

Partner Lucy Blake and Associate Joshua Kell Featured in *Forward Law Review's* Business and Human Rights Outlook for 2026

Publications

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By: Lucy Blake, Joshua Kell

London Partner Lucy Blake and Associate Joshua Kell were featured in *Forward Law Review's* "Business and human rights: the global landscape" article, contributing their insights on the evolving ESG and human rights regulatory environment for 2026.

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Lucy and Joshua reflected on the challenges facing businesses in the current climate:

"2025 was a year of recalibration for ESG and business and human rights around the world. ESG and, in particular, sustainability has become an increasingly controversial subject, especially in the US. Many companies started the year trapped between a rock and a hard place, with obligations in the EU in conflict with risks in the US. However, Q4 2025 saw political compromise and negotiations in the EU slow progress on the ESG legislation, underlining how fragmented the ESG agenda remains. Companies have been left navigating partial reforms, with many left unsure whether they fall within the scope of the framework and, if so, what is actually required.

However, whilst there remains uncertainty around compliance requirements, there is still a clear underlying pressure on businesses to address adverse human rights and climate risks in their operations and supply chains. Companies face the threat of litigation and reputational damage for adverse impacts. They are also required to provide transparency to their investors, customers and vendors, with failure to do so potentially resulting in loss of business or funding.

Whilst the unpredictability of the current climate may tempt corporates to hedge their bets, companies that invest now in mapping and supplier engagement will be best placed to deal with regulatory change and demonstrate that taking a responsible approach to business continues also to make good commercial sense."

Related Attorneys



Lucy Blake

Partner

lblake@jenner.com

+44 330 060 5409



Joshua Kell

Associate

jkell@jenner.com

+44 330 060 5472

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