

HARNEYS

Advisory Services for Family Offices and other Private Wealth Advisors

An international law firm with
entrepreneurial thinking

[harneys.com](https://www.harneys.com)

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Introduction

We are pleased to present our Family Office and Private Wealth offering in London, where our experienced team provides family offices, HNWIs and onshore trusted advisors with specialist guidance and support in relation to various aspects of their structures, investments, estate, and succession planning and wealth management.

We understand that the services our clients require are often complex and diverse and regularly extend beyond one area of expertise. Our London office has expertise which spans corporate and commercial, banking and finance, investment funds, regulatory, restructuring, dispute resolution as well as the more traditional private wealth offerings of succession planning, wills, probate, and trusts.

We work closely with families and their advisors to provide the offshore legal support they need. Our advice often extends to structuring and transactional support. We can also assist with the operation and management of their family offices or other estate and succession planning structures and vehicles.

Our professional and personal service is built around establishing long-term relationships with our clients and acting as trusted advisors.

If we don't have the necessary skillset to provide the level of service required, we will say so and will provide introductions to top class advisors from within our network of trusted contacts who will be able to assist.

“The Harneys team have been phenomenal to work with. They are practical, responsive, and spot on with their advice”

Chambers HNW, 2023

About us

Harneys is an international law firm with entrepreneurial thinking. Our service is built around professionalism, personal service, and rapid response. We have decades of experience providing offshore legal advice, having been established in the British Virgin Islands in 1960.

We have a strategic alliance with Harneys Fiduciary, which provides a full complement of corporate, wealth, and fiduciary services.

Experts in 7 legal jurisdictions*



11 locations worldwide*

180 lawyers

Our expertise

- Banking & Finance
- Corporate
- Digital Assets & Blockchain
- International Arbitration
- Investment Funds
- Litigation & Insolvency
- Private Wealth
- Regulatory & Tax
- Restructuring

Innovative

We drive innovation through Harneys Wave by seamlessly integrating our legal expertise with cutting-edge tech solutions.

Global reach

We have a strong global footprint and are located in major financial centres in Europe, Asia, the Americas, and the Caribbean.

Diversity

We are committed to a just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplace. Six of our nine office managing partners are women.

Excellence of service

Our teams around the globe work around the clock to provide a seamless and highly responsive service.

*Jersey legal services are provided through a referral arrangement with Harneys (Jersey) which is an independently owned and controlled Jersey law firm.

Our strategic alliance partner, Harneys Fiduciary, has offices in Montevideo and São Paulo. They provide services in Portuguese, Spanish, and English, and serve as the first point of contact for clients in Brazil, South, and Central America. We don't practise Brazilian or Uruguayan law.

Private Wealth

Our multi-award-winning Private Wealth team, based in financial centres around the world, assists a wide range of clients including high-net-worth and ultra-high-net-worth individuals, their families and their businesses, institutional trust companies and private offices, companies and partnerships, banks, accountants, and pension providers.

Our London Private Wealth team provides expertise to the full spectrum of private wealth mandates in relation to advisory/ non-contentious, semi-contentious and contentious matters. We are told by clients that we are responsive, efficient, and reasonably priced in the market.

We guide clients on developing wealth-holding structures and trusts. We advise clients and family offices in relation to the establishment of BVI, Cayman and Bermuda structures. Some are relatively straightforward structures; others may require bespoke and innovative solutions. In the commercial context, we advise on the creation and management of unit trusts, pension trusts, purpose trusts and EBTs. Our lawyers are well-versed in the establishment and operation of private trust companies, often in the context of highly complex overall structures.

Additionally, we have strong experience in drafting all types of wills, from simple wills disposing of shares in a BVI, Cayman Islands, Anguilla, or Cyprus company, to more complex wills establishing family trusts. We are one of the world's largest providers of BVI and Cayman Islands Grants of Probates and Letters of Administration, and pride ourselves on an efficient and responsive service.

Because of our varied client base, we have a worldwide network of contacts for all the HNW touchpoints which we are always happy to share. In the UK we work with many different law firms and other providers, and consistently work with other advisors when liaising with HMRC and other regulatory bodies.

We are often asked to give training to clients and are happy to do so. We are also used as a resource for one-off discussions and as a sounding board. We do not charge for such advice which we appreciate as an opportunity to learn more about our clients and their needs, and have often developed new structures following such discussions.

