How to deal with a relationship breakdown in a shared tenancy

18

Highlight: From the experts

She Leads for Legacy: Creating opportunities for black women in business

22

Spotlight

Humans of Liverpool, ED&I at Everton and United for Ukraine

Welcome...



Emma Carey, Managing Partner, MSB Solicitors

Welcome to the second edition of Highlight.

It's safe to say that the past year has been another challenging one. With lockdown restrictions easing but uncertainty still in the air, political issues causing concerns, and many people impacted by the ongoing cost of living crisis, we've had to be resilient and adaptable in the face of adversity.

It has made me so proud to see our communities continue to come together to support one another. It's humbling and heart-warming to see so much positivity come from such difficulty.

The first edition of the magazine was designed to celebrate everything that makes the Liverpool City Region the incredible place it is – and this time around is no different.

Yet again, we're shining a light on the incredible things happening on our doorstep.

In this edition, we hear from a range of business leaders about their plans for a post-pandemic future, speak to an incredible local charity about the work they are doing in the community and our own experts at MSB share some words of wisdom.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Highlight magazine. If you want to find out more about anything featured in this edition, or if you'd like to be part of the next one, please get in touch. We would love to hear from you.

"It's humbling and heart-warming to see so much positivity come from such difficulty."

Making Waves

A profile on Net Zero North West



Ged Barlow,
Chief Executive,
Net Zero north West

Can you give us a bit of a background into Net Zero North West and what it does?

Net Zero North West is an industry-led cluster acting as a public and private sector investment accelerator for industrial decarbonisation and clean growth projects in the North West. We're all about driving inward investment in the industrial decarbonisation space, with senior political representation from all five sub regions of the North West. We are committed to delivering a co-ordinated net zero vision for our region and that's why we unite businesses, regional leaders, and academia to deliver on our mission.

Why is the net zero mission so important to the North West?

Put simply, the North West is the only region which already has all the elements required to deliver a low carbon industrial cluster by 2030 – including renewables, hydrogen, carbon capture usage and storage, nuclear and smart grids. Our region boasts the largest concentration of advanced manufacturing and chemical production in the UK and is home to a large scale of energy intensive users. We have excellent air, rail, and road transport links – plus the iconic Port of Liverpool that continues to serve as a key international transport hub. For us, there is so much potential for the North West to lead the UK on a journey of industrial carbonisation.

What opportunities does NZNW and its mission provide for local people?

Substantially decarbonising regional industry by 2030 is an opportunity that presents significant economic and societal benefits, both regionally and nationally. With that being said, the skills agenda is a high priority for us. As set out in our North West Cluster Plan, the £30bn pipeline of investable projects in the North West will create and protect over 30,000 high value green jobs and position the UK at the forefront of global industrial emissions reductions. Cross-industry collaboration will be vital to this job delivery to support current and future workers to gain the skills and knowledge they will need. More on this can be found in the Net Zero Skills Charter.

“Ultimately, the end goal is to ensure that the North West is seen as the UK’s number one inward investment destination for industrial decarbonisation infrastructure projects.”

Can you share some of the key projects happening at the moment?

Our strength lies in the unrivalled number of projects already happening on the ground and collectively, they offer long term, sustainable investment opportunities in net zero. One of these is HyNet, which is an integrated hydrogen and CCUS infrastructure project that will deploy a hydrogen pipeline network and provide a catalyst for other sources of hydrogen generation. Continuing the hydrogen agenda, Peel Plastics-To-Hydrogen aims to convert c.11,667 tonnes of mixed residual plastic waste into hydrogen. We're also really excited about the Protos project, which has the opportunity for carbon capture and storage. A full list of ongoing projects can be found on our website.

What's next for Net Zero North West? What are your ambitions for the organisation?

The future is bright for Net Zero North West and we're really excited about it. Ultimately, the end goal is to ensure that the North West is seen as the UK's number one inward investment destination for industrial decarbonisation infrastructure projects. Short term, we want to extend our reach into the investor community and encourage businesses to get on board with the net zero mission so that we can create a sustainable and safer future for the next generation.

Communities in action



*Sonia Bassey, MBE,
Trustee and chair of
Mandela8*

In this feature, we showcase the charities across our city region who are doing incredible things in their communities.

“Any donation, however big or small, is hugely appreciated and is vital to helping us continue our work in the community.”

In this edition, we are focusing on Mandela8, whose vision is to see a permanent artwork that functions as a unique performance, conversation and contemplation space established at a Toxteth Liverpool 8 heritage site, to celebrate, commemorate and pursue the legacy of Nelson Mandela’s outstanding achievement for humanity.

We recently spoke to Sonia Bassey, MBE, Trustee and Chair of Mandela8, to find out more about the charity, its brilliant work in the community and its plans for the future.

How did Mandela8 come to be and what is its ambition?

