

IN-HOUSE TEAM OF THE YEAR
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Royal Mail

Neil Harnby

Standing strong for the client amid significant change

The legal team at Royal Mail has had a busier few years than most, with an initial public offering, a panel review, an inaugural corporate bond and two competition inquiries just some of the work the team has engaged in since the group's general counsel (GC) Neil Harnby took over in January 2012. The in-house department, which is also responsible for quasi-legal elements such as compliance, information governance and claims handling, covers everything from intellectual property to personal injury work.

The £3.3bn IPO in particular, which included extensive due diligence across 37 countries, the transfer of historic pension scheme assets to the government and the company's separation from the Post Office – all against a controversial political backdrop – has garnered the team admiration from many in the legal industry.

According to one external adviser: 'The team has navigated its way through the IPO and significant internal change, while running a panel review process in parallel and seeking to establish a legal community among panel firms to deliver added value. It is very hard-working.'

HIGHLY COMMENDED

AIG EUROPE

Chris Newby

After the 2008 financial crisis, following an \$182bn government rescue, many doubted AIG would survive but, following significant corporate restructuring, it is thriving again and the legal team have been central to that success. Work on the company restructuring occurred at the same time as a reconfiguration brought the legal teams across Europe together for the first time into a single company.

BANK OF AMERICA MERRILL LYNCH

Sajid Hussein

Matters for this highly visible team include a record-breaking \$16.6bn settlement with the US Department of Justice, federal agencies and six US states – over credit crunch-related securities transactions. In London, the loans team in particular garners praise for taking responsibility for all loan products outside the US.

COCA-COLA ENTERPRISES

Paul van Reesch

Despite its modest size, the team at Coca-Cola Enterprises – which handles the manufacturing and distribution of Coca-Cola in



(L-R) Axiom's Nick West with Royal Mail's in-house legal team

Great Britain – manages around 80% of its legal matters in-house. That includes operations from packaging, supply and advertising, to major consumer-focused projects, such as sponsoring the London Eye.

SSE

Liz Tanner

2014 was a busy year at this electricity and gas supplier, which appointed a new director of legal services, reorganised its in-house legal department and oversaw the appointment of its first-ever legal panel, consolidating almost 30 external law firms into a line-up of seven. All this and significant work, including undertaking a major asset disposal programme with an estimated value of around £1bn.

TELEFÓNICA UK

Edward Smith

This highly effective legal team has drawn plaudits in recent years for its ability to handle complex commercial work, such as negotiating key devices contracts with telecoms and technology giants, including Apple, while introducing greater efficiency.

FIRST CLASS.

**CONGRATULATIONS ROYAL MAIL
IN-HOUSE TEAM OF THE YEAR 2015**

AND TO ALL THE OTHER NOMINEES:

AIG Europe, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Coca-Cola Enterprises,
SSE, and Telefónica UK