Our culture and ethos put our clients' needs at the centre of everything that we do and this is reflected in our innovation in creating tailored private wealth structures to protect assets and secure them for future generations. As trusted advisor, we provide a single point of contact, backed by our global network, to offer a unique, responsive and forward thinking service.

Areas of expertise

- Trusts
- Private trust companies
- Wills
- Probate and letters of administration

“The Harneys private client/trust team is client centred.”

Legal 500, 2024

Corporate

Our experienced team of corporate lawyers combine experience and technical skill with a practical, commercial approach. We are recognised for being innovative and energetic with a clear understanding that our clients need to have pragmatic solutions.

The corporate team in London advises on complex cross-border, multi-jurisdictional transactions involving BVI and Cayman Islands vehicles. Our London team frequently advises and provides ongoing support to family offices and HNWI's which includes advising on the establishment and reorganisation of family structures.

We also frequently advise families on estate and succession planning using BVI and Cayman Islands vehicles.

Aside from family offices and HNWI's, our clients include investment managers and advisors, venture capitalist and private equity funds, trustees, corporate service providers, and private equity houses, who value our practical, insightful support and structuring advice. We recognise that our diverse client base faces different demands and challenges and we are adept at providing tailored solutions.

Not only do we advise and provide ongoing support to family offices and HNWI's on the establishment and on-going management and maintenance of their structures, we also advise on a range of transactions involving our clients. These include M&A and private equity related deals, assisting with due-diligence, providing commercial advice on ancillary arrangements and agreements, reviewing term sheets for proposed deals, voluntary liquidations and property de-enveloping and advising on joint venture or shareholder agreements.

Our industry expertise is broad, with our lawyers having worked on landmark deals in sectors including digital assets, transportation, online retail platforms, technology, oil and gas, gold and precious metals, real estate, hotels and hospitality, luxury goods and many more.

Harneys' corporate lawyers have strong networks in key markets around the world and understand the business and commercial environment in which our clients operate. We enjoy working with corporate and family office service providers to provide a value-added and integrated service.

Areas of expertise

- Corporate restructuring
- Private equity
- Public and private M&A
- Structuring and incorporation advice
- Corporate governance and directors' duties
- Management and administration of ownership structures
- Liquidations
- Joint ventures and shareholder arrangements
- Economic substance
- Digital assets
- Asset purchases and disposals
- Private equity
- Equity finance and fundraising

“They were professional, discrete and efficient and helped steer us through what was a significant M&A deal.”

Legal 500, 2024

Banking & Finance

Our Banking & Finance practice has decades of experience in offshore credit and security legal issues. Our team advises many of the world's largest financial groups, issuers, underwriters, trustees, managers, sponsors and corporate service providers on all types of international securitisation transactions. We also act on the borrower side of financing transactions.

We are regularly instructed in respect of multi-billion-dollar debt finance transactions involving top international banks. In the context of private wealth, we have specialist expertise in trade finance law, leasing finance, property and acquisition finance, project finance, construction/development finance and Sharia compliant finance.

Some of our key clients include Bank of America, BNP Paribas, Citigroup, Credit Suisse, Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs, Merrill Lynch, HSBC, JP Morgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, Standard Chartered Bank, UBS and EBRD. We also advise non-institutional and alternative lenders.

Member of our team have trusted contacts who can assist with the set-up of offshore bank accounts.

Areas of expertise

- Loan finance
- Debt capital markets
- Bonds, convertible bonds, loan participation notes and related debt issuance
- Derivatives
- Note issuance
- Distressed debt and non-performing loans
- Asset-based and property finance
- International project finance
- Fund finance
- Acquisition finance
- Islamic finance
- Structured finance
- Debt for equity swaps
- Workouts and enforcement of security
- Debt recovery
- BVI domestic banking
- Preparation and registration of security documents

“They are a solid practice with good expertise in a number of areas.”

Legal 500 EMEA, 2024

Investment Funds

Harneys London has a dynamic and growing offshore funds team. Our work is characterised by technical excellence, responsiveness and price transparency. We advise on all aspects of the life of a BVI or Cayman Islands fund, including formation, regulation and licensing, ongoing obligations, restructuring and closure in both planned and distressed scenarios.

Our investment funds team together with our corporate transactional team regularly advises investors including family offices and HNWIs in relation to planned investments by assisting with due diligence on the investment fund and advising on term sheet proposals. We work with pre-eminent onshore law firms in this area and our clients range from start-up managers to some of the world's largest asset managers and family offices. We also have experience assisting managers with the launch of Shariah law compliant investment funds.

