



'Nothing will replace personal interaction with our clients'

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ACTIVITY We have remained very busy across most of our practice areas – funds and investment management, finance, corporate, tax, employment, financial services, dispute resolution and insolvency, and projects and construction have all proved resilient. Obviously, the commercial property sector has faced considerable challenges over the past 12 months but we are very confident it will bounce back strongly.

We have not scaled back any of our practice areas during the pandemic period,

but have worked to respond to ongoing and ever-changing client needs. In 2020 we consolidated our data, commercial and technology practice, and welcomed Claire Morrissey to the partnership as head of the practice. Earlier this year, Lorna Smith also joined as a partner in our financial services regulatory team. These hires were in direct response to increasing client demand for regulatory, data protection and IP advice.

Our dispute resolution and insolvency team has also remained very busy, working on a mix of general litigation and restructuring and insolvency matters. Our employment group has also been extremely busy responding to Covid-related advice requests.

REMOTE WORKING Transitioning to remote working has been a relatively seamless

process and our pivot to new technology has completely transformed the way we work, but nothing will replace personal interaction with our clients. We are looking towards a fresh and blended approach to delivering client service in a post-pandemic world.

OUTLOOK Financial services, fintech, pharma and life sciences are all proving to be remarkably resilient. We also anticipate that the funds industry will continue to grow in 2021, especially as the appetite for investing in ESG funds increases.

The financial services regulatory team is heavily focused on growth sectors such as fintech, alternative lending and sustainable finance. We expect this to continue to be a booming sector in Ireland. We also expect to see strong demand for core funds and investment management and finance-related advice.

RICHARD MARTIN
Managing Partner
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ACTIVITY Fee income was down in 2020 versus 2019. Most of our service lines held up very well, although banking and commercial property were certainly affected for a time. We worked with a significant amount of issues relating to employment, tax, landlord and tenant, construction (time and delay), banking and business interruption (insurance).

REMOTE WORKING Many of our people are working full time from home, with others only coming into the office when necessary. Our people are coping well with remote working, although the continuing lockdowns can affect everyone's wellbeing. Accordingly, we have hugely accelerated our wellness programme and were delighted to recently receive the IBEC KeepWell Mark accreditation.

Service delivery has not been negatively affected. We have worked hard, and are working hard, to maintain contact and relationships, and to ensure that nothing gets in the way of delivering a first-class service. Managing and engaging with colleagues takes more thought, more planning and more imagination than before. However, I think this has led to better communication within the firm.

'We are seeing very encouraging levels of client activity'



OUTLOOK We are seeing very encouraging levels of activity across our client base, except in relation to retail, hospitality and construction primarily. We also saw a reduction in bank lending during this third lockdown.

We are seeing very significant growth in the whole area of data protection, in which we now have ten qualified data protection practitioners working. We additionally have

a dedicated 24/7 incident-response team that works alongside a bank of independent technical experts to assist clients' cyber and data security incidents.

International monetary policy is driving private investment and we have seen a lot of US money in particular coming into Ireland, into a variety of sectors, over the past six months.

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