Mandela8 came about as a result of the community’s desire to see a lasting legacy to Nelson Mandela, when he sadly passed away in December 2013. Liverpool has a strong connection to South Africa, having supported the Free Nelson Mandela Campaign and numerous anti-apartheid campaigns. Nelson Mandela was given the Freedom of the City in 1994.

How do you engage and work with local communities to spread the message and educate people?

We have our My67 Minutes Campaign which asks for people to give 67 minutes of their time to do an act of kindness for others – it could be anything from volunteering at a homeless shelter, to picking up groceries for a neighbour. 67 minutes is significant because it represents the 67 years Mandela spent fighting for social justice and human rights.

We also have our Roots and Wings programme, which supports young people who are at risk of exclusion from school to get back into mainstream education. The 12 week programme has been designed to target young people in areas of high deprivation, who lack positive role models and are at risk of criminal exploitation, or are experiencing violent crime or fear of violent crime daily.

In addition, we have introduced the Angela Holligan Book Collection scheme to 19 schools in Liverpool – named after the late activist who was born in Liverpool – which we hope will increase understanding of diversity within schools, and empower, encourage and educate all children in the city region about diversity and inclusion.

Have you had any recent successful campaigns or initiatives that you can share with us?

Yes, our most recent is the Angela Holligan Book Collection which we’re really proud of. Angela was a founding member of Liverpool Black Sisters and was particularly focussed on Black women’s empowerment. She spent many volunteer hours in the community as a member of the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee, set up to support people during and after the Toxteth Uprisings, so we’re delighted to have her associated with this campaign.

The scheme aims to ensure all children can learn about Black culture and people who look like them. We hope to roll the collection out to all primary schools across the Liverpool City Region over the next two years.

What can businesses and individuals in be doing to support the work of Mandela8?

Businesses and individuals can support us by making a donation, which will help us to continue our work. For example, a small donation of £5-£10 can help us purchase a book for the Angela Holligan Book Collection which will then go into a primary school in the Liverpool City Region.

Anyone who wishes to support Mandela8 can make a donation via Paypal on our website.



Delivering Excellence



Phillip Coburn,
Solicitor and Head of Private Landlord at MSB Solicitors

The end is nigh!

Partner and Head of Market Rents team at MSB Solicitors, Phillip Coburn, shares his insight into the world of Private Landlords...

For residential premises, two common reasons for seeking possession of a property from a tenant are; because the fixed term of the tenancy has come to an end (s21 Housing Act 1988), and / or because of a breach of tenancy (s8 Housing Act 1988).

There is a strain on local authorities who are obliged to assisted persons threatened with homelessness, and when they actually become homeless. There has been pressure for sometime on the Government to act and bring to an end so called "no fault evictions". Balancing the rights of landlords and tenants has always been a delicate, and often fraught, exercise. Life is unpredictable and circumstances may change for both parties. The current Government now plans to overhaul the existing system.

Changes in the law are proposed by way of The Renters' Reform Bill. The main proposed changes arising from the Bill were:

- An end to the use of s21 Notices ("no fault evictions")
- Wider scope on grounds for possession in Schedule 2 Housing Act 1988 (to provide other reasons for possession under s8 Housing Act 1988)
- A change to Assured Shorthold Tenancies
- Introduction of a register of landlords

It is anticipated that the gap left by the proposed abolition of section 21 will be filled by the wider reform of existing grounds of possession, with the Government stating that 'we will introduce a new ground for landlords who wish to sell their property and allow landlords and their close family members to move into a rental property'. There is no draft legislation currently in circulation, so further details are eagerly awaited.

"Balancing the rights of landlords and tenants has always been a delicate, and often fraught, exercise."

When will this happen?

There is expected to be at least six months' notice of the first implementation date, after which all new tenancies will be governed by the new rules. All existing tenancies will transition to the new system on a second implementation date. After this point, all tenants will be protected from s21 eviction. There should be at least twelve months between the first and second dates.

Phillip comments that if the Bill is passed, he would currently expect landlords of existing Assured Shorthold Tenancies to have a minimum notice period of eighteen months before the changes become effective.

There are concerns about the implications of this timeline when courts are already overrun. Landlords will inevitably be left to evaluate their own financial position, and it is not unreasonable to expect that a looming deadline may result in landlords rushing to serve s21 notices while they still can. This in turn could result in an influx of court claims if tenants do not leave when their notice period expires.

It was expected that the Bill would be debated in Parliament and voted upon by the end of 2022, with a view to it becoming legislation (an Act). It is now expected that the Reform Bill will be debated and voted on in Parliament before May 2023.

The team at MSB has recently been redeveloped and restructured to present the best possible offering to Private Landlords. Fixed fee rates for Private Landlords are on offer in certain cases, and also assistance with access to property issues, disrepair, buying and selling, refinancing and more. For more information, contact the team at



Home is where the heart is



Mark Da Vanzo,
Chief Executive,
Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse



What does your business do?

The Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse are two nationally significant theatres with proud histories, that since 1999 have been run together as a charitable trust. We strive to listen to and reflect the lives, aspirations, and experiences of our audiences; to nurture the artists within them and take Liverpool's stories to the world. Although two very distinct venues, we are united by our mission to entertain and inspire, creating unforgettable experiences built from talent, innovation, and fun.

Hospitality plays a huge part in giving back to the local economy, how has your business contributed to this?

We very much see ourselves as part of the hospitality and tourism sector. Audiences at both our theatres will often eat or drink at local restaurants and bars before and/or after our shows. With approximately 24% of our audiences travelling from outside the Liverpool City Region, we're proud to be a driver of city visitors. We're pleased to invest in as many local suppliers as possible, from set builders and costume makers, to the beers and spirits we serve in our bars. In terms of supporting the local economy, for every £1 invested by our funders, Liverpool City Council and Arts Council England, we generate £7 economic contribution.

"We strive to listen to and reflect the lives, aspirations, and experiences of our audiences; to nurture the artists within them and take Liverpool's stories to the world."

How has the cost of living crisis impacted your business?

Following the COVID restrictions, which saw our theatre closed for a considerable time, we've been building back slowly and steadily, ensuring we have a broad mix of productions across both theatres and trying to employ as many local freelance creatives as possible. Audiences are definitely wanting more of a 'good night out', an escape from the day to day and we enjoyed a record-breaking Christmas, with our Rock 'n' Roll panto at the Everyman and SIX at the Playhouse. In fact, as we look ahead to Christmas, this year's panto, Cinderella, is already out-selling previous years at this stage. Costs of materials and energy have put our costs up considerably, but the extension to the Theatre Tax Relief scheme means we haven't had to pass those costs on to our audiences and have worked to ensure we're offering a range of affordable ticket prices.

What's next for your business?

After joining the city in celebrating hosting Eurovision on behalf of Ukraine, we're looking to keep the pop-tastic party going with a new musical for families, Alice in Wonderland, at the Playhouse in July. We know our audiences love their music, adventurous heroines, and battling queens, so this new Alice in Wonderland will be the perfect summer treat!





James Bates,
Co-founder/Managing Director, Maray

What does your business do?

Maray Restaurant Group is a purpose-led, people-focussed hospitality group founded in Liverpool in 2014. We currently operate two restaurants under the Maray brand in Liverpool and one in Manchester, as well as The One O’Clock Gun - a New York style Pub-Style Bar in Liverpool. We employ 75 staff and are 100% independently owned.

Hospitality plays a huge part in giving back to the local economy. How has your business contributed to this?

We are 100% independently owned, so any profit or investment we make remains rooted in the region. We pay at least the Real Living Wage (£10.90) to all staff regardless of age or position, which we think is massively important to make hospitality an appealing career to young people in the region. Each of our restaurants has a local ‘house’ charity - we add a discretionary £1 to each bill which goes in its entirety to our charity partners. We raised over £50k last year with that scheme, together with charity events that we encourage our teams to participate in, such as the Liverpool Half Marathon and even a trek to Peru.

How has the cost-of-living crisis impacted your business?

Where to start? On one hand the cost of doing business, and by that, I mean the cost of buying ingredients, alcohol, napkins, dishwasher detergent (you get the picture - everything) has risen, not just with inflation, but way beyond inflation in our industry. Add that to the cost of energy going up by 400% (what that means in pounds is roughly £8000 a month when it was £2000 a month - that’s for one site by the way) and you can see that even the busiest restaurants and bars saw most, if not all of their profit disappear.

On the other hand, the general public have less disposable income for a lot of the same reasons and so understandably, visits to restaurants and bars are not as frequent as they once were. We think and hope we are through the worst of it, but it hasn’t been without its casualties. We had to make the incredibly tough decision to close our site in Allerton late last year and sadly our neighbours on the Albert Dock, Lerpwl, had to cease trading recently alongside countless others over the last year in the region. Since day one, we have been thankful for every single guest that comes through the door and you can times that by 10 right now.



You now have locations in both Liverpool and Manchester, how have you found the transition and what does it mean to you to expand your offering across the North West?

We are a very cerebral team, and we consider everything we do with a lot of thought. It got to a point where we had been asked for the thousandth time, “when are you opening in Manchester”, so it would have been foolish not to have made that move. We have been welcomed with open arms by the city and especially the hospitality scene, so it has all felt very natural for us. In terms of what it means - to come from what was the germ of an idea for a restaurant in 2014 to doing what not too many other restaurants have done in taking their offering out of Liverpool, I think it speaks volumes for the level of hospitality and product that our teams put out day in and day out.

What’s next for your business?

We are a growing business, so naturally, we are always on the lookout for new opportunities. We have targeted towns and cities in the North of England and Scotland that are easily accessible by train from Liverpool to ensure a good quality of life for our operational team. We have opened a new site in each of 2019, 2021 and 2022 and we would like to ramp this up to do a couple a year. We will never be a rapid growth company because we care too much about the food and drink that we serve and the quality of service we provide. They are non-negotiables, so the pace of growth has to fit around those pillars.



