

Paralegal News

Our key alliance boosts your benefits

By Lyndsey Jones

Many members will be able to enjoy more benefits and boost their career prospects because of the NALP's recent key alliance with the Fellowship of Professional Willwriters and Probate Practitioners.

As part of the joint venture, members of both organisations will enjoy dual membership and benefits. For NALP paralegals, these include free membership of the FPWPP for one year, opportunities to network and enhance career development, plus group indemnity insurance and forthcoming "money-off" products.

And despite the fragile recovery in the economy, both training bodies stressed that there has never been a better time to enter the legal profession.

"This is a very exciting alliance and our members will benefit a great deal. Those who specialise in willwriting will gain more opportunities for promotion, while other members can train to become willwriters, adding another string to their bow and broadening their skills to make them stand out in a tough jobs market," Amanda Hamilton, NALP chief executive, said.

The Legal Services Act 2007, which seeks to liberalise and regulate the industry, has also created opportunities.



Picture: Jas Sansi Photography

NALP raises its profile

Amanda Hamilton, (left) chief executive of the NALP, talks to Michael Conlon, a London barrister and fellow guest at the Institute of Financial Accountants first president's dinner in the capital recently. Speakers included Professor David Hunt, IFA president, and Angela Knight, chief executive of the British Bankers Association.

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"The NALP and FPWPP are offering a practical way and real opportunities for people in or intending to enter the legal profession at a time when more opportunities were made possible by the Legal Services Act," Rita Leat, chief executive and president of FPWPP, said.

"The legal industry is being fragmented. Instead of having consolidated frontline providers, there is an opportunity for alternative business structures, where



Rita Leat, FPWPP chief executive: 'There has never been a better time to start a legal career'

people can work for themselves. Specialist willwriters and paralegals will be in demand," she said. "There has never been a better time to start a legal career as a willwriter, paralegal, conveyancer and other support services."

Associate, Graduate and Fellow members of the NALP are eligible for automatic membership of the FPWPP because they have already completed

the requisite legal units. If they do not have qualifying employment, they will be full members. However, those who have qualifying employment in Wills and Probate can practise on their own if they complete a couple of FPWPP courses – Units 7 and 8 – and submit to FPWPP normal rules of registration. Completing this specialist training will enable NALP members to practise willwriting legitimately with indemnity insurance.

The FPWPP, which represents and trains professional willwriters and probate practitioners, has more than 150 members who will become affiliate members of the NALP and also enjoy most of the Association's benefits. The FPWPP is also actively seeking regulation of the willwriting and probate industry from the government.

Ms Leat said: "We are delighted with this alliance. Both organisations will offer benefits and qualifications to members so they can progress in their careers. We also want to promote paralegals and willwriters in the great work that they do.

"Up to five years ago, paralegals were the best kept secret in the industry but with the NALP offering a career route, this is no longer the case and the FPWPP are doing the same for willwriters."



Fruitful future for paralegals



The first half of 2010 has been relatively difficult in so far as resources are concerned, but fruitful and busy with regard to implementing projects and networking. NALP has spent a lot of time and finances on both raising the NALP profile and marketing campaigns.

In particular the marketing to Universities and Colleges has proven successful, with two Universities who are definitely interested to come on

board with our Joint Degree programme in the next academic year. We welcome both Anglia Ruskin University and Thames Valley into the growing NALP family.

Meetings have taken place with four other universities who have expressed an interest, not only in the joint scheme but also our Post Graduate Diploma. There have also been several meetings with further education colleges, which have expressed an interest in our Level 4/5 Diploma in Paralegal Studies (the new name for the Higher Certificate).

Since the beginning of the year, NALP has had a series of meetings with the following: the Society of Scrivener Notaries, South Bank University regarding a joint project, Legal Services

Commission, Legal Services Board, Solicitors Regulation Authority, Royal Bank of Scotland, Bar Services Board and Kaplan Publishing. NALP is working closely with Skills For Justice, the Sector Skills Council for the Legal sector. The first six months of 2010 has also seen the introduction of a brochure and a rebranding of our website.

We are also proud to announce a partnership with the Fellowship of Professional Willwriters and Probate Practitioners (FPWPP), which you can read about in more detail on Page 1. More information on the benefits to members should already have been emailed.

As chief executive, I believe that NALP has fulfilled all that we have set out to do in the first half of the year. I am proud of our achievements and look forward optimistically to a fruitful future for the paralegal profession.

Amanda Hamilton, chief executive

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Presidential parade NALP promotes its work



Amanda Hamilton, chief executive of the National Association of Licensed Paralegals, and Lyndsey Jones, editor of Paralegal News, meet Professor David Hunt (pictured far left), president of the Institute of Financial Accountants, and David Woodgate, IFA chief executive.

They were all attending the IFA

first president's dinner held at the Chartered Accountants Hall in London recently.

