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The City of London Solicitors' Company



The City of London Law Society

2024 Wig & Pen Prize for pro bono legal work awarded to Freshfields' Liam Symonds

Liam Symonds, Associate in Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer's Dispute Resolution practice, has been awarded the 2024 Wig & Pen Prize in recognition of his dedication to pro bono legal work and his commitment to supporting marginalised communities.

This year, Liam led a Freshfields team to secure a substantial victory for a modern slavery survivor in the First-Tier Tribunal. The case involved successfully overturning an initial refusal by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) to award compensation. After four years of dedicated work, Liam's team achieved a landmark result, with over £350,000 awarded - the highest known sum for a modern slavery survivor under the CICA scheme. The client, who had been held captive for more than 26 years, would have likely been unable to achieve this outcome without legal representation, a situation exacerbated by legal aid restrictions.

The judging panel commended Liam's dedication to the matter, noting his contribution of over 900 pro bono hours to formulate creative litigation strategies, oversee case management, and provide trauma-informed client care for a highly vulnerable individual. The Tribunal acknowledged the comprehensive efforts made by the Freshfields team, stating, "The legal team has put a considerable amount of time and energy into presenting their client's appeal whilst acting pro bono."

Beyond his work in this landmark case, Liam has represented numerous pro bono clients, including survivors of torture, race discrimination victims, and humanitarian charities. Notably, he dedicated over 150 hours representing an individual in the Manchester Employment Tribunal, successfully settling a race discrimination claim on favourable terms.

Commenting on the award, Liam Symonds said, "I'm delighted to have been awarded the Wig & Pen Prize 2024 in recognition of the work that my colleagues and I undertook in this criminal injuries appeal. The team had put in a lot of effort to achieve this outcome, and we are all very pleased that our client has finally received some compensation for the serious and life-changing injuries that he sustained over such a long period of time. Thank you very much to the City of London Law Society for making this award and I'm also grateful to Freshfields for providing us with the opportunity to have worked on this case as part of our broader pro bono modern slavery practice."

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

The City of London Law Society is the professional representative body for solicitors and law firms in the City of London, including all the largest national and international practitioners. Our membership takes in more than 21,000 solicitors and 64 corporate member firms.

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