Helen Bamford,
Sales and Events Manager, Albert Schloss

What does your business do?

True to its name, Albert’s Schloss celebrates the beloved Prince’s values every day and all night. Built as a retreat for recreation, indulgence and pleasure, Albert’s Schloss presents roaring fires, raucous performances, tankards of Europe’s finest bier and endless entertainment.

By day, Albert’s Schloss presents Alpine-inspired dishes from its Cook Haus, served 9am – 10pm daily (until 9pm on Sundays), influenced by Albert’s Schloss travels across Europe. Menu highlights include Klassics such as Schweinshaxe, Bratwurst and Schnitzel, breakfast staples such as Haus Pancakes, Kroissant Royale and Avocado and Eggs, and it’s delicious take on Sunday roast. The menu is complemented by Europe’s finest bier and haus speciality cocktails. By night, Albert’s Schloss dazzles with seven days of fantastisch showtime, including cabaret performances and live music.

Hospitality plays a huge part in giving back to the local economy. How has your business contributed to this?

Mission Mars (owners of Albert’s Schloss) have been partnered with Manchester based charity, HideOut Youth Zone, since 2020, which supports young people in discovering their passions and purposes through numerous initiatives, events, and challenges. So far, the team have raised over £100,000 for the charity, helping young people access safe and inclusive spaces, activities and coaching programmes.

Mission Mars is also in the process of setting up its own charity, Mission Mars Foundation, which will further look to support the community.

“We’re really excited for all future developments under our brand and can’t wait to cater to even more people across the North West and beyond!”

You now have locations in both Liverpool and Manchester, how have you found the transition and what does it mean to you to expand your offering across the North West?

After opening Manchester and Birmingham, Liverpool was the obvious next choice, given how popular the Manchester venue has been with those from Liverpool. Since officially opening in December 2022, Albert’s Schloss Liverpool has seen record numbers through its doors, with a busier than expected Christmas, New Year, and the typically ‘quieter months’ within hospitality. Without a doubt, this welcomed opening cemented the Bier + Pleasure Palace as a must-visit destination in Liverpool. The success of Liverpool, however, hasn’t taken the spotlight away from Manchester, which remains one of the busiest venues in the city.

What’s next for your business?

Mission Mars is set to invest £25-30m over the next three years. As part of its three-year plan, it will look to open six to eight Rudy’s sites per annum and one Albert’s Schloss, also hoping to double the size of its current circa 1,000-strong workforce over that three-year period. We’re really excited for all future developments under our brand and can’t wait to cater to even more people across the North West and beyond!

Liverpool's future tennis stars

The evolution of The Qube Liverpool International Tennis Tournament...



Anders Borg,
Managing Director,
Northern Vision

Launched back in 2002 as a means to “take tennis out of London and bring it out to the people”, Liverpool International Tennis Tournament has evolved to become the event where future stars hone their skills and warm up for Wimbledon.

From a small competition hosted in a public park tucked away in Liverpool, the tournament is now recognised worldwide, with some of the game's biggest stars, such as Novak Djokovic and Emma Raducanu, making an appearance over the years.

Recognising a need to showcase tennis to populations who might not typically have access to the sport, which is considered “elitist” by some, Oslo-born Anders Borg, Director of the tournament's host Northern Vision, set out on a mission to create an inclusive event and showcase tennis as the enjoyable and diverse sport it is.

Anders said:

“We were looking to bring a tennis event to a region in England that didn't have many tennis events. Most of these occasions take place down south, so we wanted a public park in a location which didn't have a huge interest in tennis.”

Launching the first event in Liverpool's Calderstones Park, Anders said while he was called “mad” for choosing Liverpool over alternative option Hampstead Heath, he has “never regretted” his choice.

Anders added:

“The most important thing was to bring tennis out to the people and what better way to do that than in a public park in Liverpool.

“Over the years, Liverpool has drastically improved, and it has been a fantastic venue to us. I believe the city is heavily underrated; why more businesses are not moving into the city I do not know. It has the best universities, great golf courses, it's on the river, west-facing, sun setting,

it has most listed buildings outside of London; Liverpool is just beautiful.”

After 12 years of continuous growth, the event needed a new venue that could host its ever-growing numbers. Moving to Liverpool Cricket Club in 2014, Anders said it has been a lot easier to organise events and it has allowed for the occasion to continue its growth.

Throughout its years, Liverpool International Tennis Festival has featured some of the sport's most loved names. From Novak Djokovic, who featured in Liverpool 15 years ago back before he became number one in the world, as well as Caroline Wozniacki, John McEnroe, Marion Bartoli and Mansour Bahrami. Not to mention Emma Raducanu won her first Junior event in Liverpool as a 12-year-old in 2015, the first victory on a path that led her to the 2021 US Open.

