



## Stephen Thompson

### Partner

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Stephen is a partner and also head of the firm's Corporate and Commercial teams.

He undertakes a wide range of transactional corporate work including acquisitions, disposals, joint ventures, investments and group restructures. Sectors of particular expertise include life sciences, nursing homes, manufacturing, veterinary practices and also hospitality.

Stephen also advises on a wide range of commercial issues including franchising and intellectual property.

In addition, Stephen has nearly 30 years' experience advising businesses and individuals in relation to insolvency related legal issues.

Stephen's extensive and lengthy legal career means that he can bring to bear on his legal work a wealth of commercial knowledge and expertise. His commercial experience enables him to deliver legal advice and assistance to his clients that is tailor made to their particular business needs.

Stephen is known for his calm, friendly manner and also a highly pragmatic approach to legal problems and issues. He is always able to get straight to the nub of issues for his clients, enabling them to quickly move on with running their businesses and not get bogged down with unnecessary legal niceties.

In addition to providing regular support to established businesses, Stephen regularly works with start-ups and growth businesses across a variety of sectors. His wide-ranging legal experience across a variety of business sectors enables him to provide invaluable support to businesses that are in an early stage of their development and growth.

On the franchising side, Stephen leads the team with 25 years' experience in the sector. He has a widely known expertise in the franchising industry and is the Chair of the South West and Wales branch of Encouraging Women into Franchising (EWIF). The firm is also an affiliate member of the British Franchise Association.

Stephen also works extensively in the Housing Association and charitable sector advising on a range of corporate and also governance issues.

Stephen is a regular speaking and writer in relation to a wide range of legal topics including radio and television appearances.

## Recent Work

- Sale of a large nursing home based in South Wales
- Investment into a Welsh company producing computer systems and real-time graphics for quiz and light entertainment programmes
- Significant early funding round for a Welsh cutting-edge AI risk management company
- Sale of a leading clean air solutions company for £2.5m
- MBO of a local renowned fine foods company
- Sale of an insurance brokerage for £0.5m
- Sale of a local engineering company
- Purchase of a local estate agency from administrators
- Purchase of an engineering business from administrators
- Sale of a national freight business by the administrators
- Review of master service agreement for a life sciences company
- Regular commercial support to inhouse counsel for an IT company
- Regular reviews of master service agreement for a life sciences company
- Drafting and updating franchise agreements for a variety of franchisor companies
- Conducting IP audit for a networking franchise
- Advising a variety of franchisors in relation to dealing with franchisee disputes
- Advising on and forming a group company structure for a business advisory company
- Advising on and drafting a commission agreement for a property broking company
- Advising a housing association in relation to the formation of a commercial subsidiary
- Advising a housing association in relation to a variety of corporate governance issues

## Expertise

### Corporate

- Debt and equity investment
- Share and asset sales
- MBOs
- Lending and security documents
- Consultancy agreements
- Group company restructures
- Pre-packs
- Shareholders' agreements
- LLP and partnership agreements
- Joint venture agreements
- Agency and distribution agreements
- Corporate governance and directors' duties

### Commercial

- Commercial contract reviews
- Assignment and licensing of IP
- IP audits
- IT agreements
- Franchise agreements
- Framework agreements
- Non-disclosure agreements
- Competition
- Trust deeds
- GDPR and data protection
- Freedom of Information
- Procurement
- Training

## Experience

- Partner, Darwin Gray - 2004 - present
- Associate then Partner, Gimblett Williams, 1999 - 2004
- Solicitor, Pinsent Curtis, 1997 - 1998
- Solicitor, Morgan Bruce, 1993-1996
- Trainee Solicitor, Morgan Bruce, 1991 - 1993

### Education

- Hutton Grammar School
- University of West England

**Membership**

- Member of the Data Protection Society
- Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators
- Affiliate of the British Franchise Association
- Regional Chair of EWIF South West and Wales branch