

Signatories call 9 September 2019 – follow up notes

NB – given the range of discussion and updates from attendees, the detail of all of which it is hard to capture in a note, this is more of a follow up with actions and a summary of discussion than a formal meeting note.

Attendees

Byrne-dean – Richard Martin and Bethany Smith

Barclays – Tammy Dixon

Pinsent Masons – Jacquie Dunn and Kate Dodd

Ashursts – Julia Derrick

Baker McKenzie – Sarah Gregory

Lloyds – Rachel Holder

CMS – Rachel Czernobay

Clifford Chance – Melissa Fogarty

Simmons & Simmons – Joanna Harris

Eversheds Sutherland - Jennifer Watson

Herbert Smith Freehills - Matthew Clements

Coventry Building Society – Amanda Robinson

Stone King – Tom Morrison, Rani Ahmed

Paul Hastings - Hannah Smith

Radiant Law – Serena Wallace

Burness Paul – Emma Smith

Osborne Clarke – Liz Lovell

1. Update

Anna who had been supporting our Charter work has unfortunately had to leave over the Summer. We are recruiting a permanent replacement for her but in the meantime we have created a generic email address MBC@byrnedean.com which is being monitored on a regular basis.

2. Updates

It was very valuable last time to go round the attendees to get an update from everyone on what they had been doing. That said, with increasing numbers on the call, it was recognised that would take a lot of time so we had agreed on attendees providing an update on a rolling basis, a handful on each call. Along with the signatories listed below, we had hoped proposed updates from Addleshaw Goddard and RBS but they were not able to attend the call. The following therefore gave the following updates on principal activity since the last call.

Barclays – Tammy Dixon

Back in May Barclays did a wellbeing survey including reference to the MBC and have been processing the data throughout the summer. Their focus for the moment has been on engaging with law firms and other external stakeholders around the Charter, as well as looking at other areas of the bank where it could be implemented – compliance and the business management team with corporate banking have been the main internal areas of focus thus far.

Pinsent Masons – Kate Dodd

They have created their MBC story for the MBC website which RM confirmed is with the website developers to go live on the site. They have developed and launched an internal Code of Conduct which started out as a Partner code but now a code for everybody in terms of behaviours that can be expected from all. The code will be formally launched with an event later this month and October

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“speak your mind sessions” which will be confidential spaces for all staff to speak freely around the Charter and how they feel it is being adopted and implemented. They are looking to launch the Charter in Hong Kong and Australia.

PM will share the Code of Conduct in due course but want to allow for it to be embedded and for any immediate tweaking to be done before releasing it externally. They will have a representative talking about it at the 10 October event (see below) from a junior lawyer perspective.

They have also produced MBC books and pens which, although on the face of it a small thing, do work to remind and reinforce and to keep attention on the Charter.

Eversheds Sutherland – Jennifer Watson

ES have incorporated the Charter into a wellbeing plan for the whole firm which was relaunched in May. They have been talking to clients more about the Charter and are holding a client event regarding the MBC and sustainable high performance. The focus going forward is on continuing to raise awareness, helping teams to adopt and incorporate the Charter and creating accountability for it. It is about getting it more into the day to day.

Hogan Lovells – Julie-Anne Johnston was unable to attend the call due to illness but provided the following update by email - *The main thing I was going to profile is an upcoming Mind Cycle challenge we are holding in celebration of the 2020 Paralympics held in Tokyo next year (we have a partnership with the British Paralympic Association) and in conjunction with Rob Stephenson of Inside Out. Between Tuesday 8 - Thursday 10 October, we will have use of four bikes in the atrium of our London office, with the combined goal of completing a 3,000km virtual cycling route of Japan whilst raising awareness of and stimulating conversation around mental health. This is a prime opportunity for us to profile the MBC to our people taking part, walking by, cheering on teammates and generally raising awareness across the firm. There has been lots of internal comms around it already and we'll do a round up afterwards. We have invited Lloyds and Barclays to participate and I will pull together an article/ profile for inclusion on the MBC website.*

RM reminded attendees that we need more collateral for the “Implementation – Stories and Resources” section of the website and that it had been agreed that all signatories would prioritise creating a narrative of their progress thus far with the Charter, with as much detail as possible and reference to useful internal documents and other information that can be shared with signatories and added to the website. All are encouraged to do this but particularly the original signatories to have this done and up on the website prior to 10 October, the first anniversary of the Charter. We will need the material a week or two in advance of 10 October to get it up and ready. Format is up to you but please look at what is there already if you want a guide. The more we can share, the greater the impact. Going forward, each signatory should provide such an update on each anniversary of their signing to keep the momentum going.

Lloyds are looking to do a blog piece around the experience of their GCs going on holiday without their work phones and are just waiting for internal approval.

