

The Fineprint*

A note from the editors

As 2025 draws to a close, welcome to the second edition of The Fineprint—our newsletter dedicated to exploring the legal, commercial, and cultural shifts shaping founder-led and owner-managed businesses.

At Lawrence Stephens, we know what it means to build something from the ground up. As an owner-managed firm ourselves, we share the same challenges and ambitions as our clients: the weight of every decision, the thrill of growth, and the responsibility that comes with leadership. The Fineprint exists to help you navigate complexity, challenge convention, and uncover opportunities where others might not look.

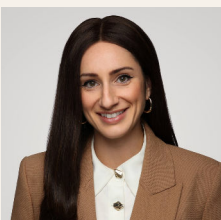
This edition is packed with insights and ideas for the year ahead. From decoding the UK Government's SME Growth Strategy to understanding the realities of rent reviews, we've got practical guidance for businesses ready to scale. We also dive into topics that spark conversation, from why pre-nups are smart business planning to the rise of Hyrox and what it teaches us about building global communities.

We're proud to feature voices from across the entrepreneurial landscape, including Jonny Grubin of SoPost on beauty trends and Ansor on what makes the perfect acquisition target. Plus, we tackle issues that matter now: cybersecurity at board level, festive season etiquette, and the latest on director verification requirements.

Our goal remains the same: to equip you with clarity and confidence in a fast-changing world. If this edition sparks ideas or questions, we'd love to hear from you. Feedback is always welcome.

Thank you for reading, and here's to a successful year ahead.

Warm wishes,
Charlotte and Alanah



Charlotte Hamilton,
Associate,
Corporate and
Commercial

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Alanah Lenten,
Senior Business
Development and
Marketing Executive

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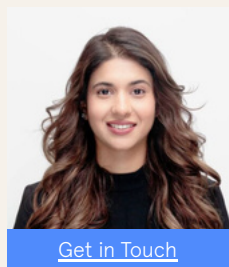
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UK SME Growth Strategy: What Founders and Business Leaders Need to Know

In August, the UK Government published the SME Growth Strategy, a crucial policy outlining reforms to drive growth and innovation across the SME sector. [Harshita Samani](#) explains how businesses can interpret and implement the reforms to position themselves effectively to thrive as the strategy unfolds, including a checklist of what you should consider.

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Harshita Samani
Senior Associate,
Corporate and
Commercial

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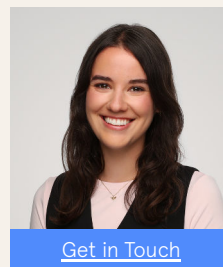
Clicks to Bricks: The Journey from URL to IRL

On **Thursday 26 February 2026** we're bringing ambitious brands, scale-ups, and Flourish friends together for an evening of networking and insight. We'll dive into three key themes with seasoned professionals:

- Getting Noticed – Building campaigns that make retailers take you seriously.
- Getting Stocked – A founder's story of landing shelves at Boots and Harrods.
- Getting Keys – Knowing when to move from online to bricks-and-mortar stores.

Want to attend?

[Register Your Interest Here](#)



Alanah Lenten,
Senior Business
Development and
Marketing Executive

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Taylor Swift's Engagement and Why Business Owners Need a Pre-nup Too

Taylor Swift's Engagement and Why Business Owners Need a Pre-nup Too

With Swift's billion-dollar empire built on music, branding and intellectual property, a prenup isn't just smart, it's essential. Similarly for business owners and founders, a prenup can protect everything that you've built. [Annabel Andreou](#) unpacks exactly what a prenup is, debunks common myths, and shares practical tips for business owners.

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Annabel Andreou
Associate,
Family

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What The Jaguar Land Rover Cyberattack Can Teach Founders About Resilience

What Jaguar Land Rover Cyberattack Can Teach Founders About Resilience

When Jaguar Land Rover was hit by a cyberattack production lines stopped. And the cost? A staggering £485 million. High-profile cyberattacks like JLR dominate headlines, but the reality is that breaches aren't just a big business problem. [Dominic Holden](#) breaks down the practical steps that every business leader should take to prepare.

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Dominic Holden,
Director,
Dispute Resolution

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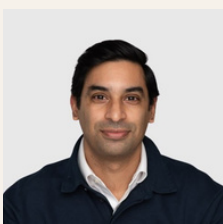
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Selling-Up and Scaling-Up: What investors look for in SMEs

We partnered with our long-standing client [Ansor](#), a professional investment business, to uncover what they look for when investing in SMEs and what founders should consider to prepare their business for the next stage of growth.

