



New firm: Sinclair Gibson

On the 1st July 2019, Sinclair Gibson was launched by partners Keith Bruce-Smith, Lucy Gibson, Alison Meek, Kathryn Peat, Henry Hickman, Eleanor Walsh and Annabel Staples. Several of these partners had long served together at Marcus Sinclair, a firm with a successful private client practice established in 2002 and had accordingly built strong reputations while doing so. So where did the motivation for a new firm come from?

Firstly, we considered that the time was right for a rebrand. The senior partners of Sinclair Gibson are, very clearly, Keith Bruce-Smith (the Sinclair is his mother's maiden name) and Lucy Gibson and it was felt that this should be recognised by placing their names on the door! The name change provided the starting point for the firm's launch, which has included a new website www.sinclairgibson.com, while simultaneously acknowledging the stellar reputations each of the individual partners have cultivated over the years, allowing a name change with minimal disruption to the business: our partners are our reputation.

Secondly, Sinclair Gibson is licensed as an Alternative Business Structure (ABS) rather than as a traditional law firm. This is, in part, to allow the appointment of non-solicitor partners but also to offer flexibility for the future. The legal industry has changed significantly since 2002: technology plays a far larger part in the day to day activities of law firms and compliance regulations have become more and more stringent resulting in the requirements for a different set of skills to enable the smooth running of a successful law firm.

Against a background where technological advances and regulatory requirements have become more prevalent and finances and strategy play an integral part, many small to medium firms outsource much of their back office work to specialists to minimise workload and to ensure compliance across the board. However, at Sinclair Gibson the decision has been made to bring these skills in house to ensure that the firm's objectives are fully understood as well as to encourage a culture of compliance within. It is therefore important that there is a structure in place whereby the skills of senior members of staff which lie in areas other than law, such as finance and compliance, can be recognised, with the ultimate reward being a partnership appointment.

Finally, the time that Marcus Sinclair had been trading had naturally resulted in some evolution in terms of practice areas and there was a desire to return to the ethos of old. As such, Sinclair Gibson concentrates on the core work that the founding partners have always enjoyed and valued and continues a move away from the expansionist business model reliant on compartmentalisation, juniors and precedent-led work increasingly prevalent in the market. We pride ourselves on our ability to provide innovative bespoke advice tailored to the individual through our three complementary areas of Private Client, Family and Private Client Litigation law.

The firm's model utilises partner-led teams, though individual solicitors are encouraged to work independently and build close and personalised relationships with clients, with many

of the firm's practitioners having competence and experience across two or more practice areas. The nature of Sinclair Gibson, and the size of our teams, is such that there is an agility which enables us to obtain opinions and advice from other departments within the firm at short notice which is invaluable and allows us to keep the private client's needs, which are at the heart of our practice, at the forefront of our minds.

Led by Keith Bruce-Smith and Lucy Gibson, and supported by Eleanor Walsh and a team of qualified solicitors, our private client department combines deep expertise in advising UK-based families and landed estates on wealth structuring and devolution planning with a specialist practice in advising international clients on multi-jurisdictional matters, including cross-border estates.

The family department, which is led by Kathryn Peat, advises on all aspects of family law, from legal issues arising from the breakdown of a marriage and other relationships to pre and post nuptial agreements. The team places a particular emphasis on advising high net worth clients on complex financial remedy claims and is also well regarded for its work in private children matters.

The vastly experienced Alison Meek heads up Sinclair Gibson's internationally well-regarded litigation practice, along with Henry Hickman. The firm's dispute resolution practice is primarily focussed on litigation about trusts, probate and succession matters including for individuals, family offices, protectors and trustees on general contentious issues such as professional negligence. There are additional specialisms in Court of Protection and Privy Council agency work.

Overall, the breadth of expertise within the firm and the experience of our practitioners ensure that clients benefit from high quality and robust advice, rooted in independent and intelligent thinking as well as extensive experience. ■

Annabel Staples
Partner, Sinclair Gibson