

GUERNSEY ADVOCATE NAMED BEST OFFSHORE LAWYER AT EUROPEAN WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARDS

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One of Guernsey's leading corporate lawyers has been recognised at the Euromoney Legal Media Group's ninth annual Europe Women in Business Law Awards.

Frances Watson, Partner in the Corporate and Funds teams at [Mourant](#), was named 'Best in Offshore' in the awards, having earlier in the year been included in the 2019 International Financial Law Review's 1,000 Women Leaders list. Fostering an inclusive community is a key business priority for Mourant.

She has more than 20 years' experience in corporate law, having trained and established herself in London with Allen & Overy before moving to Guernsey in 2005, qualifying as a Guernsey advocate in 2007. She joined Mourant in early 2017, and continues to practise across a wide variety of corporate and commercial matters, finance, investment funds, insurance, listings and restructurings.

She said her decision to move to Guernsey was based on quality of life. "I loved the firm I was working with, loved the work, but hated the commute," she said. "I was looking for somewhere with the same quality of work and calibre of colleagues. My parents enjoyed coming here on holiday – though I had never been – and they told me that there was a finance industry here. I started investigating the opportunities and it ticked all the boxes.

"The work lived up to my expectations too. It does vary with the economic cycle which really helps you to develop as a lawyer. You never know what might hit your desk when you walk in each day."

She said it was rewarding to work with Mourant, a firm with strength in depth. Her work this year has included [Oak Group's acquisition of IAG](#), Butterfield Bank's acquisition of ABN's Channel Islands banking operation, establishing a technology-focused private investment fund for a private equity promoter, and advising family offices on using Guernsey funds and structures to manage their wealth.

Frances has a particular interest in private capital and investment funds, and the Guernsey Private Investment Fund, which straddles both sectors, she described as "the perfect vehicle within the private capital space for those looking for a regulated structure".

Financial services in Guernsey has many strengths, she said, from the well-known qualities of track record, good products, pragmatic regulatory regime, and a tax environment which people know and trust, to the ability to adapt and innovate, including the decision to embrace green finance.

"What Guernsey has to offer stands us in very good stead, notwithstanding any Brexit headwinds," she said. "It has certainly been a busy summer for us at Mourant and we have an exceptionally strong pipeline of work. Since 2005 I have learned that Guernsey always flexes itself according to the environment, and I am certain we will continue to see strong growth."

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