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# 2024 Appellate Employment Highlights

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## Old Square's A – Z of 2024

It was a significant year in the world of employment law. Between the new Labour Government's announcement of an Employment Rights Bill following its election, and the many appellate court judgments across a variety of hot topics, there has been much to keep employment law blogs busy. In this article, we take a look back through some of the most important appeals of 2024, many of which feature Old Square members.

For those interested in reading about the Employment Rights Bill in greater depth, the excellent blog written by [Prof. Alan Bogg](#) and [Mr Michael Ford KC](#) on the Bill can be found [here](#).



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## **Addison Lee Limited v Afshar and others** **[2024] EAT 114**

Various current and former drivers for Addison Lee brought proceedings alleging that they were workers. A previous claim, presented by Mr Lange and others, had been upheld by EJ Pearl. Mr Afshar and others applied to strike out Addison Lee's grounds of resistance on the grounds that they were an abuse of process in light of the findings of the Pearl tribunal. An EJ made deposit orders of £75,000 and £25,000 against Addison Lee, and Addison Lee appealed.

The EAT dismissed the appeal, holding that (i) the EJ was entitled to have regard to the outcome of the previous litigation in deciding whether to make deposit orders; (ii) the deposit orders were not penal and the EJ had been

entitled to make a deposit order in respect of each of the 329 claimants in respect of whom arguments were being pursued; (iii) there was no rule that the beneficiary of the deposit order should be paying for legal representation and so nothing to prevent an EJ making deposit orders for those being represented under damages-based agreements; and (iv) the EJ had been entitled to decline to consider limitation issues when considering whether to make deposit orders as the issue under Rule 39 is about whether a particular allegation or argument has little reasonable prospects of success, not to consider the case as a whole. Oliver Segal KC and Melanie Tether acted for the Claimants.

## **Aird and others v Asda Stores Ltd and others** **[2024] ICR D33**

There are two groups of Claimants in a mass equal pay claim against Asda. The claims of one group (Calder multiple) were stayed pending resolution of the first group (Brierley Multiple). A firm of solicitors representing several thousand of the Calder Multiple group had applied for permission to be provided with all correspondence and documents passing between the parties in the Brierley Multiple. The ET declined to do so. The EAT dismissed the appeal and held that this was a case management order which was well within the gift of the EJ, that the requirement that parties should be on equal footing is not absolute (particularly in group litigation), and that if there was inequality flowing from different representation, that was something that resulted from choices the different claimants had made. Ben Cooper KC and Nadia Motraghi KC acted for Asda.



## Bailey v Stonewall Equality Limited, Garden Court Chambers Limited and others [2024] EAT 119

Judgment was handed down by the Employment Tribunal in 2022 in the much-publicised first instance decision in this case, and this year Ms Bailey's appeal to the Employment Appeal Tribunal was rejected. Ms Bailey's case against Garden Court succeeded at first instance but her claim against Stonewall did not. She therefore appealed to the Appeal Tribunal in relation to her claim under Section 111, Equality Act 2010, which applies to claims that an individual or party has instructed, caused or induced a contravention of certain parts of the Equality Act.

Bourne J, in upholding the first instance decision, provided useful guidance on the application of Section 111. In particular, he examined in some depth the scope of any requisite mental element to succeed in Section 111 and the distinction between 'instruct' and 'induce' (on one hand), and 'cause' (on the other).

At the time of writing, it is understood that permission has been granted by the Court of Appeal to hear Ms Bailey's appeal. Ben Cooper KC appeared for Ms Bailey, and Ijeoma Omambala KC appeared for Stonewall.

## Boohene and others v Royal Parks Ltd [2024] EWCA Civ 583

In Boohene, a group of 16 claimants brought a claim of indirect discrimination against their employer. The individuals concerned were a group of contractors whose claim was brought against the end-user of their services, Royal Parks Ltd. In substance, the indirect discrimination claim concerned the payment of London Living Wage to the Respondent's own staff and the National Minimum Wage to the Claimants, at least during the initial period of their employment. It was argued that this practice was indirectly discriminatory, with race being the protected characteristic on which the Claimants relied.

