



VARDAGS  
INSIGHTS

# 2021 | A YEAR IN REVIEW

CELEBRATING OUR PEOPLE AND THEIR SUCCESSES

## **AYESHA VARDAG - FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF VARDAGS**

Now in its 17th year, Vardags celebrates the outstanding achievements of its lawyers firm-wide. We, like other firms and other businesses across the country, are still having to adapt to the continually moving goalposts of these Covid times, and while it hasn't been easy, this year has certainly not been short of its successes. After all, we're ambitious - Vardags has been built on relentless growth – from just Ayesha and

her cat in her spare room in 2005, to becoming one of the Sunday Times Fast Track fastest growing UK companies (the only law firm on there) delivering 64% compound annual growth rate for years.

Here's an insight into some of our company successes over the past year, as we look forward to an equally progressive, fruitful 2022.



# 1 | *BATTLING FOR BILLIONS*

MAKING OUR UHNW CLIENTS MORE MONEY, BY THE MINUTE

## **SIMON MCKIRGAN - SENIOR DIRECTOR, DIVORCE AND FAMILY**

Vardags continues to take on the biggest of cases. One of our 2021 cases required five directors and three silks on our side alone, covering complicated and competing strategic considerations, special contribution arguments and tax disputes along with litigation against a foreign state. In the last forty minutes of the case the team made £125,000 per minute for the client.





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# FIRST PAST THE *POST*

GETTING RESULTS FOR OUR CLIENTS IN RECORD TIME

## **GEORGINA HAMBLIN - SENIOR DIRECTOR, HEAD OF LONDON FAMILY**

Contrary to initial expectation, post-Brexit jurisdictional races continue to live on. In just one 2021 case involving a very high-profile individual, the team had to file a divorce petition in record time, whilst also contending with the other side trying to file abroad - resulting in an emergency response at 10 pm and urgent service on the husband on his early morning walk. This reflects Vardags specialist crisis response to difficult international cases.

# 3 | FROZEN

MAKING SURE OUR CLIENTS GET THE BEST PROTECTION POSSIBLE

## **SOPHIE GROVES - DIRECTOR, DIVORCE AND FAMILY**

We managed to gain two ex parte freezing injunctions in two weeks with full costs being awarded both times. One involved discovering the other side had purchased millions of pounds of modern artwork, the other involved the other side being the subject of an FBI investigation.



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# AT THE FOREFRONT OF CHANGE

WE DON'T JUST ADVISE ON THE LAW, WE CHANGE IT

## **LOIS ROGERS - DIRECTOR, DIVORCE AND FAMILY**

This year has again shown how Vardags is at the cutting edge of changing the law. Our lawyers argued that the “pension provision” should be included in the carer’s allowance in determining a divorce settlement, since the primary carer of children are unfairly prejudiced otherwise. Although Roberts J could not change the law in this case, she stated that this issue should be resolved either by the intervention of Parliament or a further decision of the higher appellate courts. Watch this space!





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# REPUTATION AND PRIVACY *A DIFFERENT WORLD*

SOLVING NEW PROBLEMS WITH INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

## **ALEX MCCREADY - DIRECTOR, HEAD OF REPUTATION AND PRIVACY**

Our R&P team have tackled Covid restrictions to introduce technology to clients needing the utmost security to assisting in advising clients across the spectrum, including schools and parents needing guidance following the “Everyone’s invited” campaign from earlier this year. Alex McCready has been personally recognised by Spears and Top 100 Private Client Lawyers showing the strength of her reputation, as the R&P department she founded grows continually in stature with high calibre cases for notable individuals.





# 6 | AN INDUSTRY LEADING CHILDREN TEAM

PROTECTING THE CHILDREN OF OUR CLIENTS AT ALL COSTS

## **KATHERINE RES PRITCHARD - SENIOR DIRECTOR, HEAD OF CHILDREN**

Our expert Children team have been involved in several national and international reported child abduction or relocation cases, successfully gaining the safe return of children to England as well as the relocation of a client and her children back to the US. Having been asked to guest edit the summer 2021 issue of the Journal for the International Centre for Family Law, Policy and Practice, the team headed by Katherine Res Pritchard have been asked to be permanent editors which will also mean being called upon as interveners in the Supreme Court.





