



Kent **LEGAL**  
**SECTOR**  
**REVIEW 2022**



Kent **LEGAL SECTOR REVIEW 2022**

# How we rank the county's law firms

Compared with many other sectors, the UK legal profession does not yet embrace real-time, consumer-driven, website rankings.

Currently, the closest equivalents are the widely-respected annual guide produced by Chambers & Partners and The Legal 500.

These independently-researched guides draw heavily on interviews with law firms' clients.

The Kent Legal Sector Review is based on the Chambers and Legal 500 rankings, which we translate into numerical scores.

We award five points for a top band ranking, four points for band two, and so on.

Where both guides analyse the same legal specialism a similar way, a total of 10 points up will be grabs in that section – five from The Legal 500 and another five from Chambers.

Where one guide covers a

specialism, but the other guide does not, the maximum possible score a firm can receive is five. Occasionally, we combine closely related sections.

For example, Chambers has multiple rankings covering corporate law advice, which we consolidated into one.

Where one legal directory consolidates previously separate rankings, but the other does not, we combine all of the rankings into one score.

In combined sections, we base our score on each firms' highest rankings.

Our main findings are broken down into four broad tables; corporate and commercial; dispute resolution; private client and charities; and real estate and public sector.

The larger the firm, the more sections it will typically be ranked in.

Recognising that some Kent firms

enjoy a nationwide reputation, the main table of top firms across all disciplines adds firms' UK-wide Chambers rankings to their Kent-specific scores.

To give smaller or niche firms a chance to shine, the same table highlights firms that are highly-rated in four or fewer practice areas in Kent.

To allow readers to identify which of these firms are consistently highly rated, we produce an average score per ranking.

We then rank firms from high to low, based on this average score. For most tables, last year's rankings are shown in parenthesis.

However, because the legal directories change their Kent coverage on an annual basis, care should be exercised in drawing year-on-year comparisons.

A substantial rise – or fall – in a firm's year-on-year rankings does not necessarily reflect a sharp shift in the firm's reputation.



## Get the best legal advice from Gullands' Business Hub

Gullands Solicitors offers a full range of legal services for businesses of all sizes under the umbrella of our Business Hub.

We are specialists in the fields of:

- Shareholder and Partnership Agreements
- Commercial Contracts
- Finance Documentation
- Management Buy Outs
- Company and Business Sales and Purchases
- Business defence
- Employment Law
- Charity Law
- Commercial Property Law
- Construction Law
- Commercial and Management Disputes
- Insolvency
- Licensing

Whatever stage you are in the business cycle, contact us today to see how we can help you

business@gullands.com | 01622 962365  
www.gullands.com

**GULLANDS**  
SOLICITORS



“

The quality of Furley Page's work, their level of expertise is on a par with a high-end City firm... they have a deep understanding of their clients' needs and how best to serve them. I cannot rate them highly enough. Outstanding.



Get in touch:  
01227 763939  
furleypage.co.uk

Canterbury Chatham Whitstable

**furley  
page**

Knowledge. Experience. Results.



Kent **LEGAL SECTOR REVIEW 2022**

# Cripps retains corporate dominance

## Corporate & commercial

*Breakdown by legal specialism*

Firm name	Corporate (from mid market / PE to SME) and commercial	Banking and finance	Restructuring, insolvency, & corporate recovery	Health & Safety	Employment	IT / telecoms	Intellectual property	Media / Entertainment / Sport	Transport - aviation and shipping	2021 totals (2020)
Cripps Pemberton Greenish LLP	9	8	8	0	9	4	4	4	0	46 (55)
Brachers	5	3	3	0	8	0	0	0	0	19 (25)
Thomson Snell & Passmore	8	0	2	0	3	0	2	0	4	19 (21)
Furley Page Solicitors	8	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	15 (17)
Warners Solicitors	7	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	0	15 (13)
Knights PLC (formerly asb Law LLP)	3	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	5	14 (19)
Rix & Kay Solicitors LLP	6	0	0	0	3	0	0	4	0	13 (10)
Loch Employment Law	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	7 (7)
Outset Legal	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	6 (6)
Girlings	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3 (2)
Thomas Mansfield LLP	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3 (3)

It's hard to see how Cripps Pemberton Greenish will be knocked off its perch as the county's top exponent of corporate and commercial law, such is its lead over its rivals.