Although the Claimants were successful in the Employment Tribunal, Royal Parks succeeded in overturning that

decision on appeal to the Employment Appeal Tribunal. This year, the Court of Appeal heard the Claimants' appeal and upheld the decision of the Appeal Tribunal. The scope of the appeal related to the application of Section 41 of the Equality Act 2010 and, with that, the protection provided to contract workers against discrimination from the end-user of their services. The Court of Appeal held, in essence, that no claim for discrimination can be brought where the discrimination relied on is the contractor's contract of employment with their own employer (even where the end-user has control over those terms). Richard O'Keefe appeared for the Claimants.





## **Bhogal v National Education Union [2024] IRLR 809**

The Claimant applied for an interim injunction seeking a stay of disciplinary proceedings against him by the union, on the basis that he was entitled to legal representation at the appeal hearing. The High Court rejected the application on the facts, noting that the true construction of the union's rulebook did not allow for legal representation and that did not offend natural justice given that legal representation was far from the norm in a disciplinary procedure. Thus, this was not a seriously arguable case with a real prospect of success. Rebecca Tuck KC appeared for the Defendant union.

## **British Airways plc v Mello and others [2024] IRLR 543; [2024] ICR 967**

In Mello, cabin crew claimants brought claims asserting unlawful deductions from their holiday pay and that these came about because of a failure to factor in various allowances that should have counted towards normal pay. The EAT considered various issues on appeal. It affirmed that the overriding principle was that holiday pay had to reflect normal pay, which would arise if the pay was compensation for performing duties or tasks of the job rather than exclusively to cover costs, and the burden was on the worker to show this. Importantly, the EAT also applied Agnew, holding that in considering a series of deductions, the employment tribunal should not assess whether the “sufficient similarity” and “temporal” tests are satisfied in silos, but in the overall context of the relevant factual matrix, and recognising that one may have a bearing on the other. In particular, if all of the complaints by a given claimant are of deductions from holiday pay, proper account must be taken, when considering temporality, of the fact that there will inherently be gaps in time between successive holidays. Nicola Newbegin appeared for the Claimants.

## **British Airways PLC v 1) Mr B Rollett and Others 2) Minister for Women and Equalities [2024] EAT 131.**

The ECJ's 2015 judgment, CHEZ, has long been an important case in the world of indirect discrimination and discrimination by association. In Rollett, Eady J (President of the EAT) held that Section 19 of the Equality Act 2010 can be read compatibly with the ECJ's judgment in CHEZ. Although Section 19 requires that the individual share the protected characteristic of the disadvantaged group to fall within scope, CHEZ permitted an indirect discrimination claim from someone outside of that group but who suffered the same disadvantage as the group did. Rollett therefore expands scope for claims in indirect discrimination which need not overcome the hurdle that the individual concerned shares the protected characteristic of the group disadvantaged by a PCP.



## **Buildmaster Construction Services Ltd v Al- Naimi [2024] ICR D43**

In this case, the Respondent had appealed against a finding of unlawful deduction from wages contending that the judge elided the separate questions under s.13 of the ERA 1996, and failed to give adequate reasons for his decision. The EAT dismissed the appeal. Rad Kohanzad appeared for the Respondent.

## **Commissioners for His Majesty's Revenue and Customs v Professional Game Match Officials Ltd [2024] UKSC 29.**

In September, the Supreme Court handed down judgment in HMRC v PGMOL in which it assessed the employment status of part-time referees, who had previously treated them as self-employed for tax purposes by the PGMOL.

Although ostensibly a tax case which was initially heard in the First Tier Tribunal, the Supreme Court's judgment provided a useful restatement of the principles applicable to determining employment status. In particular, the Court examined mutuality of obligation and control, both of which it deemed satisfied. The appeal's scope was limited to those two matters. The case has therefore been remitted to the First Tier Tribunal for final determination.

## **Derma Med Ltd v Ally [2024] EWCA Civ 175.**

The Court of Appeal in Ally overturned the decision of Bourne J to discharge injunctions which had been granted at first instance on account of the Claimant's failure to comply with its disclosure obligations. In doing so, it provided Claimants with a steer on seeking injunctions without notice and on injunctions regarding the disclosure of confidential information, but muddied the water on approach to whether interim injunctions are an appropriate remedy for enforcing negative covenants.