# 7 | LA VIE EN ROSE

DROPPING EVERYTHING IN THE PURSUIT OF CLIENT SERVICE

## REBECCA HUGHES - ASSOCIATE, FAMILY

Rebecca Hughes jumped on a plane and flew off to be by the side of a high profile international creative, to prepare everything for their much-publicised multi-million pound corporate litigation. Rebecca worked with Ayesha assembling a team of lawyers and building a strategy for the case. She worked day and night for weeks, with only a little bit of upside in the form of dinners in an elite destination, gallons of Dom Perignon and a bit of whizzing around in private jets. The fact that we could entrust someone at that point newly qualified to be the primary contact in a lynchpin case is a testament both to the magnificent Rebecca and to those who trained her.



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# FIGHTING FRAUD WITH *FORENSIC PROWESS*

OUR BESPOKE, IN-HOUSE FORENSIC TEAM SAVES THE DAY, YET AGAIN

## **KATHARINE ANDERSON - DIRECTOR, HEAD OF FINANCIAL FORENSICS**

The Financial Forensics team successfully argued fraudulently prepared accounts showing that the other side had not included their debts. A re-evaluation at the final hearing showing the other side's business go up in value. Another impressive case this year was where the team successfully argued the dynastic nature of a family business, meaning it could be handed down to the client's children.





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# HELPING OUT *THE UNDERDOG*

VARDAGS WORKING TO PROTECT THE VICTIMS IN AN HISTORIC INTERNATIONAL CASE

## **FRANK RYAN - DIRECTOR, HEAD OF CIVIL AND COMMERCIAL LITIGATION**

Every now and then you have a truly David and Goliath case. Frank Ryan acted for the families of the fishermen in the high profile Bugaled Brezh inquest - was their boat sunk by a British submarine - or a Dutch one - or maybe just unfortunately caught in a net? Involving the MOD and the Admiralty, the case saw Frank interviewed on the Today Programme and featured across the international press.





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# RECORD-TIME DEALS *THE PROPERTY BOOM*

A SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR OUR PROPERTY TEAM

## **JAMES BUNKER - DIRECTOR, HEAD OF PROPERTY**

Contrary to expectations, 2021 was incredibly successful for the property market. Our team continues to secure HNW sales and purchases; two this year were worth £38m and £20m each. The team experienced a workload never before seen due to the three SDLT deadlines. In the two weeks leading up to the June deadline, the team exchanged and completed on 17 cases including a £4.5m leasehold purchase which exchanged and completed in three weeks from receiving the contract papers.





# 11 | 100% SUCCESS RATE AND TOP TEAM WORK



**ROB CONWAY - DIRECTOR, HEAD OF CRIMINAL DEFENCE**

Our criminal defence team can boast the extraordinary statistic that they have 100% success rate on getting charges dropped for clients who come to them from the start. Rob, Mr 100%, has also been busy collaborating across the firm, especially with R&P and family, to provide a fully-faceted team.



# 12 | NATIONWIDE WINS FOR VARDAGS

THE MANCHESTER TEAM DOES IT AGAIN

## EMMA GILL - SENIOR DIRECTOR, HEAD OF MANCHESTER OFFICE

Vardags is a national firm, supporting clients around the country, so it is not just our London office that we are proud of in 2021. Our Manchester office in particular has had some very notable wins, including the successful conclusion of a marathon two-and-a-half-year case during a three-day hearing in the High Court with one of the most complex corporate re-structures and a disabled child that became an adult during proceedings.



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a red dress and a necklace, is sitting on a blue sofa. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. Two dogs are lying on the sofa with her. The background is a wall with a mural depicting a scene with people and a landscape. The overall lighting is warm and golden.

# EPILOGUE 2022, WHAT'S IN STORE?

AYESHA LOOKS FORWARD TO A NEW YEAR, WITH NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR HER FIRM

Vardags has long championed the introduction of no-fault divorce, which is finally being brought into law in April 2022. We hope this change will mark the beginning of a new era in family law, where it's accepted that decent people part and often it's no one's fault. Family lawyers should not get down in the mud and sling it at the other side, but work to bring our clients into a strong future while keeping a civilised relationship with their former partner, for their own mutual support and the vital co-parenting of their children.

My personal hope is that 2022 is a year in which we tackle loneliness. So many people have been deeply affected by loneliness over the past couple of years, and before that it was already a growing problem in our fragmented communities. Working from home should not mean isolation. We need to take care of one another, pick up the phone, be kind, be brave enough to connect. As Forster said, "only connect". Human connection is what we need for a new year and a fresh start.

In the meantime, Vardags would like to wish all of its exceptional team, its superb Counsel and above all, its beloved clients, who are what it's all about, a wonderful new year filled with happy endings and exciting beginnings.