Retaining its top spot once again, the Tunbridge Wells firms ranks comfortably in the lead with more than double its competitors.

While its score is slightly down on last year, so are the majority of the others.

It dropped four points in the IT/telecoms category and three in health and safety but still comfortably out guns the rest.

Once again, as last year, its strength is being ranked by the two source directories across a number of disciplines.

It is, for example, one of just three in the list to be ranked for banking and finance; restructuring, insolvency and corporate recovery work; intellectual property; and media, entertainment and sport.

According to the Legal 500, it specialises in "private equity and M&A transactions in the healthcare, advertising, technology and media, insurance broking and education sectors" with its team acting for a "wide range of regional, national and international clients including



from the US, France and Spain".

Elsewhere, it's very much a case of 'as you were' for the majority of firms in terms of overall rankings.

West Kent-based Warners Solicitors edges up one place into fifth place, increasing its score over last year at the expense of Knights plc (formerly asb law) which drops a place.

Girlings increased its score - fractionally - and Maidstone and Gravesend's Gullands falls off the table according to the latest rankings.

The biggest points gain was for Rix & Kay Solicitors, which has branches in Ashford and Sevenoaks.

Its three point rise was all courtesy of increasing its corporate work. It represents something of a bounce back as last year's rankings revealed it has lost two points in the same category. Very much a case of two steps back, three steps forward.

## When the only certainty is change

Uncertainty is part of life, but the world has changed so rapidly that finding creative ways to keep pace is a huge challenge.

We provide businesses and individuals with pragmatic advice to help them adapt.





# Kent LEGAL SECTOR REVIEW 2022

## Private client & charities

Breakdown by legal specialism

Firm name	Crime / fraud	Personal injury / clinical / professional negligence - claimant	Family / private client	Personal tax, trusts and probate	Contentious trusts and probate	Charities and not-for-profit	2021 totals (2020)
Thomson Snell & Passmore	0	15	10	5	3	4	37 (37)
Cripps Pemberton Greenish LLP	0	5	10	5	5	5	30 (15)
Brachers	0	5	9	5	4	4	27 (20)
Knights PLC (formerly asb Law LLP)	0	5	4	3	4	0	16 (12)
Furley Page Solicitors	0	4	2	4	0	4	14 (17)
Rix & Kay Solicitors LLP	0	0	2	4	3	4	13 (13)
Warners Solicitors	0	0	7	3	0	0	10 (10)
Tuckers Solicitors	9	0	0	0	0	0	9 (0)
Girings	0	3	2	3	0	0	8 (6)
GT Stewart Solicitors and Advocates	8	0	0	0	0	0	8 (8)
Gullands Solicitors	7	0	0	0	0	0	7 (8)
Taylor Rose MW	0	3	0	0	3	0	6 (6)
Clarke Kiernan LLP Solicitors	4	0	0	0	0	0	4 (4)
Boys & Maughan	0	0	3	0	0	0	3 (3)
Stowe Family Law	0	0	3	0	0	0	3 (3)
ThomasHaywood Solicitors	0	0	3	0	0	0	3 (3)
Edward Cooke Family Law	0	0	2	0	0	0	2 (0)
Thomas Mansfield LLP	0	0	2	0	0	0	2 (0)

## Kent's best niche law firms

Firm	Kent total points 2021	Number of sections 2021	Sections 2021	Average 2021	Position 2021
Tuckers Solicitors	9	1	Crime / Fraud	9	1
GT Stewart Solicitors & Advocates	8	1	Crime / Fraud	8	2
Loch Employment Law	7	1	Employment	7	3
Gullands Solicitors	7	1	Crime / Fraud	7	3
Whitehead Monckton	4	1	Agriculture	4	5
Knights Solicitors	4	1	Agriculture	4	5
Clarke Kiernan LLP Solicitors	4	1	Crime / Fraud	4	5
Outset Legal	6	2	Corporate (Mid Market / PE to SME) & Commercial	3	8
Taylor Rose MW	6	2	Personal Injury - Claimant Negligence Clinical & Professional	3	8
Hadfield Bull & Bull	3	1	Debt Recovery	3	8
Stowe Family Law	3	1	Family / Private Client	3	8
ThomasHaywood Solicitors	3	1	Family / Private Client	3	8
Griffin Law	2	1	Litigation / Commercial Litigation	2	13
Edward Cooke Family Law	2	1	Family / Private Client	2	13