The annual event has now established itself as one of the premier tennis exhibition events in Europe, though it has not been without its challenges.

Anders explained:

“The tournament has faced numerous challenges over the years. It is dependent on sponsorships and support from the City Council which we initially had, however then came the financial crisis in 2008. The corporate world collapsed for a couple of years and the support from the government fell short, those were tough years.

“Then in 2010, we had the volcanic ash cloud which threatened the event as flights to the UK were cancelled just two weeks before the tournament, risking our international players attendance. And most recently everyone has suffered due to the Covid-19 pandemic, so we have been faced with some tough challenges.”

Since 2002, Northern Vision has gone from strength to strength, evolving its offering to Liverpool. As well as showcasing the sport in the annual tournament, the foundation organises in-school coaching, after-school clubs, competitions, mentoring and a tennis academy - introducing around 1000 young people to tennis each year.

Anders puts significant emphasis on providing young people with opportunities through Northern Vision. Since the launch of Liverpool International Tennis Tournament, Liverpool has become a major hub for international junior events, opening the doors to local children who might have struggled to obtain ranking points and compete against international players.

Anders said:

“In November, children from more than 50 nations are flew in to Liverpool to participate in these junior events at the Liverpool Tennis Centre in Wavertree.

“We flew in the children from all over the world, and the advantage for local young children is we're able to provide them with wild cards. They can get into the event and compete against international players without the ranking which is usually required for entering events such as these.

Not that many parents from Liverpool usually have the means to travel around and obtain these ranking points, so for them to have local events such as this – five of them each year – is very beneficial. That is a huge part of our youth programme to get youths on the court and off the streets.”

Now the longest running and largest tennis exhibition in Europe, Anders has big plans to continue growing the annual tournament, as well as increasing the reach of the youth programme across the Merseyside region, giving more young people the opportunity to engage in tennis.

“The most important thing was to bring tennis out to the people and what better way to do that than in a public park in Liverpool.”



Legal advice



John Owens,
Partner, MSB Solicitors

How to deal with a relationship breakdown in a shared tenancy

Family law issues such as separation, divorce, and domestic violence share a significant link with social housing law that can affect tenants on a daily basis. But what does this mean for those experiencing a relationship breakdown whilst sharing rented properties with partners?

We invited John Owens, Partner in MSB's Family Law team, to answer a few short questions to assist on what actions can be taken in this instance:

What is divorce?

Divorce is the process by which parties legally end their marriage. Either party can apply for a divorce, separately or jointly. The person to apply is known as the applicant and the other party is known as the respondent. In a joint application, the parties are known as Applicant 1 and Applicant 2.

The divorce process begins when the applicant issues the divorce application, the respondent acknowledges this application, the applicant can then apply for a Conditional Order of divorce and then, after a period of 6 weeks, for a Final Order.

The marriage is legally ended once the Court has pronounced the Final Order.

What are the grounds for seeking a divorce?

Following the recent change in the law, the only ground for divorce is now that the marriage has "irretrievably broken down".

Parties no longer need to rely on any facts to support this, with it being known as a "non-fault divorce".

Can my ex-partner be removed from our joint tenancy?

The simple answer is yes if this decision is reached by agreement.

A Judge, in financial remedy proceedings, would not have the power to order this, but if the parties agree by consent, this decision can be recorded in the recitals section of the Court Order.

A Judge has the power under the Family Law Act 1996 to order a transfer of a tenancy from one party to another but not to remove a party from a tenancy. The landlord in question would not be a party to the proceedings and therefore could refuse to comply.

A landlord may also be willing to remove your ex-partner if your ex-partner agrees to being removed by way of a Deed of Assignment. They will usually only agree to do this if the rent account is clear and there is no legal action pending.

If your ex-partner does not consent to be removed from the tenancy, you could end the tenancy by way of a Notice to Quit if your landlord is agreeable to grant a new tenancy for the property in your sole name.

What if my ex-partner has been violent towards me? Can I make them leave the property?

Yes, the Court has the power to make orders to protect vulnerable people in circumstances like this.

The court has the power under the Family Law Act 1996, to make either Occupation Orders, which would remove a violent party from a property, or Non-Molestation Orders, which would often have the same effect.

Your landlord should also have a Domestic Violence policy so may be able to offer you assistance with a move yourself or may be able to apply for an Injunction pursuant to the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act to exclude them from the property.

What happens if I leave the rented property and my ex-partner stays living there? Will I still need to pay the rent?

If you remain named on the tenancy agreement, then you will remain jointly liable for the rent. This is much the same as circumstances where parties have obtained a joint mortgage. Both parties are jointly and severally liable for the debt and monthly repayments.

You should speak to your landlord to see if you can be removed from the tenancy agreement. You could also serve a Notice to Quit to end the tenancy but that would also end the tenancy on behalf of your ex-partner.