The event proved a great opportunity for the NALP to meet other leading educational providers to build professional relationships, swap ideas and promote the business. Mr Hunt advised about 100 guests to

"make the most of the evening through networking and professional fellowship".

Ms Hamilton said: "It was a great night to meet old friends and start to make new business alliances with other leading educational bodies."

Picture: Jas Sansi Photography

Licensed to target tribunals

By Lyndsey Jones

Licensed paralegals who are members of the NALP will be approved in July by the Valuation Tribunal for England to have rights of audience.

The Association will be added to the VTE's list of recognised bodies, which includes barristers, solicitors, legal executives and surveyors, who are accepted to represent clients at tribunals. The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority will also tell its members not to object to NALP licensed paralegals representing clients.

"This is great news. Potentially paralegals can get more work and start to bring cases as an advocate," John Johnson, who is a NALP licensed paralegal and sits on a panel of the Valuation Tribunal for England. "I have had personal experience of sitting on the panel when NALP members had rights of audience at the VTE and they

handled their cases very well – whether they won or lost. This is a great opportunity for NALP members to develop their career."

Amanda Hamilton, NALP chief executive, agreed. "This demonstrates how vital it is for paralegals to gain their licence through our association."

The NALP has gained approval because it could show it had a history of appearing at tribunals and that it had a code of practice and disciplinary procedure.

"This was crucial criteria to meet in order to gain approval to be on the VTE's list of bodies," Ms Hamilton said. "It is also very welcome news that our paralegals will be recognised by the Criminal

'This demonstrates how vital it is for paralegals to gain their licence through our association'

Injuries Compensation Authority too."

The VTE was created under the local government and public involvement in health act 2007, when it replaced 56 tribunals. It largely handles commercial rates and council tax issues and since October 2009 it has taken over responsibility for dealing with appeals.

The VTE's first president is Professor Graham Zellick who was appointed – along with four vice-presidents – by the Lord Chancellor in January 2009. They receive remuneration for the work they do. The panel of chairmen and members are all volunteers who receive training and are experienced in hearing appeals.

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority is the government body responsible for running a free service, processing applications and making awards that range from £1,000 to £500,000 to victims of violent crime. The scheme operates in England, Scotland and Wales.



Enjoy the summer with our hot offers

Summer is finally here and you can enjoy those hot, lazy days even more with sizzling offers on the luxury shopping and hospitality website Keep It Hush.

There is something for everyone, where you can choose from deals on short breaks, champagne and strawberries, traditional afternoon cream teas or fabulous golf, spa and leisure offers at great, affordable prices.

This summer you can enjoy a summer break at De Vere Hotels & Resorts. You can book a room for two people for two nights bed and breakfast, with dinner on the first night from just £130. Rates are subject to availability and valid between June 4 and September 4 2010.

You can treat yourself to a bed and breakfast stay at any one of 20 Village

hotels. All yours £40 per room. Or why not indulge yourself and a friend with a Dom Perignon afternoon tea for two at The Champagne Bar at Westfield shopping centre in London. All yours for £35.

The NALP recently teamed up with Keep It Hush to give qualified members free, exclusive access to fabulous offers on luxury brands.

Membership is absolutely free but is open only to Associate, Graduate and Fellow members of the Association.

Amanda Hamilton, chief executive of the NALP, said: "These really are fantastic offers for members. It's a great new benefit and I would urge all those members who qualify for it to take it up, particularly as summer is here."

Our mentor is on hand to help you

If you find you are stuck on course work and need help, you can contact our student mentor Steven Pollard. He is there to answer queries from students on the Level 4/5 Diploma in Paralegal Studies, formerly the Higher certificate. The service, which has been running for a year, is free to NALP members. To request Steven's assistance, send an email to: queries@nationalparalegals.co.uk



I'm delighted at fantastic courses

I have been in the legal profession for years and throughout my career changes, having a legal knowledge has helped me every step of the way from paralegal to legal IT professional to running my own online art magazine and art projects.

I am delighted to see that the NALP is heading in the right direction and ensuring that paralegals get their names on the map. The methodology of the courses are fantastic and supportive every step of the way. It definitely builds your confidence and I hope that NALP continues to receive all of the success it deserves in the future.

Kelly Foxhall a former NALP student of Rainham, Kent

A serious way to study law

Please allow me to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to your institution for enabling me to study law in a serious, structured way. When I started my course I was very nervous to answer the given questions. However, as I have accomplished each unit I have gained confidence to answer such questions and now have an understanding of law across the range of subjects.

Writing essays on law was extremely difficult for me as English is my second language but I was determined not to give up.

I enjoyed studying law and I wish to continue to improve my knowledge of law and work in a law environment.

Tsugumi Inoue, a former NALP student of London

Share your views with Paralegal News. Email us at: info@nationalparalegals.co.uk