A without-notice injunction was obtained which prohibited the use or disclosure of confidential information by the Defendant. That was defined as including, but not being limited to, any information 'that would reasonably be regarded as confidential'. Such wide drafting was critiqued by both Bourne J and then the Court of Appeal, giving guidance both to courts and those drafting proposed Orders.

The Court stated that an injunction generally is the appropriate remedy at an interim stage to enforce a negative covenant, but notably absent from its decision was the judgment in Planon v Gilligan [2022] EWCA Civ 642, with which the decision in Ally sits uneasily.





## **Donkor-Baah v University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and others [2024] ICR 758**

The Claimant was supplied by an agency to work shifts at the NHS Trust. An incident took place during a shift and she was told to go home. She was not offered shifts during the investigation or paid, but at the end of the investigation she was allowed to book shifts again. The ET had struck out a claim under the Agency Worker Regulations. On appeal, the Claimant argued that she was entitled to full pay during that period by virtue of the Agency Worker Regulations because there was an overarching agency relationship between her and the Trust after the end of each assignment. The EAT disagreed, holding that the Agency Worker Regulations do not support the existence of an overarching 'agency relationship', and are instead concerned with rights applicable during the course of a particular assignment. [Madeline Stanley](#) acted for the NHS Trust.

## **HSBC Bank plc v Chevalier-Firescu [2024] EWCA Civ 1550**

In *Chevalier-Firescu*, the ET had struck out claims of race discrimination, sex discrimination and victimisation as being out of time, refusing to exercise its discretion to extend time on the basis it was just and equitable to do so under s.123(1)(b) Equality Act 2010. The EAT had upheld an appeal against that decision. The Court of Appeal unanimously dismissed the employer's further appeal, and in doing so followed the approach approved in *Afolabi* [2003] ICR 800 – i.e. by asking whether the Claimant had brought the claim within three months from when she had knowledge that she had an arguable discrimination claim. In doing so, Underhill LJ considered based on *Barnes v Metropolitan Police*

Commissioner UKEAT/0474/05, that mere 'suspicion' as opposed to actual knowledge of a viable claim may be sufficient to establish that a claimant reasonably could have brought proceedings sooner, though he emphasised this was fact-sensitive and only one part of the enquiry. Readers will note that in the subsequent case of *Jones v Secretary of State for Health Care* [2024] EWCA Civ 1568, a differently constituted bench of the Court of Appeal considered that 'suspicion' was not a relevant factor in the s.123 balancing exercise, meaning there may be some conflict between these two recent Court of Appeal decisions. [Oliver Segal KC](#) appeared as leading counsel for Ms Chevalier-Firescu.



## Independent Workers Union of Great Britain v Central Arbitration Committee and Deliveroo [2024] I.C.R. 189

The Independent Workers of Great Britain (“the Union”) sought compulsory collective bargaining in respect of a unit of Deliveroo riders in the Camden and Kentish Town food delivery zone. Applications by a trade union (to be recognised for compulsory collective bargaining) are determined by the Central Arbitration Committee (“the CAC”). A trade union can only (as a matter of domestic law) apply to be recognised for collective bargaining in respect of a unit of workers (as defined by section 296(1) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (“the 1992 Act”). The CAC refused the Union’s application on the basis that the relevant riders did not constitute workers within the meaning of section 296(1) of the 1992 Act.

The Union judicially reviewed the decision on the basis that the CAC’s decision constituted a breach of Article 11 of the European Convention of Human Rights. Article 11 of the ECHR includes the right to form and join trade unions. The high court dismissed the Union’s claim. The Union appealed to the Court of Appeal.

The Court of Appeal dismissed the Union’s appeal.

The Supreme Court dismissed the Union’s appeal, holding that for article 11 to apply, it was necessary for there to be an employment relationship. This was an autonomous concept which involved looking at a variety of factors and was separate from the domestic definitions of worker and employee. On the facts of this case, there was a broad power of substitution. Riders were free to reject offers of work, to make themselves unavailable and to undertake work for competitors. These matters negated the existence of an employment relationship. The Supreme Court also rejected the Union’s argument that article 11 required the UK to enact legislation conferring on art.11 workers the right to require their reluctant employer to recognise and negotiate with the union of their choice.