"Family law issues such as separation, divorce, and domestic violence share a significant link with social housing law that can affect tenants on a daily basis."

Highlight: From the experts



Sharon Amesu,
Co-founder, She Leads for Legacy

She Leads for Legacy: Creating opportunities for black women in business

Sharon Amesu is a multi-award-winning motivational speaker, executive coach and leadership enthusiast. Having spent 16 years as a Criminal Barrister, Sharon takes her insights from the experience to help business leaders lead inclusively, running a consultancy delivering leadership development, executive coaching and diversity and inclusion training.

In 2021, together with her daughter, Afiya Amesu, Sharon co-founded She Leads for Legacy. After recognising a need for change within business,

She Leads of Legacy was established to support the acceleration of black women into senior leadership and board level positions.

Here, we talk to Sharon about her motivation for creating the organisation, her ambitions for the future and what business leaders can do to affect much-needed change.

Identifying the problem

“When I was in practice as a Barrister, I was doing a lot of work with women who had experienced domestic abuse and I became increasingly frustrated by the fact that the criminal justice system wasn’t designed to enable and support the voice and the agency of those women. This gave me a clear intent and focus on supporting the voice of others and to be part of an empowerment process, but it began to feel like it wasn’t something I could facilitate properly through the criminal justice process.

“That frustration coincided with me being introduced to coaching. I became enamoured by the prospect of being able to use the power of question, enquiry and curiosity to draw out the potential in others and have a focus which was much more about the prospects and possibilities for people, as opposed to a deficit model where things had gone wrong.

“The world of coaching led me to consulting. I became drawn to working with leaders because they are the key decision makers, they are the ones who influence and shape policy that impacts other people’s lives. I also recognised that they, as leaders, are often incredibly frustrated and lonely at the top, and are having to make decisions, oftentimes at crisis point with no partner alongside them to support the weight. So, I took the skills I acquired while in practice and transferred them into a context to enable me to support people. That was how the journey into the work that I’m doing now started.”

A need for change

“Conversations with my daughter, Afiya, began several years ago. She is about to start practice as a barrister, and she had relayed to me some of the challenges and barriers that she was experiencing on her journey. What was deeply profound for me was the fact that so many of the experiences were ones that I had experienced more than 20 years ago. One would have hoped that those barriers cease to exist, but they’re still there.

“By way of example, in 2019, of the 400 pupillages (training contracts) offered to barristers, only two of were offered to black candidates. A clear problem exists.

“Our frustration was largely driven by the double bind of the intersectional issue: being a woman and being a black woman, and the impact those two elements have on a person’s ability to enter and succeed in industry. Our focus was originally on the professional services space, but as we began to have more conversations with peers and with colleagues, we recognised that actually, this is universal.

“Rather than shouting from the side lines, we decided to mobilise into action and work with each other, like minded black women and with supporters, champions and allies, who understand that this is a situation which is no longer sustainable – it’s not good for business, our communities, our society or our environment. So, we wanted to play our part in the corner of the world that we occupy, to bring about change to gender and racial diversity from an intersectional perspective.”

The Northern Powerhouse

“Our principal focus is on the North – we believe there is a lot of work to be done here. We’re originally from Manchester and what’s brilliant is that we have been lorded for our position as being one of the most impactful cities in the world, which is incredible. However, we still have in many ways a tale of two cities.

On one side of the track, we have incredibly thriving businesses and a thriving tech sector, which is recognised across the world for so much innovation.

“However, across the other side of the river you find huge underrepresentation, huge inequalities and low levels of productivity. We know that there is an untapped resource and potential – namely black women in the North who would be able to add significant value.

Awareness and education

“We launched in January 2021 and our principal focus is raising awareness and education. Nothing happens without people being aware of the challenges, so we host online events and invite allies to hear the experiences of black women in the workplace. When we become aware of other people’s stories, we’re more inclined towards empathy.

“We also invite speakers to share their experience of best practice. We can help each other and help organisations to see a path forward for themselves when they hear about how other people are doing it. So, our principal focus is around raising awareness, sharing stories, creating a safe space for enquiry and curiosity, to enable organisations and leaders to learn how they can move the agenda forward.”

Agents of change

“One of our key ambitions is to equip and empower black women through structured leadership development programmes, to really populate the pipeline so that they can reach leadership and board level positions not just in their organisations, but in our communities as well. If ever there was a place in which we need to have women’s voices, women’s experiences, and women’s insights, it’s in the world of politics, both local and national. So, we really want to inspire and marshal the voices of women and their corrective power in those spaces.

“To support this, we hosted our inaugural conference in October 2021, encouraging women to be strategic in relation to their careers. This year, we hosted our allies conference, which brought black female professionals and allies together to talk about equipping, empowering, and inspiring white leaders and white allies in particular, to understand the issues and also to use the agency, power and influence they have to be agents of change. We had some incredible sponsors and it was fantastic to be able to host the event in person – that interaction makes all the difference.

