

People and Reward

Our global practice

2026

FRESHFIELDS



Our global practice

The workplace is evolving fast. Employers grapple with advancing technology, AI-driven automation, shifting millennial expectations, agile working models and the imperative of fostering a strong workplace culture. As transformational M&A activity rises, prioritising post-deal workforce integration early on is crucial for sustained success.

Our People and Reward lawyers partner with you to provide practical, innovative and commercially focused legal advice across all of these challenges.

Whatever your HR legal challenges, we're here to offer you the very best of our expertise

Digital transformation is reshaping the workplace – whether through gig economy models redefining employment structures or the growing use of big data and people analytics to guide HR decisions.

These changes prompt businesses to rethink their organisational strategies and adjust HR practices to help employees thrive. Ensuring the right employment status, alongside effective monitoring and incentives, is essential. As technology unlocks new forms of value, HR considerations are more critical than ever. Our global team is on hand to address emerging risks and guide you through this evolving landscape.

Our labour and employment experience includes:

- evaluating technology's impact on the workplace;
- ensuring people analytics tools comply with privacy regulations;
- managing major changes in international HR policy;
- advising on senior hires and departures;
- handling investigations, whistleblowing, discrimination, and complex disputes;
- guiding corporate governance, culture, ethics and boardroom matters;
- protecting businesses from unwanted staff departures, data leaks, loss or theft;
- implementing cost and liability management strategies such as redundancies, salary freezes, reduced working hours, strategic pensions projects (including buyouts) and shared service centres;
- advising on employment and benefits aspects for public and private M&A (including spin-offs and carve-outs), and joint ventures;
- managing corporate restructurings, including post-acquisition integrations, the setting up of European companies and cross-border mergers; and
- navigating industrial relations, works council issues, global union campaigns, OECD complaints, industrial disputes and employee activism; assessing labour market reforms and their impact on investment decisions.

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Freshfields have been excellent in guiding us through complex matters which have impacts in a variety of jurisdictions.

Chambers Europe, 2025

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They have an excellent knowledge base supported by industry benchmarks, loyalty and good communication with the client.

Chambers Europe, 2025

Our offer

With over 120 lawyers covering key jurisdictions in Asia-Pacific, Europe and North America, we're ready to assist in any HR crisis, from sensitive terminations to complex corruption investigations.

For global employers, we develop tailored HR policies, review executive compensation, co-ordinate international cost-management initiatives and handle industrial relations issues or complex pensions matters. Whether it's people aspects in M&A, restructuring, or everyday HR operations, our advice is strategic and integrated.

We offer end-to-end support in employee benefits, incentives, and share schemes, including:

- designing, drafting and implementing bonus plans and other incentive or retention arrangements;
- advising on the short- and long-term regulatory and shareholder advisory firm impacts on executive pay, particularly in the financial services and tech industry;
- creating and managing share plans – both all-employee and executive – while ensuring all relevant governance, benefit, and funding considerations are addressed. This includes handling related labor law, tax, corporate governance, and securities considerations. We also prepare shareholder documentation for plan approvals or amendments and advise on listing rules and disclosure obligations;
- project-managing and co-ordinating global legal reviews for worldwide employee share plans, including engaging local counsel in jurisdictions where we do not have offices; and
- advising on share plans in IPOs and takeovers, through acquisitions or restructurings.