Lord John Hendy KC, Katharine Newton KC and Madeline Stanley acted for the Union.

## **Groom v Maritime and Coastguard Agency** **[2024] IRLR 618**

The Claimant, a volunteer with the coastal rescue service, appealed against an ET decision that he was not a limb (b) worker. The EAT upheld the appeal, finding that there was a clear right to remuneration for certain activities and the mere fact that the Claimant had to submit a claim for payment and many volunteers did not do so in practice was irrelevant. Stuart Brittenden KC appeared for the Claimant.





## **Leicester City Council** **(appellant) v Parmar** **(respondent) [2024]** **IRLR 721; [2024] ICR 1115**

An ET had upheld a claim of race discrimination, concluding that there was a disparity of treatment between the Claimant and other white colleagues, meaning the burden of proof shifted to the Respondent, and the Respondent had not discharged that burden as there was no credible non-discriminatory reason for the treatment.

HHJ Tayler in the EAT upheld that decision on the facts, and in so doing gave some valuable guidance on the proper operation of the burden of proof, namely (i) it is not necessarily an error of law if the two-stage burden of proof is not considered separately for each allegation; (ii) if there are multiple examples of unfair treatment it is unlikely to be a case where there is a 'mere difference of treatment'; (iii) the number of employees who have been treated differently does not have to be statistically relevant before they can be taken into account; and (iv) the purpose of comparators is to be an evidential tool and so a tribunal is permitted to use an evidential comparator to see whether an inference of discrimination is justified. Deshpal Panesar KC and Serena Crawshay-Williams acted for the Claimant.

## **Ministry of Defence v Rubery [2024] EAT 165**

On 14 October 2024, the Employment Appeal Tribunal (per Mrs Justice Stacey) handed down judgment in *Ministry of Defence v Rubery* [2024] EAT 165. The appeal concerned the Employment Tribunal's jurisdiction under the Equality Act 2010 to consider complaints by active service personnel about decisions made within, and alleged maladministration in connection with the handling of, the statutory Armed Forces service complaints process for redress of service complaints. Allowing the Ministry of Defence's appeal, Mrs Justice Stacey ruled that the UK's exclusion of such challenges from Tribunal jurisdiction did not violate such servicepersons' Article 14 Convention rights read with

Article 6, as the measure was justified. Nor would a proposed read down of the impugned provisions be possible under s.3 of the Human Rights Act 1998, because such read down went directly against the grain of the legislation: see *Ghaidan v Godin-Mendoza* [2004] 2 AC 557 SC at [33]. Further, dismissing the claimant's cross-appeal, Stacey J found that the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 at the applicable time prevented the claimant's proposed reading down of the legislation, since the read down proposed impermissibly "disapplied" an enactment and went beyond mere interpretation (see Schedule 1 para 3(2)(a) European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.) Ben Cooper KC and James Chegwidan acted for the Appellant, the Ministry of Defence.



## **Cheryl Lobo v University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

In the Lobo case, a locum consultant who had been employed for more than four years sought a declaration that she had become a permanent employee of the Respondent pursuant to the Fixed Term (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002. The ET had dismissed the claim at first instance. The EAT dismissed the appeal and helpfully clarified the correct approach to the objective justification test under Regulation 8. [Rad Kohanzad](#) appeared for the Claimant and [Eleena Misra KC](#) appeared for the Respondent.



## **National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers and another (Respondents) v Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive T/A Nexus [2024] UKSC 37**

Nexus (which operates Newcastle Metro) sought to rectify a collective agreement concluding the 2012 pay negotiations between Nexus and the trade unions recognised by Nexus for the purposes of collective bargaining (RMT and Unite).

In this judgment, the Supreme Court dismissed the rectification claim which Nexus had brought against RMT and Unite (these trade unions had no legal entitlements under the collective agreement which was not an enforceable contract). It also held (for the first time) that parties bringing claims for unauthorised deductions from wages in the Employment Tribunal can argue that contractual terms should be treated as “rectified” (in very general terms an argument that the relevant written agreement does not properly reflect the intention of the relevant parties).