Our London investment funds team also works closely with the corporate transactional team to provide downstream fund transactional advice and advise fund managers on a range of deals including M&A deals and exiting and restructuring investments or portfolio companies.

We advise on all aspects of the regulatory regimes of the BVI and the Cayman Islands and work closely with our dedicated Regulatory practice in this regard.

Our lawyers have been involved in many of the largest and most complex restructurings and distressed situations and have considerable experience dealing with changes to a fund's structure during its life. These matters may involve consideration of existing rights of investors and obligations of directors, managers, and agents.

We are at the forefront of designing innovative structures including those dealing with mixed liquidity portfolios. We are also experienced in advising on issues surrounding the use of side letters for individual investors.

We work closely with our Litigation team who have significant experience in assisting on a full range of fund disputes and have acted for limited partners, general partners and investment managers in this context. We have advised on issues arising from fraud and mismanagement of funds and contentious valuations of underlying assets, and act for clients in disputes arising from the entitlement to and/or the quantum of management or carry fees, breaches of partnership agreements and winding up of funds.

Our size, collegiate atmosphere and flexible teams allow us to work across departments and offices. We do the work in the location that is most suitable to the client.

Areas of expertise

- Fund formation
- Fund restructuring
- Regulatory consents
- Blockchain and digital assets
- Cryptocurrencies
- Manager formation
- Manager transfers of control
- Distressed funds
- Unit trusts
- Fund services
- Private equity
- Open ended structures

“Harneys are very responsive, always available. They have absolute expertise in the topics they specialise in.”

Chambers HNW, 2023

Litigation & Insolvency

Harneys is a known leader in litigation and insolvency. We have been involved in the most significant global disputes over many years, winning keynote victories for clients and helping to shape the law. Our work often involves high-profile, multi-jurisdictional, commercial, insolvency, trusts, and probate disputes. We regularly appear at all levels of the court system, including the highest, the Privy Council.

Our specialists in the BVI, Bermuda, Cayman, London, Cyprus, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Singapore work together efficiently to ensure that we provide bespoke and effective solutions across all time zones.

We work closely with specialists in our other practice areas including Investment Funds, Private Wealth, Regulatory & Tax, Banking & Finance and Corporate & Commercial.

We solve complex issues. We have a reputation for providing clear, accurate and timely advice so you and your clients can take well-informed decisions. It is good to win, but it can also be better and cheaper to stay out of court. Our focus is on the resolution that is best for you, and that includes being mindful of ongoing relationships.

We have acted, and continue to act, for a wide range of clients including some of the world's largest corporations, banks, accountants, high-net-worth and ultra-high-net-worth individuals as well as their families and family offices, for example AlixPartners, HSBC, Grant Thornton, Credit Suisse, BP, IMG Trust Company Limited, Mr Henry Liang, one of the leading hedge fund managers in Asia and Mr Prateek Gupta, a prominent Indian businessman in the metals sector.

We are more than happy to offer clients the benefit of our expertise either by way of training or by acting as a sounding board prior to formal instruction, as we fully appreciate how important it can be for clients to get a steer at the earliest possible stage of any potential dispute.

Areas of expertise

- Trusts and private client litigation
- Commercial litigation
- Contentious probate
- Arbitration and enforcement
- Fraud and asset tracing
- Claims against directors
- Shareholder disputes
- Banking and contractual disputes
- Investigations, corporate crime and fraud
- Property disputes
- Professional negligence claims
- Insolvency proceedings
- Liquidations
- Administrative law and judicial review
- Intellectual property litigation
- Insurance disputes

“They truly are the go-to firm for high value offshore litigation.”

Legal 500, 2024

Restructuring

Harneys has been at the forefront of the development of offshore jurisprudence in the field of restructuring and insolvency for decades and our restructuring and insolvency practice leads the offshore market in both global reach and expertise.

We have acted on some of the largest and most complex cross-border restructurings and insolvencies of recent times.

As market leaders in the British Virgin Islands, we completed and advised on the first scheme of arrangement, creditors' arrangement and plan of arrangement and have unrivalled experience in these areas. We are also well-known for our experience advising on Cayman Islands and Bermuda law.

Borrowers and creditors can change their positions as business, legal and regulatory landscapes can shift. We help clients navigate the complex dynamics including, where necessary, seeking out and recover assets.

