

Prevention is Protection. How Rowlinsons Solicitors makes the most out of Lawyer Checker.

Rowlinsons Solicitors based in Cheshire, is a law firm with a burgeoning Property Department who were one of the first to be awarded the Law Society's Conveyancing Quality Scheme (CQS) accreditation in 2011. The firm has won numerous awards over the years owing to the excellent customer service that they deliver to their clients, most recently winning a Law Society Excellence Award in 2018 for Excellence in Private Client Practice.

Tom Parkinson, Director & Head of Property, joined Rowlinsons 12 years ago and is head of the 30 strong property team which handles both commercial and residential property transactions. Tom and his team have used Lawyer Checker since its inception and have recently moved over to using poweredbypie's ordering portal, Brighter Law, which has streamlined the ordering process of Lawyer Checker and other property searches through a single system and log-in at no extra cost.

Tom explains: "We undertake over 2,000 property transactions each year, but because of the large sums of money involved in the purchase of property, law firms are prime targets for fraudsters either impersonating other law firms or clients in attempt to intercept funds. We have used Lawyer Checker for many years to verify the details of sellers' solicitors as part of a larger due diligence process we have in place. It helps ensure client funds are sent to a legitimate bank account associated with the seller's solicitors and is used on every property transaction we undertake as a matter of firm policy.

Property fraud is a significant threat to our business and simply checking that a firm exists with the Law Society is no longer enough. However, Lawyer Checker helps verify whether the seller's solicitor's bank account details are genuine by checking many different conveyancing related databases to highlight any red flags commonly associated with fraudulent activity.

If it cannot verify the account details at first instance a "further research report" is provided which contains detailed information about the solicitor we are liaising with. We then consider this in conjunction with other information we have on file and make an informed decision whether to abort the transaction or not after speaking with our clients.

Obviously, there can be legitimate reasons why Lawyer Checker results may require further research or fail. The solicitor may for example be a sole practitioner or they may not frequently undertake property transactions. The great point about Lawyer Checker though, is that if there is any doubt at all, the platform ensures further checks are made to assist us in making a decision as to whether the law firm we are dealing with is genuine.

We have all heard of law firms who have been unfortunate enough to encounter property fraud, but for just £10 per transaction which is paid by the client, Lawyer Checker helps ensure funds are safely directed to the correct bank account. Clients understand that this is a small price to pay for peace of mind and the security of their money.

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Now we have moved to poweredbypie's Brighter Law suite, the team have just one log-in to use Lawyer Checker and order other necessary property searches. We also use Consumer Bank Account Checker which, as its name suggests, verifies the bank account details of our clients before sending any money to them.

The Brighter Law Suite portal is easy to use and the streamlined process means we get just one invoice for the use of Lawyer Checker, Consumer Bank Account Checker and the property searches. The implementation is part of a wider drive across our firm to improve our processes and increase efficiency even further. The feedback from staff has been particularly positive as the system is so straight forward and intuitive to use and, in addition, the customer service is excellent."

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