“Our mission is to build a thriving community of black women and allies across the North, who are committed to ensuring that black women thrive in the workplace.”

Time to take action

“I would encourage business leaders to listen to the stories of the women in their organisation and take action on what they recommend should be done next. There is a huge amount of insight within organisations and across every level. So, if in your organisation there isn’t anyone at senior or middle management level, you can gain insight from more entry level team members, and ask them what are their experiences, what are the barriers, what can we do to help? Undertake genuine, authentic listening exercises. Based on what you are hearing, invite collaboration and contribution, and consult with your team members about what your organisation can do to change the situation and move forward.

“It’s not just about making sure the workforce is diverse through recruitment, it’s about making sure those people have opportunities to progress and excel. True inclusion is about ensuring that everyone has a voice, is heard and has the opportunity to thrive in their organisation.”

Prioritising inclusivity

“Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, organisations would have had many reasons as to why their staff had to be in the office – you couldn’t be as effective if you were working remotely, you couldn’t be as productive or as profitable. When offices had to close and people couldn’t get into those buildings, organisations immediately had to find an alternative solution. They had to restructure, rework things and find a way forward. If they didn’t, they wouldn’t survive.

“If organisations can place that sort of urgency, the sense of priority and ‘we do this or we die’ attitude on the diversity agenda, putting it at the forefront, they can create a workforce which is engaged, inclusive, diverse and welcoming. This should be a huge priority. What we’ve come to is the ‘great resignation’, which is the increased sense of agency that we’re seeing in the labour market. We have a huge labour shortage – there are millions of jobs available and there’s so much more choice in the marketplace. You hear increasingly of employers saying ‘we’re not able to recruit people’, but if you want to attract the best talent, you have to have the best conditions and part of that is creating an inclusive environment.”

Be ambitious and be bold

“Our post-pandemic position creates for us an opportunity like no other. We have an opportunity to reset our historic imbalance and create the inclusive growth and the inclusive economy that society calls for. It is up to every business leader to play their part in ensuring that happens.”

To find out more about She Leads for Legacy, visit

“Our mission is to build a thriving community of black women and allies across the North, who are committed to ensuring that black women thrive in the workplace.”



Spotlight



Adam Thompson,
Humans of Liverpool

How did Humans of Liverpool come to be and what is its ambition?

Liverpool is a city that is full of incredible stories, whether they're related to our rich sporting, musical, or comedic heritage - or from the fella that you bump into when you're doing your shopping. We wanted to share these personal stories with the world, offering people a collection of journeys to relate to their own, to make them realise that they aren't alone. In turn, it's about giving communities the voice and the platform that they might not otherwise have, bringing them together and nurturing new relationships through shared experience.

The project is a testament to the resilience, diversity, and spirit of this vibrant city and its people. Whether you're a local or a visitor, we aim to give you a deeper appreciation and understanding of Liverpool and the individuals who call it home.

Have you had any recent stand out stories that you can share with us?

I recently interviewed the CEO of a national charity, and his candidness has really had an impact on our audience. When people put themselves out there and are vulnerable, I think they're the most endearing stories, because they allow others to accept those same emotions and experiences and to heal. They are some of the stories that have resonated the most. Stories about a man's love for his dog as his best friend or facing issues with addiction and mental health show us that our challenges are universal and affect us all, no matter where we come from, whatever our social status or perceived level of success.



What's been the most valuable thing you've taken from the stories/people you've come across?

One of the most valuable things doing this has taught me is the need for kindness. You never know what an individual is going through and our perceptions of someone are almost always wrong. So don't judge too harshly. Keep an open mind and an open heart. I've also seen first-hand how connected people are to Liverpool and how proud they are of their Scouse heritage.

This city is small but international. Its cultural makeup is colourful and varied and that's reflected in its people.

What can businesses and individuals be doing to support the work of Humans of Liverpool?

We collaborate with organisations that value authentic human storytelling and match our ethics and values. We're currently profiling 50 inspirational figures for Liverpool John Moores University, to celebrate their bicentenary year and inspire the next generation. We're also working with Strawberry Field to document stories related to John Lennon's legacy and their steps to work program for vulnerable adults. If your organisation has a story that you'd like to be shared in a natural and unfiltered way, then please get in touch:

We also encourage individuals to share their stories with us, as we consistently receive amazing contributions from our followers. You can of course also follow along on social media:

What does the future look like for Humans of Liverpool?

We have some exciting projects in the works including stories on Eurovision in Liverpool, mental health, and the cost-of-living crisis. We want to continue to connect people through storytelling and give individuals and communities a platform to normalise and demystify topics close to their hearts and to have their voices heard.

"This city is small but international. Its cultural makeup is colourful and varied and that's reflected in its people."



Ben Osu, Senior Lead for ED&I at Everton

As Senior Lead for ED&I at Everton, what does your role involve? Tell us a bit about your work.