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Ryan D'Souza,
Director,
Corporate and
Commercial

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Lawrence Stephens Announces the Launch of LS Private

Have you just had an exit event? Lawrence Stephens has launched LS Private, a multi-family office platform for entrepreneurs and wealth creators. Led by [John Russo](#), LS Private offers governance, oversight, and operational support to protect capital, simplify decisions, and align advisers and assets—delivering stronger structures and swift solutions for complex issues.

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Alanah Lenten,
Senior Business
Development and
Marketing Executive

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The UK Budget: What is the Impact for Founders?

Have you seen the Autumn Budget's impact on founders? From rising employment costs and frozen tax thresholds to new opportunities with EMI and EIS, [Leigh Sayliss](#) breaks down what every owner-managed business needs to know. Discover the changes, challenges, and silver linings.

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Leigh Sayliss
Director,
Tax

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Lawrence Stephens Announces the Launch of Flourish: Legal Advice for Start-Ups

We know the early years of a business can be the most challenging and the most exciting. That's why we've launched Flourish, our tailored legal support programme exclusively for early-stage, UK businesses. Flourish offers:

- Fixed-price legal support
- Significant discounts on our standard fees for two years
- Quarterly sessions with a legal mentor
- Access to our events and community of founders, funders, and advisors

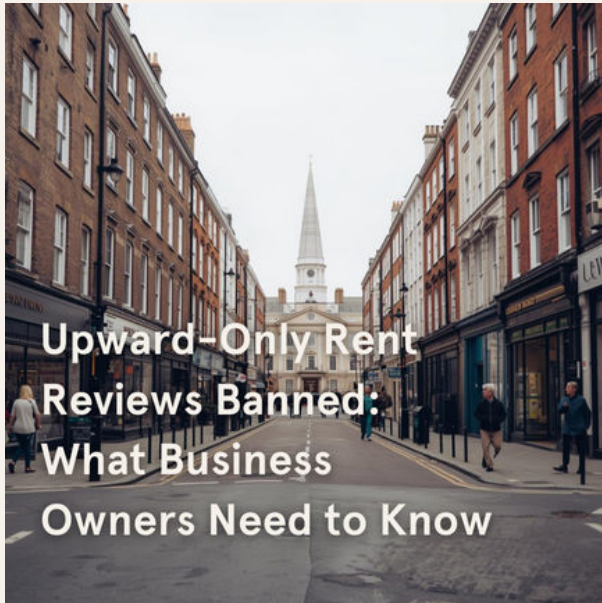
[See if you Qualify.](#)



Alanah Lenten,
Senior Business
Development and
Marketing Executive

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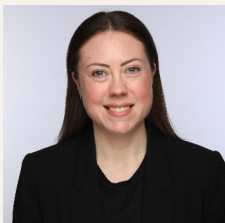
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Upward-Only Rent Reviews Banned: What Business Owners Need to Know

In a move designed to support small businesses and revitalise high streets, upward-only rent reviews are now banned in new commercial leases in the UK. [Louisa Hartley](#) and [Sophia Dixon](#) explain what this means for your next lease and provide key tips on how to negotiate.

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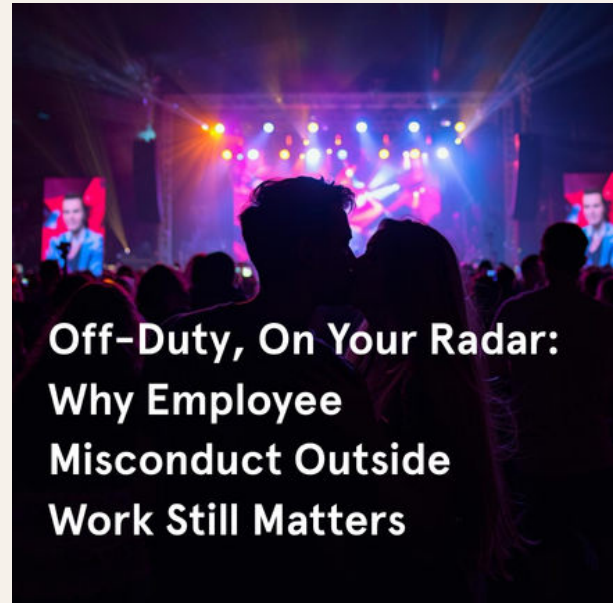
Louisa Hartley,
Associate,
Corporate Real
Estate

[Get in Touch](#)



Sophia Dixon,
Trainee Solicitor

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Off-Duty, On Your Radar: Why Employee Misconduct Outside Work Still Matters

Missteps witnessed by clients, colleagues, or cameras out-of-hours can very quickly become your businesses' problem - we all saw what resulted from the Coldplay kiss cam. [Emma Cocker](#) explains what employers need to know, covering when disciplinary action is justified, to how to set clear expectations for your team.