Our client base is diverse, encompassing leading international and regional accountancy practices, onshore law firms, financial institutions, insolvency office holders, official and unofficial creditors' committees, private equity sponsors, hedge funds, debtor in possession loan providers, directors, trustees, shareholders, and corporate debtors.

We frequently advise lenders and investors at all levels of the capital structure, corporates, and insolvency officeholders on the use of schemes of arrangements in the context of parallel restructurings or reorganisation procedures in other jurisdictions, such as Chapter 11 of the US Bankruptcy Code or parallel schemes of arrangement in other common law jurisdictions.

Areas of expertise

- Debt and equity rescheduling and refinancing
- Distressed mergers and acquisitions
- Distressed funds advice
- Formal insolvency proceedings and office holders' conduct, powers and regulation, both contentious and non-contentious
- Out-of-court restructurings and refinancings
- Contingency planning and implementation
- Schemes of arrangement
- Security enhancement and prioritisation
- Debt for equity swaps
- Recognition and joint protocol proceedings
- Workouts and enforcement of security
- Directors duties and claims against auditors, fund administrators and other service providers
- Debt recovery
- Liquidation

“The Harneys team is absolutely top of the market – smart, commercial, strategic, responsive...”

Legal 500, 2024

Regulatory & Tax

Our market leading global Regulatory & Tax practice advises regulated and non-regulated clients, including all magic circle law firms and the world's top banks such as Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, and Societe Generale, on anti-money laundering and terrorist financing compliance, financial services regulation, sanctions and restrictive measures, tax and tax information exchange, virtual assets, economic substance, data protection and other areas.

We frequently advise on the implementation of key international initiatives as they affect the BVI, Cayman Islands, Luxembourg, Cyprus, Bermuda, and Anguilla. We cover all key sectors from banking, insurance and broker dealing right through to asset management, trust companies and virtual asset licensing.

Right from the very start of a business' journey in this complex industry, we advise on the full scope of perimeter enforcement and regulatory applications dealing closely with the BVI Financial Services Commission (BVFSC), the Cayman Islands Monetary Authority (CIMA), the Cyprus Securities and Exchange Commission (CySEC) and others. Following licensing approval, we continue to assist our clients in ensuring compliance with their regulatory obligations, including anti-money laundering, sanctions, capital adequacy, supervision and conduct of business.

Our Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI) practice comprises market leading lawyers and compliance experts dedicated to helping clients comply with FATCA, the Common Reporting Standard (CRS), mandatory tax disclosure reporting, tax information exchange and similar legal regimes. We assist clients with determining the applicability of regulations and their obligations under the relevant laws and defend them in front of regulators and investigators.

In our EU offices (Luxembourg and Cyprus) we advise on the tax implications of investment transactions (for example in the unregulated sectors on opaque entities such as SOPARFIs, Securitisation Vehicles or Family Wealth Companies, and tax transparent entities such as LP/SLPs), and on the on-going tax treatment of structure resulting from such transactions.

We have excellent relations with all regulators we deal with in our jurisdictions. Many of our lawyers sit on various advisory committees established by various governmental agencies and the regulatory bodies in these jurisdictions. Our client base includes most of the market leading investment and private banking institutions in the US, UK, Europe and Asia.

Areas of expertise

- Financial services regulation, licensing, capital adequacy, conduct of business
- Regulation of trusts and trust companies
- Anti-money laundering and terrorist / proliferation financing compliance
- Sanctions and restrictive measures
- Data protection and GDPR
- Insurance, reinsurance, and captives
- Investigations, corporate crime, bribery, and fraud
- Risk management and compliance
- Economic substance
- Taxation, including in relation to structures, capitalisation and loans, operational matters, trading, indirect taxes, distributions and liquidations
- FATCA, CRS and other tax information exchange
- BEPS and Country by Country Reporting

“The Regulatory team at Harneys is the best there is for BVI...”

Legal 500, 2024

Key contacts



Henry Mander

Partner | London

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Henry Mander is a leading trust practitioner, with over 20 years offshore and onshore experience in the international private client industry, and is the global head of our Trusts and Private Wealth groups. He is ranked in the top band in both Cayman and BVI for private client/trusts by Legal 500 and Chambers High Net Worth, the leading directories in this field.

Henry advises both private and institutional clients, including banks and trust companies, on all aspects of Cayman and BVI trust law. He has a broad range of trust and estate planning experience, including the creation, administration and termination of complex international trusts and advising on the mechanics for effective succession planning for high net worth individuals and families.