# Your business is our business

Through challenge and triumph, we're on your side

**Brachers**  
With you all the way

Maidstone 01622 690691  
Canterbury 01227 949510

www.brachers.co.uk  
hello@brachers.co.uk



Kent **LEGAL SECTOR REVIEW 2022**

# Familiar faces in front as 'new normal' beds in

## Kent's best performing law firms

Based on Chambers & Partners and Legal 500 rankings

Firm	Kent rank 2021 (2020)	Kent points total 2021 (2020)	2021 rank with national points (2020)	2021 Kent and national points combined (2020)
Cripps Pemberton Greenish LLP	1 (1)	139 (141)	1 (1)	142 (142)
Thomson Snell & Passmore	2 (2)	88 (91)	2 (2)	89 (96)
Brachers	3 (3)	80 (80)	3 (3)	80 (78)
Knights PLC (formerly asb Law LLP)	4 (5)	54 (42)	4 (5)	54 (44)
Furley Page Solicitors	5 (4)	48 (59)	5 (4)	48 (59)
Rix & Kay Solicitors LLP	6 (6)	41 (35)	6 (6)	41 (35)
Warners Solicitors	7 (7)	34 (33)	7 (7)	34 (33)
Girlings	8 (14)	11 (8)	9 (15)	11 (8)
Tuckers Solicitors	9 (-)	9 (-)	8 (-)	14 (-)
GT Stewart Solicitors and Advocates	10 (14)	8 (8)	10 (10)	8 (12)
Loch Employment Law	11 (17)	7 (7)	11 (17)	7 (7)
Gullands Solicitors	11 (10)	7 (11)	11 (11)	7 (11)
Outset Legal	13 (18)	6 (6)	13 (18)	6 (6)
Taylor Rose MW	13 (18)	6 (7)	13 (18)	6 (7)
Thomas Mansfield LLP	15 (23)	5 (3)	15 (23)	5 (3)
Boys & Maughan	15 (14)	5 (8)	15 (15)	5 (8)
Whitehead Monckton	17 (21)	4 (4)	17 (21)	4 (4)
Knights Solicitors	17 (10)	4 (11)	17 (11)	4 (11)
Clarke Kiernan LLP Solicitors	17 (21)	4 (4)	17 (21)	4 (4)
Hadfield Bull & Bull	20 (23)	3 (3)	20 (23)	3 (3)
Stowe Family Law	20 (23)	3 (3)	20 (23)	3 (3)
ThomasHaywood Solicitors	20 (23)	3 (3)	20 (23)	3 (3)
Griffin Law	23 (29)	2 (2)	23 (29)	2 (2)
Edward Cooke Family Law	23 (-)	2 (-)	23 (-)	2 (-)

Anyone hoping for a major surprise at the top of the list of Kent's best performing law firms are likely to be disappointed. Once again, there are a lot of very familiar names making the top 10 with only a little wriggle room.

Cripps Pemberton Greenish romp to its customary position at the top once again (even scoring the same amount of points as last year), while Thomson Snell & Passmore and Brachers take their customary positions right behind. There is, however, a slight change with Knights plc (which embraced asb law to its corporate bosom in March 2020) rising to pinch fourth place from Furley Page.

Worthy of particular note is Girlings' rise up through the ranks - leaping from 14th place last year to regain its top 10 place.

Slipping off the list are Brasted firm Sharratts and Gravesend's Stantons Solicitors.

In their place, come Tuckers which enters at number nine in the list. Its Margate-based Kent Branch is the combined might of former firms Robin Murray & Co and Kent Defence which merged as part of the nation-wide leading criminal defence firm Tuckers Solicitors.

