

Christopher Ainsworth

Partner

“Chris provided us with support on our acquisitions of individual and multiple group transactions. I have always found him very reliable, supportive and the expert required to give the right advice and guidance.”

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Christopher is a highly experienced real estate lawyer, with a specific focus on the hospitality and leisure industry.

Christopher has advised clients solely within the hospitality sector for more than 25 years and specialises largely in property acquisitions, disposals, volume letting and estate management work for hotel operators, pub companies, restaurant groups and brewers. His expertise covers not only complex development projects, acquisition and disposal of portfolios of property and general estate management work, but also extends to regulatory and commercial points of particular concern to the sector.

Christopher's client base is national, reflecting the spread of operators across the country.

Legal Services

Real Estate

Selected Cases

- Property aspects of the sale of a regional brewery business for a sum in excess of £50 million.
- Taking over all property related matters for a national estate of over 300 restaurants, including a full estate audit followed by a major refinancing exercise.

- Dealing with the sale of over 150 outlets for a national brewer over a two year period.
- Acting in connection with the sale by Administrators of over 100 pub outlets.
- Advising national and regional brewers and pub companies on competition issues and the regulatory framework including the statutory code for tied pubs and the voluntary code of practice, Article 101 TFEU and the associated block exemption.
- Dealing with portfolio estate management.
- Negotiating options, pre-emptions and conditional agreements.

Sectors

Drinks, Hospitality & Leisure

Christopher has acted for more than 20 years advising national and regional pub, restaurant, bar, late night venue, and hotel operators. As a result he has many connections within the industry and substantial knowledge of the issues that businesses in the sector are likely to come across. Christopher regularly advises on widely ranging real estate transactions within the sector and is the deputy head of the firm's leisure team.

Selected Cases

- Advising national and regional brewers and pubcos on competition issues and the regulatory framework, including the statutory code for tied pub estates.
- Drafting standard tenancy and franchise documents, including obtaining Crystal Mark (plain English) accreditation.
- Buying and selling portfolios of tenanted and managed pubs and restaurants.
- Dealing with portfolio estate management for national and regional pubs and restaurants.
- Property aspects of securitisations/refinancing of managed or tenanted public house estates – for example, refinancing of a 1,000+ public house estate.
- Advising leading multiple operators of pubs and restaurants on ongoing leasehold acquisitions in premium shopping centre and retail park locations.
- Negotiating options, pre-emptions and conditional agreements.
- Acquisitions of distressed business assets out of pre-pack administration or sales from administrators.
- Dealing with all related issues including the sale and purchase of stock and fixtures and fittings, employees (including the application of TUPE), VAT, Capital Allowances and warranties.