[Oliver Segal KC](#) and [Madeline Stanley](#) acted for RMT and Unite.

## **Pady and others v Revenue and Customs Commissioners and others [2024] ICR D37**

The EAT upheld a tribunal's decision to strike out claims where the Claimants had issued claims of a similar nature to other ongoing claims that were being determined pursuant to a presidential case management order (and which had been dismissed following a hearing on justification), where the Claimants had been aware both of the other proceedings and of the hearing but not sought to participate in those other proceedings. The EAT considered that whilst the power to strike out claims for abuse of process was exceptional, the ET had been right to say that there was nothing to prevent these Claimants from participating in those other proceedings, and it would be unfair to allow the issue of justification to be reopened. The case contains a useful summary of the principles to be adopted for strike-out due to abuse of process. [Ijeoma Omambala KC](#) and [Madeline Stanley](#) acted for the Claimants.





## **Ridley v HB Kirtley (t/a Queen's Court Business Centre) [2024] EWCA Civ 884**

For readers litigating in the Employment Appeal Tribunal, a useful review of the Appeal Tribunal's discretion to extend time for lodging an appeal was laid down by the Court of Appeal in *Ridley*. In essence, *Ridley* marks the relaxing of a formerly strict approach taken by the Appeal Tribunal to its discretion to extend time for filing an appeal, particularly where an appellant has filed their appeal in time but without all the requisite accompanying documents. The appeals in *Ridley* have been remitted to the EAT to reconsider the applications for extensions of time in light of the Court of Appeal's judgment.



## **Secretary of State for Business and Trade (Respondent) v Mercer (Appellant) [2024] UKSC 12.**

In *Mercer*, in which [Michael Ford KC](#), [Stuart Brittenden KC](#) and [Professor Alan Bogg](#) appeared for the Claimant, the Supreme Court made a declaration of incompatibility in relation to Section 146, Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 ('TULRCA'). *Mercer* concerned the question of detriment short of dismissal for individuals taking part in lawful industrial action. In particular, the Court considered the absence of protection within TULRCA for workers taking part in lawful industrial action, except in cases of dismissal, and whether that absence is compatible with Article 11, European Convention of Human Rights ('ECHR'). They held that such absence was incompatible with the ECHR and became the first court to declare legislation incompatible with Article 11.

## **Secretary of State for DEFRA and others v PCS [2024] UKSC 41**

Various government departments unilaterally stopped allowing employees to pay their union subscriptions by way of check-off, and it was subsequently found that this was a breach of contract which had not been varied. The question for the Supreme Court was whether the union could enforce that contractual term, and seek to claim damages for breach. The government departments defended the claim arguing that the right to check-off derived from an unenforceable collective agreement, and therefore the parties to the employment contracts could not have intended the union to enforce the term as a third-party. The Supreme Court unanimously upheld PCS' appeal and its right to claim as a third party on the basis of the wording of the 1999 Act. They considered that since the contract benefited the union, there was a rebuttable presumption that the parties had intended the union to be able to enforce it, and the intentions of the parties entering into the collective agreement did not shed light on the intentions of the parties to the contracts of employment. [Oliver Segal KC](#) and [Darshan Patel](#) appeared for PCS.



## **Tesco Stores Ltd v Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) [2024] UKSC 28.**

The Supreme Court handed down its much-awaited judgment this year concerning what has become known as ‘fire and rehire’ practices. Such practices involve the dismissal of employees and their subsequent rehiring on different, typically less favourable, contractual terms. That was the case at Tesco when in 2021 they sought to dismiss employees earning a specific, permanent financial benefit granted in 2007 (known as ‘retained pay’) if they did not accept the removal of that benefit.

In 2022, Ellenbogen J in the High Court granted an injunction to the USDAW which sought to prevent Tesco from carrying out that practice, by implying a term into the relevant contracts of employment which circumscribed Tesco’s power to terminate employment on notice where the purpose was to deprive employees of their right to retained pay. That decision was overturned in the Court of Appeal but their decision was reversed by the Supreme Court, who restored Ellenbogen J’s injunction. Oliver Segal KC and Stuart Brittenden KC appeared for USDAW.