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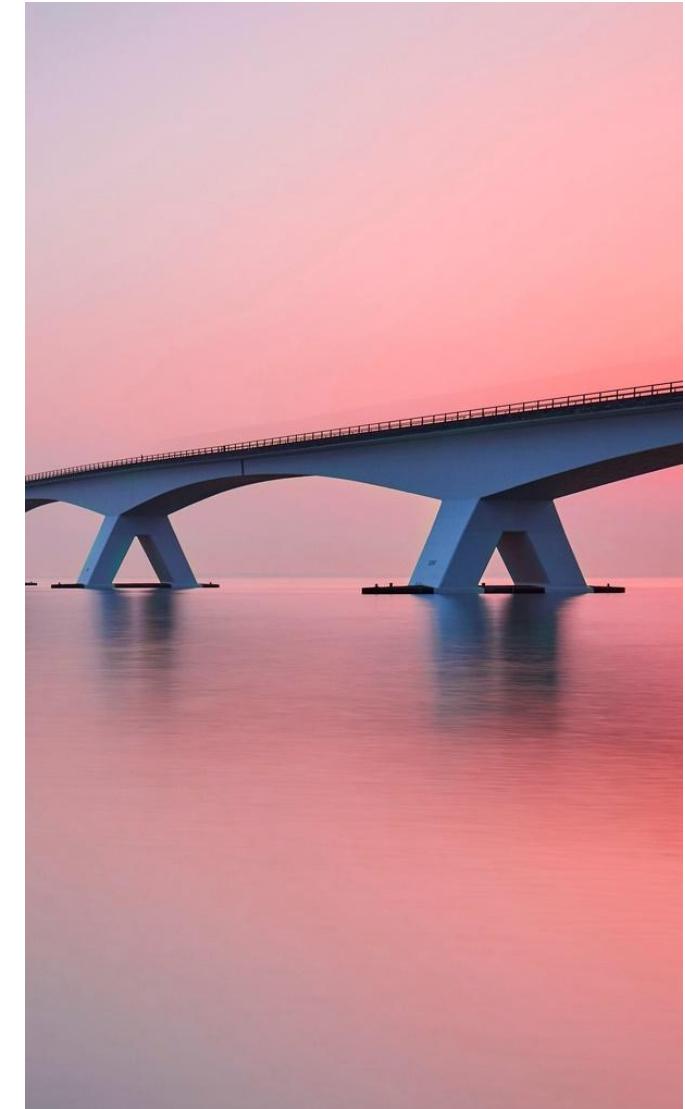
Freshfields offers a very high level of professional expertise, goal-oriented and objective negotiation as well as exceptional commitment from our contact person.

Chambers Europe, 2025

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They have excellent expertise that makes us confident. Freshfields' key strengths are a deep understanding of business needs, practical, easily implementable solutions and exceptional expertise in specialised legal fields.

Chambers Europe, 2025



Our pensions and retirement benefit expertise

Our experience includes:

- advising on pension arrangements and benefits, including amendments of pension schemes, moving employees to new pensions arrangements and associated consultation obligations;
- supporting on funding issues and covenant protection arrangements (including security arrangements), including managing funding deficits;
- guiding and innovating on strategic pensions projects, including supporting in investment and de-risking transactions (such as buying, buyout, longevity swaps, capital back journey planning and run-on), plus restructuring measures such as scheme mergers and wind-ups;
- creating and implementing strategies to access pension surplus;
- managing pension risk associated with interventionist regulators (including where there is risk of criminal liability), together with regulatory investigations, disputes and litigation; and
- supporting on pensions considerations in public and private M&A, financing, restructuring returns of capital and other corporate activity, including trustee

negotiations, covenant support packages, regulatory clearances, and buyout funding arrangements.

You'll also benefit from our close collaboration with other HR legal providers. Through our Freshfields StrongerTogether network, we team up with trusted local counsel worldwide, ensuring a seamless, coordinated global service and a consistent, strategic approach to HR challenges.

Sharing our knowledge

Stay informed with our regular briefings, newsletters, and guides, covering local and international developments. Join our seminars, conferences, and working groups, or request tailored training. For more information or to join our mailing lists, contact our team or visit freshfields.com.

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Freshfields are very knowledgeable and able to offer meaningful navigation through complex and sensitive issues. They are deep on substance and there isn't a topic that they could not address.

Chambers Global, 2025

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Freshfields always produces the highest quality work, with practical, commercial advice.

IEL Elite guide, 2025

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The team have a clear understanding of the relevant legal positions coupled with common sense and clear articulation thereof. Partners and senior associates are very strong, very responsive and offer a high-quality service.

Chambers Global 2025

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