3. Tweaks to Charter wording

The current wording of the Charter in a couple of places plants it firmly in the legal profession. Although its origins are there it is agreed that it has application across business and that we want to encourage other sectors to get involved. Accordingly, assuming we can tweak the Charter to make it more inclusive of other sectors without impacting its meaning or message, it is agreed we should do so.

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The opening statement currently says the following:

“The intention of the Mindful Business Charter is to remove *unnecessary sources of workplace stress and promote better mental health and wellbeing in the legal community*. We recognise that there will be times and transactions when long-hours and stress cannot be avoided, but this isn’t always the case, and we want it to become the exception rather than the rule. In this way, the Charter is brave and commercial. It recognises that we cannot remove all sources of stress, nor will change happen overnight – but as a *legal community* we have a responsibility to try do things differently.”

[The words in italics are the key ones for consideration here.]

It is proposed that we change the wording to say the following:

The intention of the Mindful Business Charter is to *remove unnecessary sources of stress and promote better mental health and wellbeing in the workplace*. We recognise that there will be times and transactions when long-hours and stress cannot be avoided, but this isn’t always the case, and we want it to become the exception rather than the rule. In this way, the Charter is brave and commercial. It recognises that we cannot remove all sources of stress, nor will change happen overnight – but as a *business community* we have a responsibility to try do things differently.

Further down, one of “My organisation’s commitments” is to:

Make performance against the Mindful Business Charter / responsible business a priority standing agenda item for all relationship review meetings.

It was proposed that we change “relationship review meetings” to “stakeholder and relationship review meetings”. Reflecting further after the call, the term stakeholder is often interpreted very broadly to include employees, customers, shareholders and more, which I think goes beyond the intention. I would suggest “client and supplier relationship review meetings”. Does that work?

Although the Charter wording is obviously hugely important and will have been long in the drafting, these feel like fairly gentle tweaks. Can you all please have a think, let me know any thoughts/issues/suggestions and we can hopefully get this sorted and ready for agreement on or before the next call?

4. October event

Simmons & Simmons are kindly hosting – for which thank you.

Dennis Stevenson will give a key note address. Rob Allen from Simmons will give a welcome and an update from Simmons perspective. I will give a broader update and Phil will speak about the Charter more generally. We then will have a junior lawyer from Pinsents speaking about their code of conduct and also the impact of the Charter from a junior perspective. Matt Dean will speak about the thinking behind, the comms supporting and the impact of our recent office shut down. We will then have a panel of the speakers with Q and A.

If anyone else feels they have a useful update or learning point they would like to share on the evening, please let me know and we can either get you on the panel or I can try to draw it out in the Q and A by calling on you at an appropriate time.

There will then be the formalities of signing and networking.

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You should have received the invite to the event with registration process and also requests re press and other influencers – please do make sure to go through all that please. Any questions let me or Katie Drysdale know.

5. Update on new signatories

The following organisations are confirmed to be signing:

BCLP

Burness paul

Coventry building society

HFW

Irwin Mitchell

Morten Fraser

paul hastings

Radiant Law

RPC

Shoosmiths

tlt

Ward Hadaway

We expect to have several more over the line before the date. If you have referred someone to us and are wondering where they are at then let us know – I am wary for various reasons of sharing too much of this info too widely. We will have a good pipeline of people we will be working on for the next event, with more sure to come on board, and are looking at the feasibility of signing events in Scotland and elsewhere – if that happens it would be important to get representatives of existing signatories to attend and witness.

6. Just a reminder, as referred to earlier, about materials for the website

7. Buddying

There was general agreement to the idea that new signatories be offered the opportunity of having an assigned buddy from the existing signatory group to help them in their journey. Please do therefore help to support this by responding as positively as possible with requests that arise. We will try to share the burden around!

8. Madworld

Unfortunately, we have been unable to secure a slot to speak at the event this year but are on the case to do so next time – the major stumbling block was that we were being asked for a substantial cash sum which clearly, as a not for profit movement we are not in a position to do. I have made the point that their conference is not complete without the MBC and they will take it on board for next year. In the meantime, we will get some written material included and they have made the following offer:

In the spirit of future collaboration, I am happy to offer an exclusive discounted delegate rate of 50% to any/all of your team or the MBC signatories including any staff, clients or supply chain companies – they can use my own promo code of SB50 when they register at this link:

<https://www.madworldsummit.com/registration.php>

9. IBA

RM is speaking at the IBA conference in Seoul later this month and will be talking about the Charter. Please do all keep an eye out for similar opportunities and let us know if support/help is needed.

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10. Email sign off and other links

A number of the links people use under their email signatures are going to sites that existed before the MBC website was launched – to promote the MBC website and to increase the google ranking and so push more traffic, can you all please ensure any links you use point to www.mindfulbusinesscharter.com

11. Working group update

The working group is meeting again next week and will report back in due course.

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