

Digesting the law for our food and drink clients

The UK's food and drink industry is more vibrant and diverse than ever before, with consumers showing a real appetite for high quality, ethically sourced food and drink products. At the same time operators are facing unparalleled challenges, for example rapidly rising costs and access to a skilled workforce.

Whatever your involvement in the food and drink sector, mfg has a rich heritage in helping clients with commercial interests throughout the food chain to flourish.

We operate a specialist team of lawyers with specific experience of working with food and drink operators who bring a detailed knowledge of the unique circumstances you face. Our team invests time into understanding the dynamics of this fast-changing and highly regulated sector, and in attending trade related events to deepen our knowledge of the commercial issues involved in running a successful business.

Our food and drink team works with:

- Agricultural estates who are diversifying into food and drink processing/supply, hospitality and leisure
- Food and drink manufacturers and distributors
- Restaurants, pubs, cafes, hotels, caterers and take-away businesses
- Suppliers who support food and drink customers, for example logistics and packaging companies

ON THE MENU

Food and drink clients typically ask for our help with the following areas of law:

- Corporate law – company incorporations, partnership and shareholder agreements, buying or selling a business, joint ventures, group reorganisations
- Commercial property and agricultural estates
- Employment
- Energy
- Defamation/reputation management
- Product recall
- Marketing, distribution and supply agreements
- Immigration and Brexit
- Licensing
- Competition law
- Health and safety
- Dispute resolution and litigation
- Trusts and tax
- Regulatory – e.g. labelling, food safety regulations
- Personal legal advice for business owners and their employees– for example family, wills, conveyancing, wealth management
- Intellectual property and trade marks



CASE STUDIES

Having a 'field to fork' practice has benefited our clients who have gone on to collaborate with one another, for example we introduced a micro-drinks business to an agricultural client who was able to help secure new commercial premises on their estate. With an office network throughout Worcestershire and Shropshire, we are ideally located in close proximity to the operations of producers, manufacturers and suppliers.

Churchfields Ice Cream

Just over one hundred years ago, Churchfields Farm in Salwarpe was bought by Thomas Davies as part of the High Park and Salwarpe Court Estate auction held in Worcester. The farm was 45 acres at the time, and home to a herd of 15 dairy shorthorns. Today, the farm is still owned and run by the fourth and fifth generation of the Davies family – Michael Davies and Gillian Kerton. The family has embraced new business opportunities which have emerged on the back of running the dairy farm and in 2004 Gillian Kerton made her first batch of ice cream. Since then, Churchfields Ice Cream has flourished and is now available in multiple outlets throughout Worcestershire, as well as at Churchfields' café barn.

How we have helped

mfg have worked alongside the Davies family for many years and supported them throughout their journey. Our involvement includes advising on commercial contracts with suppliers and customers, employment issues and property, as well as specialist agricultural advice needed in running a acre family-run estate. We are proud to have seen Churchfields' commercial operations flourish and to have been part of their journey to today's highly successful food manufacturing and café ventures.

In the words of our client

"We have worked with mfg for a number of years and we value the professional, pragmatic advice they provide to our commercial enterprises and family interests. This is backed by exceptional industry specific knowledge which we have had to call upon on several occasions."

- Will Kerton, *Churchfields*



Churchfields

Farm • Ice Cream • Barn

Subway Food Franchise Operator

Harmesh Kumar has operated Subway franchises for over a decade in Worcester and the near vicinity. As a household name, Subway is well established and has a significant high street presence. The four Worcester branches which Harmesh runs are all performing extremely well in an competitive market place. In 2016, the Worcester branches were the first national group to sign up to Worcester County Council's healthier choices food scheme, awarded to food businesses that have achieved a level 4 or 5 in the national food hygiene rating system.

How we have helped

Food franchisees face a unique set of challenges – both in terms of the complexity of the ownership structure and the specific issues which arise from working in the highly regulated food and drink sector. mfg's lawyers have supported Harmesh with a variety of legal issues covering regulatory, employment and commercial contracts, as well as advice relating to aspects of running a franchise.

In the words of our client

"As a franchise operator, I have instructed mfg on several occasions to advise on a wide range of issues, and on each occasion they have demonstrated an excellent understanding of my business. Their lawyers are professional, personable and always on hand, ready to support when I need guidance."

- Harmesh Kumar, *Subway franchisee*



CASE STUDIES

Tang Food

Tang Contract Catering is an owner managed business, established in 1997, starting as a high-end sandwich deli in Birmingham's business district and expanding into the contract catering sector. The company is passionate about freshly prepared seasonal food and places a strong emphasis on exceptional customer service. The company's catering services include deli and branded coffee bars, staff dining rooms, and client dining and hospitality, and has now expanded to operate from Birmingham and London. Tang Food is also a Starbucks business alliance partner.