## **Virgin Atlantic Airways Ltd (appellant) v Loverseed and others (respondents) [2024] IRLR 651**

The Claimant pilots had been made redundant and brought claims of unfair dismissal, and indirect discrimination on grounds of sex and age. The EAT upheld a decision by an employment judge requiring the Respondent to disclose unredacted copies of internal management documents relating to the redundancy. This material was likely to affect the parties’ cases on the disputed issues on the pleadings, and the judge had reached the correct conclusion. The EAT considered that where redaction occurs, there must be the usual disclosure statement demonstrating that the disclosing party understands and has complied with his disclosure obligations, but that there was no additional obligation to specifically attest that redactions were limited to irrelevant material and set out why it was irrelevant. The EAT also considered that the question of relevance of a document for the purpose of disclosure was not a matter of case management discretion and therefore did not require deference from an appellate court/tribunal in the same way as a case management decision would. Oliver Segal KC acted for the Claimants.

## **William v Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust [2024] ICR 1065**

In Williams, the EAT dismissed an appeal by an unsuccessful Claimant and in doing so confirmed the decision in Malik v Centros Securities plc EAT/0100/17, that where an individual who makes a decision which inflicts a detriment did not know of protected disclosures and therefore could not have been materially influenced by them, the knowledge and motivation of another individual who influenced the decision maker cannot be ascribed to the decision maker. This was not inconsistent with the Supreme Court’s decision in Royal Mail Group v Jhuti [2019] UKSC 55. Robert Moretto acted for the Respondent.





## Cases referred to

- Addison Lee Limited v Afshar and others [2024] EAT 114
- Aird and others v Asda Stores Ltd and others [2024] ICR D33
- Bailey v Stonewall Equality Limited, Garden Court Chambers Limited and others [2024] EAT 119
- Boohene and others v Royal Parks Ltd [2024] EWCA Civ 583
- Bhogal v National Education Union [2024] IRLR 809
- British Airways plc v Mello and others [2024] IRLR 543; [2024] ICR 967
- British Airways PLC v 1) Mr B Rollett and Others 2) Minister for Women and Equalities [2024] EAT 131
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- Derma Med Ltd v Ally [2024] EWCA Civ 175
- Donkor-Baah v University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and others [2024] ICR 758
- HSBC Bank plc v Chevalier-Firescu [2024] EWCA Civ 1550
- Independent Workers Union of Great Britain v Central Arbitration Committee and Deliveroo [2024] I.C.R. 189
- Groom v Maritime and Coastguard Agency [2024] IRLR 618
- Leicester City Council (appellant) v Parmar (respondent) [2024] IRLR 721; [2024] ICR 1115
- Ministry of Defence v Rubery [2024] EAT 165
- Cheryl Lobo v University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers and another (Respondents) v Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive T/A Nexus [2024] UKSC 37
- Pady and others v Revenue and Customs Commissioners and others [2024] ICR D37
- Ridley v HB Kirtley (t/a Queen's Court Business Centre) [2024] EWCA Civ 884
- Secretary of State for Business and Trade (Respondent) v Mercer (Appellant) [2024] UKSC 12
- Secretary of State for DEFRA and others v PCS [2024] UKSC 41
- Tesco Stores Ltd v Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) [2024] UKSC 28
- Virgin Atlantic Airways Ltd (appellant) v Loverseed and others (respondents) [2024] IRLR 651
- William v Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust [2024] ICR 1065

The following members of Old Square Chambers appeared in the appeals featured in this article.



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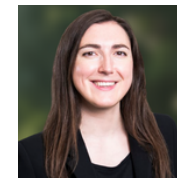
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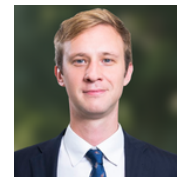
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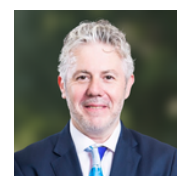
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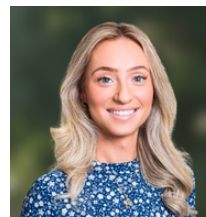
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