



Richard Gray
Partner



Areas of Law: Corporate
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Background

Richard joined the firm in 2014 as a Partner and jointly heads the firm's Corporate Team. He obtained a degree in law (LLB Honours) at the Queen's University, Belfast before being called to the Bar in Northern Ireland in 1989. He requalified as a Solicitor with the City of London firm, CMS Cameron McKenna. Richard returned to Northern Ireland in 1992 and was formerly a Partner in an international law practice.

Richard's main areas of practice are in corporate, corporate finance and projects work. He also advises a number of clients in relation to competition matters. Richard has also worked as an external course adviser at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies in Belfast in the area of company law. He is a member of the Law Societies of Northern Ireland and of England and Wales.

Richard has been named as a 'leader in the field' for corporate finance (and previously for banking and projects) in Chambers UK Guide to the Legal Professional for more than a decade and also in Chambers Guide to Europe. The Guide refers to him as a "trusted adviser" and "very committed to the job and getting the right outcome". He is also recommended in the Legal 500 which describes him as "authoritative, patient and not fazed by complexity".

Commenting on Richard's approach the General Counsel of a global infrastructure fund said of his input on a major project, Richard was "really outstanding". His "technical skills were extremely good" but he was also "very commercial" as well as being "extremely responsive and a really good communicator".

Richard is a Member of the Institute of Directors.

Recent Experience:

- Lead adviser to the shareholders in **Lagan Group Holdings Limited** in its sale to Brendon Group Plc in a deal reported at over £450M.
- Lead adviser to leading Northern Ireland corporate, **SHS Group Limited** on its purchase of 3V Natural Foods Limited (owner of the Meridian nut butter range and Rocks Organic Cordial).
- Lead adviser to **SHS Group Limited** (on its acquisition of Standard Brands Limited, owners of the Zip and Sunny Jim firelighter brands, from Graphite Capital).



- Lead adviser to US listed company, **Aegion Corporation**, on its acquisition of Environmental Techniques Limited.
- Lead adviser to the shareholders in **Chain Reaction Cycles Limited**, the global online retailer of bicycle components and accessories on its merger with fellow online retailer, Wiggle (the majority shareholder in which is private equity company Bridgepoint), following the granting of clearance by the UK Competition and Markets Authority.
- Advised the management shareholders on the sale by them and by Hg Capital of **Relay Software Limited**, the largest producer of insurance software to insurers and brokers in Ireland, to the US Applied Systems Group, the largest provider of broker management systems in the world.
- Advised a leading construction group, **Graham**, on the sale of a portfolio of interests in a number of education accommodation projects in Scotland and Ireland to a European infrastructure fund.
- Advised the shareholders in **Telestack Limited** on its sale to NASDAQ listed Astec Industries Inc. for \$36m.
- Advised leading Northern Ireland corporate, **SHS Group Limited**, on its acquisition of leading premium soft drinks manufacturer, Bottlegreen Holdings Limited from (amongst others) Piper Investment Fund. Richard previously advised SHS Group Limited on a number of other acquisitions including Merrydown PLC, British Pepper and Spice Company Limited, Charles Gordon Associates Limited and Caledonian Bottlers Limited.
- Advised **SHS Group Limited** on its strategic investment in Brand Phoenix Limited, owner of the First Cape wine brand and leading importer of South African and other wines into the UK.
- Advised **Heathrow Airport Holdings** and **Ferrovial Aeropuertos** in relation to the disposal of Edinburgh Airport to Global Infrastructure Partners in a deal reported at approximately £807 million. Richard led the team negotiating with multiple bidders and finalized the documents with the successful bidder within a challenging framework and within the limitations set by the Competition Commission.
- Acted as lead adviser to **Ferrovial** on the sale of Belfast City Airport to ABN Amro Global Infrastructure Fund for £130 million.
- Acted as lead adviser to the shareholders of the international Belfast based building service engineering group, **Rotary**, which was sold to the Australian listed company, Hastie Group Limited, in a deal valued at £120 million.
- Advised **Queen's University Belfast** for more than 15 years on a range of commercial and corporate matters, including milestone projects, such as the contracts for the transfer of Nursing and Midwifery education in Northern Ireland to the University, the establishment of the Agri Food and Biosciences Institute, the joint venture with INTO, the development of the Northern Ireland Advanced Composites Centre, (a joint project between Queen's, University of Ulster and Bombardier Aerospace (amongst others)) and the University's joint venture with the China Medical University to establish a joint campus in Shenyang.
- Assisted a number of significant clients in the preparation and implementation of competition compliance programmes, including competition audits and staff briefings.
- Richard has also advised a client on its response to what is considered the first "dawn raid" in Northern Ireland carried out by the Office of Fair Trading (now the Competition and Markets Authority).