Henry has a particular expertise in the use of STAR trusts and VISTA trusts for clients in emerging markets, specifically Latin America and the Far East. Recent instructions have also involved sophisticated planning involving Private Trust Companies in both Cayman and BVI. The majority of Henry's practice involves working with clients' onshore advisors, especially lawyers and accountants, to ensure that the most advantageous Cayman or BVI trust vehicle is established. In recent years, Henry has also acted as expert witness and as court-appointed representative for certain beneficiaries in various complex international trust proceedings.

Henry joined Harneys in the BVI in January 2011 before relocating to the Cayman Islands later that year. He previously worked in the private client departments of London firms Boodle Hatfield and Farrer & Co.

Henry is a full member of the Society of Trust & Estate Practitioners (**STEP**) and has sat on the STEP Cayman Islands Council, including its legislative sub-committee, since 2014. He is one of the contributing editors to British Virgin Islands Commercial Law, Sweet & Maxwell, now in its fourth edition.

Key contacts



Rachel Graham

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Rachel Graham is the managing partner of our London office and leads our BVI corporate transactional practice in the EMEA region. She is highly regarded in her field, having nearly 25 years of experience practising as a lawyer, 17 of which have been offshore. Rachel advises corporations, high net worth individuals, entrepreneurs, financial institutions, seed capital investors, private equity funds and their advisers, and is the client relationship partner for several of the firm's key clients.

With a broad range of corporate, finance, and restructuring practice experience, Rachel also works closely with Harneys Fiduciary, our strategic alliance partner, which provides a full complement of corporate, wealth, and fiduciary services. She regularly advises on all aspects of corporate and commercial law, including equity fundraisings, listings, SPACs, restrictive and special purpose vehicles, corporate re-organisations, restructurings (including schemes and plans of arrangement), mergers & acquisitions, and joint ventures. She advised on the first scheme of arrangement in the BVI in 2009.



Jeremy Child

Partner | London
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Jeremy Child is a partner in our Litigation & Insolvency department, having joined us in 2011. He advises on strategy and procedure relating to international commercial disputes, fraud, asset-tracing and preservation, and insolvency and restructuring, serving clients from both our London and BVI offices.

Previously, Jeremy spent eight years practicing as a chancery barrister at Enterprise Chambers in London where he remains a door tenant. Jeremy's advocacy experience is exemplified by his appearances in some of the BVI's most significant cases.

Jeremy is a member of RISA and an overseas member of the Chancery Bar Association. He is also a regular contributor to the [Offshore Litigation Blog](#).

Key contacts



Francesca Gibbons

Partner | London
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Francesca Gibbons is a partner in our Litigation and Insolvency practice in London, practising BVI law, having 14 years' experience of commercial litigation in a range of industries.

Francesca specialises in complex and high value international commercial litigation and asset recovery including shareholder claims, fraud and trust litigation. She acts for a wide range of clients, including global and boutique law firms, Ips, and ultra-high-net-worth individuals from around the world.

Before joining us in 2015, Francesca was a banking and finance litigation solicitor for MAB LLP (acquired by Dentons UKMEA LLP) and Simmons & Simmons LLP in the UK. She has also undertaken three successful client secondments at Barclays Bank PLC in London.

Francesca is called to the BVI bar and has appeared as sole advocate in the Commercial Court of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court and as a junior in the Privy Council.

Francesca is a trusts litigation expert and was committee member of the Contentious Trusts Association (ConTrA) for six years. Other memberships include the ILA, CFLA, IWIRC, and RISA (associate member). Francesca has also been a member of our CSR committee since 2016.

Francesca is a regular contributor to our [Offshore Litigation Blog](#) and podcasts.



Matthew Howson

Counsel | London
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Matthew Howson is a member of our London office, specialising in BVI and Cayman trust law, general private client and estate planning matters. His clients include individuals and families, trust companies and family offices, as well as institutional clients such as banks.

His current practice includes creating, administering and advising on often complex trust structures. He also drafts wills covering BVI assets and administers BVI estates. His work invariably has an international and multi-jurisdictional dimension.

Matthew is a full member of the Society of Trust & Estate Practitioners (BI). He regularly speaks to small and large audiences worldwide about succession planning, and also assists in developing new BVI legislation. He has contributed to publications such as the STEP Journal, Trusts & Estates Law & Tax Journal, Private Client Adviser, and LexisNexis Seminars.

Other London contacts



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