Certainly it's been another challenging year for the law sector as firms adjusted to the 'new normal' of home-working and the on-off nature of Covid restrictions.

Nationally, financial results suggest law firms did a good job of adapting to a world still haunted by the pandemic. The initial pessimism and concerns as the world locked down has been replaced with a rather more optimistic outlook.

It has, if nothing else, demonstrated the flexibility of today's modern law firms to pivot when faced with what seemed like insurmountable challenges for a sector which thrives on face-to-face encounters and close collaboration.

According to PwC's annual survey of law 76% of the UK's top 100 law firms reported increased profits; a trend likely to be reflected on a more local scale.

Also worth noting, in the same survey, is that 48% of those same top ranked firms were expecting to reduce their office footprint in the short to medium term. It will certainly be interesting to see how that plays out in practice in Kent. There is, after all, a need, perhaps now more than ever, to be seen as a key member of the communities they serve - something which will surely slow any progress towards more online focused efforts.

Whitehead  
Monckton  
the Kent law firm



quality care  
experience efficiency  
Client Relationships  
support expertis  
value  
reliability

## 230 years of legal expertise at your service

Whitehead Monckton has been providing legal services to businesses and individuals in Kent and beyond for over 230 years.

- Business Transactions and Disputes
- Commercial Property
- Debt Recovery
- Employment Law
- Notarial Services
- Personal Client Services

If you would like to check out our legal experts and discuss your business or personal challenges simply contact us.

E-mail: [enquiries@whitehead-monckton.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@whitehead-monckton.co.uk)

**01622 698000**

[www.whitehead-monckton.co.uk](http://www.whitehead-monckton.co.uk)

Canterbury 01227 643250  
Docklands 020 7531 2990  
Maidstone 01622 698000  
Tenterden 01580 765722

Whitehead Monckton Limited (no. 08366020), registered in England & Wales. Registered office is Eclipse Park, Sittingbourne Road, Maidstone, Kent ME14 3EN. Authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority under no. 60522/3.

KMLR 1/19





Kent **LEGAL SECTOR REVIEW 2022**

# No disputing the top firms



It's very much a case of 'as you were' in the dispute resolution category this year - with plenty of familiar names making up the list - the vast bulk of which occupy the same position as they did last year.

While Cripps Pemberton Greenish sit at the top of the tree, it does so with a hefty eight point drop on last year's score. Not that the

gap between it and its nearest rivals has been greatly eroded as a consequence as many scores were down.

A seven-point dip was also seen by second-placed Brachers, which has offices in Maidstone and Canterbury, while six-points were shaved off Furley Page which once again occupies the third spot as too were they from Thomson Snell & Passmore.

Knights plc, which took over Maidstone's asb law in March 2020 following an £8.5m deal, is, however, notable by its absence this year after occupying fifth spot. Meanwhile, two new entries which made the list for the first time last year continue to retain a space in this year's countdown.

Margate's Boys & Maughan keeps its two points for its property and real estate litigation work, while Ashford's Rix & Kay Solicitors chalks up points for its commercial litigation work.

According to the Legal 500, Rix & Kay, alongside its core commercial dispute offering, holds specialisms in insolvency, restructuring and construction disputes, with clients including large SME businesses, professional services firms and accountants.

**Dispute resolution**

	Litigation / commercial litigation	Clinical / Professional Negligence - Defendant	Professional Negligence	Property / real estate litigation	Debt recovery	2021 totals (2020)
Cripps Pemberton Greenish LLP	5	0	10	5	0	20 (28)
Brachers	0	5	0	4	5	14 (21)
Furley Page Solicitors	3	0	0	4	0	7 (13)
Thomson Snell & Passmore	4	0	0	3	0	7 (13)
Hadfield Bull & Bull	0	0	0	0	3	3 (3)
Boys & Maughan	0	0	0	2	0	2 (2)
Griffin Law	2	0	0	0	0	2 (2)
Rix & Kay Solicitors LLP	2	0	0	0	0	2 (2)



Central Family Court



The Court of Protection

**TIGERLAW**

We are a female-owned, client-centred firm dedicated to being by your side for the journey...

so you can get back to what matters most, your business and your family.