My role at Everton involves developing and delivering on our commitment to Equity & Inclusion; ensuring everyone who engages with the Club feels respected, celebrated, and empowered, regardless of their background or identity. There are many elements to the job, which can range from organising events and workshops, reviewing and developing policy, presenting to colleagues at various levels and, most importantly, engaging with our people – colleagues and supporters alike. Another part of what I do is about representing the organisation externally on the local, regional, national, and international stage, to shout about our All Together Now campaign - the brand all our equity & inclusion work sits under.

Why is it important for the sporting industry to have inclusive practices?

Sport is all about people, and people come from many different backgrounds and in many different shapes and sizes. It needs to develop inclusive practices to ensure everyone can participate and that its participants are truly reflective of the diverse communities we have in the world today. Not only is it the right thing to do, but commercially it makes sense for sport to be inclusive. We want people to have a great experience when they visit Everton, to feel that they've been considered, and for that experience to have them wanting to come back again and again.

What can we learn from Everton's work?

From working at the Club and in the sporting sector, I think we can take a moment to realise that, whilst there is a long way to go and a lot more work to do, there are many good people out there. We need to keep an objective and open mind when exploring topics related to EDI, develop our personal skills (emotional intelligence and empathy, in particular), and listen to understand, not to respond. We need to work on our confidence to challenge and report discrimination and injustice when we see it, and we need to work together as a community. We are stronger together.

What does the future look like for Everton in the ED&I space?

The future for Everton in the EDI space is very exciting. We have just developed our 10-year vision and strategy and we want to be at the forefront of change. We want to do things differently and we want to be bold. We have a new stadium on the horizon which presents many opportunities for us to cement our commitment to equity and inclusion and set out our stall as a leader in this space. As has been mentioned before, there's a long way to go and a lot more work to do but we will only make real change when we take real action.

“Sport is all about people, and people come from many different backgrounds and in many different shapes and sizes.”





*Mariana and Oksana,
United for Ukraine*

How did United for Ukraine come to be and what is its ambition?

United for Ukraine was launched in Greater Manchester, in response to the war in Ukraine, by businesses and other partners across the North West of England to support evacuees coming to our region. For Ukrainian nationals, this initiative provides a support opportunities and a searchable list of vacancies with employers who have committed to providing good job opportunities in a supportive environment. For employers, it provides an easy and direct way to communicate job opportunities to Ukrainian nationals coming to the UK.

It is our ambition to help as many Ukrainian refugees as possible into meaningful employment in the North West for as long as they need it.

Why is it important for the North West to play their part in this cause?

The North West is the second largest area of the country (after London and Greater London) where Ukrainians are located. With this, we have a lot of greatly skilled, highly educated Ukrainians who are ready to start work as soon as possible, which poses the opportunity for employers to take advantage of this talent. Our aim is to match them with the employers, so their expertise and knowledge can be utilised better and businesses in the region can support this ambition! Now is the time to come together and be there for the refugees who need us.

What has the impact been on the North West/refugees in the past year? Statistics?

Since United for Ukraine's inception in April 2022, we have made a huge impact in job creation and support for refugees. We have ensured 207 job starts, supported more than 2000 refugees, and had more than 14,000 unique site visits. We're proud of these numbers but there is always more to do and that's why we're so passionate about continuing this work and helping even more people.

"It is our ambition to help as many Ukrainian refugees as possible into meaningful employment in the North West for as long as they need it."

What can businesses and individuals be doing to support the work of Humans of Liverpool?

There are so many ways to support United for Ukraine. The war is not over yet and we still need your support, so, please, advertise your vacancies on the website, offer shadowing opportunities to young evacuees, share United for Ukraine with businesses, help us grow our directory of support, invite us to your events, and share our stories on social media. However you show your support, we greatly appreciate it.

What does the future look like for United for Ukraine?

Ideally, we would love to keep the project going, as some Ukrainians might stay in the UK after the war finishes due to some personal changes or getting settled here, so our help will be useful for them. United for Ukraine is a unique service that should be implemented to all that need our help. Potentially we could expand this project further helping other categories of asylum seekers, evacuees, and refugees, based on our experience. We have also recently launched a Restart Scheme for Ukraine, that offers some great opportunities for Ukrainians that we hope to see take off in the near future. Above all, we would love to expand our services across the UK to be able to support more Ukrainian nationals.



We've moved!

We are excited to announce that our Property Team at MSB Allerton Rd have moved to MSB HQ at 4 St Paul's Square in Liverpool City Centre.

It's still business as usual, except in a brand-new home for the team. Services we can provide:

- Property Sales and Purchases
- Auction transactions
- Transfers of Equity
- Residential Development and plot sales
- Remortgages
- Landlord and Tenant matters
- Bridging Loans
- Property disputes
- Shared Ownership Leases

If you have any queries, don't hesitate to get in touch with **Brad Armstrong** at **BradArmstrong@msbsolicitors.co.uk**

msb