

Partner Lucy Blake Featured in *Edward Fennell's Legal Diary* on Record-High Modern Slavery Referrals

Publications

November 12, 2025

By: Lucy Blake

London Partner Lucy Blake was featured in *Edward Fennell's Legal Diary*, where her commentary on the latest Government figures revealing record-high modern slavery referrals was recognised as "Legal Comment of the Week." The figures show the number of referrals of potential victims of modern slavery received this quarter is the highest ever since the National Referral Mechanism began in 2009. Lucy's insights highlight the growing legal and commercial risks for businesses, particularly those with vulnerable workforces, seasonal labour, or complex supply chains.

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Lucy offered her observations on the challenges confronting businesses:

"The increase in referrals, coupled with intensified litigation activity, new regulations and government and media scrutiny relating to labour market misconduct in the UK and Europe heightens the risks for companies. Those that rely on low-skilled labour and/or with high numbers of seasonal or temporary workers or complex and opaque supply chains are particularly exposed."

"Litigation relating to labour conditions is on the rise, with claims being brought by increasingly well-funded and litigious NGOs as well as large groups of individuals on contingent fee-arrangements. These claims are not being dismissed for remoteness – the Courts in the UK (and Europe) are showing an increasing willingness to engage in ESG/ human rights issues and have accepted jurisdiction to hear claims against UK parent companies in respect of forced labour issues involving overseas subsidiaries."

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