01233 227 355

www.tiger-law.com

"They are very efficient, professional and have a range of quality expertise to support the service they provide."

Chambers HNW

Warners Solicitors is modern and innovative, with a strong reputation grounded in heritage. Our lawyers are experts in their field and are recognised for providing high quality, responsive service at the right value.

**warners**  
solicitors

Tonbridge 01732 770660 | Sevenoaks 01732 747900 | www.warners-solicitors.co.uk



# Building up to become a close contest

## Real estate and public sector

Breakdown by legal specialism

Firm name	Agriculture	Public sector (including education / health / local government)	Real estate / commercial property	Construction	Environment / planning	Social housing	2021 totals (2020)
Cripps Pemberton Greenish LLP	10	5	14	9	5	0	43 (43)
Thomson Snell & Passmore	8	0	11	7	0	0	26 (20)
Knights PLC (formerly asb Law LLP)	5	2	9	0	0	8	24 (2)
Brachers	4	5	11	0	0	0	20 (12)
Rix & Kay Solicitors LLP	4	2	4	3	0	0	13 (10)
Furley Page Solicitors	8	0	4	0	0	0	12 (12)
Warners Solicitors	9	0	0	0	0	0	9 (10)
Knights Solicitors	4	0	0	0	0	0	4 (11)
Whitehead Monckton	4	0	0	0	0	0	4 (4)

It's been an often challenging 12 months in the world of property - held back by the Covid restrictions, there has subsequently been a flurry of activity since lockdowns were eased and both private and commercial buyers and sellers started adjusting to the new normal.

From businesses downsizing due to new hybrid working to the public sector re-examining their property portfolio in the light of a squeeze on funding while facing a raft of challenges they can barely have thought possible two years ago. It has been nothing if not eventful.

Knights plc is the big mover in this year's real estate and public sector table - catapulting its way to third in the list which it can put down to a significant point gain over the previous

12 months.

It put on a remarkable 22 points lifting it up from 11th place last time out.

In particular, has been its push into social housing which saw it gain eight points alone. It is the only firm on this year's list to be ranked for the category. It also added five points through its work in the agriculture sector.

The question is, can it build on its impressive showing to climb yet higher next year?

The firm, which took over asb law, should not be confused with Knights Solicitors, based in Tunbridge Wells which is also on the list, albeit having shed several points in the category.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Cripps Pemberton Greenish sit atop of the table once again. According to the Legal 500, Cripps

handles work for clients including institutional property investment companies, residential developers, local authorities, shopping centre owners and real estate lenders

But the gap between first and second continues to narrow. Tunbridge Wells-based Thomson Snell & Passmore, which made gains last - albeit primarily through a change in the way the legal directories categorised the private sector (dropping separate categories to, instead, combine them) - gained another six points on Cripps.

Brachers dropped into fourth, due to Knights plc's rise, while Rix & Kay continue to perform well.

Dropping off the top table this year is Brasted-based Sharratts and Margate's Boys & Maughan.

“

We are reshaping our workplace for good, for our people and our clients. We will experience better outcomes, attract and retain great clients, and create a better future of work for us all.

Richard Cripps,  
Rix & Kay Managing Partner

”

girlings.com

**Girlings**  
SOLICITORS



What's  
important  
to you, is  
important  
to us.

**We make it easy for you to make your mark your own way**

The new world of work has arrived. We're excited about the potential it offers to balance the objectives of our business and the needs of our people equally. We want you to be part of it with us.

Visit our careers page - [rixandkay.co.uk/careers](http://rixandkay.co.uk/careers)

*'I've stayed with Girlings in preference to other solicitors as they outperform in all aspects including availability, fees, communication and simple explanations.'*

CLIENT - THE LEGAL 500.

Contact us now and experience the Girlings' way.



**RIX & KAY**





First for business.  
First for you.  
And first in Kent.

Find out more at [www.crippspg.co.uk](http://www.crippspg.co.uk)