How we have helped

Catering is now one of the largest employment sectors in the UK, characterised by the need for long and flexible working hours. Mfg's employment lawyers have advised Tang Catering for a number of years, ensuring that the company's employment practices meet the complex statutory requirements of the law and create a fair working environment for the workforce.

In the words of our client

"I have been consistently impressed by mfg's commitment to supporting our business and the time their solicitors have spent understanding Tang Food and the markets in which we operate."
- Andy Cleary, *Tang Food*



Charles Faram

Charles Faram has been established as merchants of hops and hop products for over 150 years. The company, which was originally based in Worcester, now resides in the small hamlet of Newland at the foot of the picturesque Malvern Hills. With over 100 different varieties of hops to choose from, Charles Faram stocks and sells the largest range of hops in the UK. The company is represented around the world by distributors Europe, North and South America, South Africa and Australasia.

How we have helped

Our relationship with Charles Faram grew from our role advising the family owners of the agricultural estate. As the commercial aspects of the farm expanded, our advice extended to legal advice on commercial and property matters, working in close partnership to support Charles Faram's ambitions.

In the words of our client

"Charles Faram has been associated with mfg over a number of years, both in relation to estates matters, as well as property and commercial advice. Our business has steadily grown and mfg has provided clear and pragmatic guidance during this time, enabling us to make informed decisions."
- Paul Corbett, *Managing Director, Charles Faram*



Wing Yip

Wing Yip is a family business founded in 1970 and has grown to be the UK's leading supplier of over 4,500 authentic and quality Oriental ingredients and products. The company operates four superstores, an online offering and four business centres in Birmingham, Manchester, Cricklewood and Croydon.

How we have helped

Efficient cash collection is critical to the success of any operation and we have worked with Wing Yip over a number of years to support the company with recovering payment on overdue invoices. This partnership has allowed the management team to dedicate more time to other aspects of running the business.

In the words of our client

"When it comes to running a large operation, professional advice and consistent support is essential. mfg is highly efficient and always there to offer us clear and quality advice around the clock – a real pleasure to work with."
- Henry Yap, *Managing Director*



MEET THE TEAM



01905 610410
iain.morrison@mfgsolicitors.com

Iain Morrison

Favourite food: Steak and Chips
Favourite drink: Real Ale

Iain heads up mfg's food and drink team and has over 20 years' experience of advising agricultural estate owners. As his agricultural clients have expanded to include food and drink processing and hospitality, Iain has supported them with diversifying their operations.



01905 610410
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Sally Morris

Favourite food: Sunday roast with all of the trimmings
Favourite drink: Elderflower and pink grapefruit gin

Sally is an employment Partner and spends a significant amount of time working with companies operating in the hospitality and leisure sector, ensuring companies comply with complex and ever-changing employment legislation.



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Sarah Astbury

Favourite food: Blueberry muffin
Favourite drink: Pint of Ludlow Gold

Sarah's area of specialism is in providing commercial and commercial property advice. She has niche expertise in advising hotel groups, Michelin starred restaurants and pubs.



01562 820181
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Tom Esler

Favourite food: Steak
Favourite drink: Guinness

Tom is a Partner in our litigation team. For our food and drink clients, he is the main point of contact for issues including regulatory matters, such as product recall, labelling, health and safety and commercial disputes.



01905 610410
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James Hayes

Favourite food: Roast Lamb
Favourite drink: Vintage Claret

As a commercial and corporate Partner, James brings vast experience of advising mfg's food and drink clients with buying and selling a business, succession plans, company formation and structure, also commercial contracts.



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Stephen Wyer

Favourite food: Pie Chips and Gravy
Favourite drink: Real Ale

As head of mfg's corporate team, has vast experience of M&A and can support such transactions Mergers and acquisitions in the food and drink sector are predicted to rise this year as businesses seek improved efficiencies, economies of scale and increased bargaining power.



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Chris Piggott

Favourite food: Sausage and Mash
Favourite drink: Red Wine

Chris is recognised in the leading legal directories of Chambers & Partners and Legal 500 as an employment law specialist. Chris is a trusted adviser to a number of UK plc's and UK subsidiaries of European and US Fortune 500 companies, together with general commercial clients and senior executives on matters of employment law.



01562 820181
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Gary Priest

Favourite food: Pizza (no pineapple)
Favourite drink: Beer (or an espresso Martini!)

A hugely experienced tax specialist, Gary Priest is a Partner within mfg's Private Client Division. Having worked in the sector for over eight years, Gary is able to provide mfg clients with expert legal advice on the broad range of matters relating to estate and tax planning but has particular expertise in inheritance tax and capital gains tax planning.