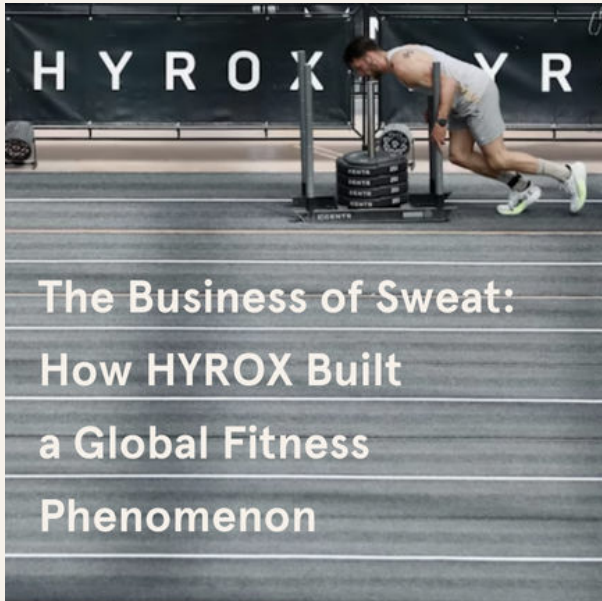
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Emma Cocker,
Senior Associate,
Employment

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The Business of Sweat: How HYROX Built a Global Fitness Phenomenon

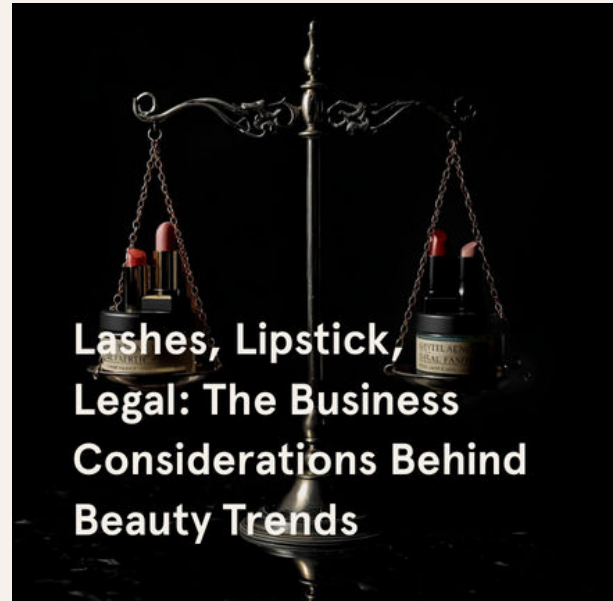
HYROX launched as an ambitious idea between two fitness enthusiasts. Today, it's a global fitness phenomenon. HYROX represents a masterclass in legal, logistical, and commercial strategy, and its rise offers lessons every entrepreneur can learn from. [Andy Wallis](#) tells HYROX's story and breaks down takeaways for business leaders.

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Andy Wallis,
Trainee Solicitor

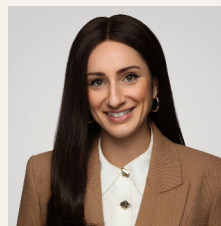
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Lashes, Lipstick, Legal: The Business Considerations Behind Beauty Trends

Beauty is a £30.4 billion industry—and it's evolving fast. [Charlotte Hamilton](#) joined Jonny Grubin, CEO of SoPost—a UK leader in digital product sampling campaigns—to explore the latest beauty trends. Jonny shared what's trending in the beauty industry, and we examined the legal and commercial considerations behind these developments.

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Charlotte Hamilton,
Associate,
Corporate and
Commercial

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Our Headlines

See what we've been up to around the firm this quarter. [Click on a headline to read more about the work we do.](#)

Lawrence Stephens Advises on Cross-Border Sale of IBL Lighting to Inovara Group

Lawrence Stephens Advises on Sale of Aspire Independent Financial Planners LLP Assets to HCF Partnership Ltd

Lawrence Stephens completes over £33 million worth of transactions in pre-budget sprint

Lawrence Stephens Advises Fashion Retailer GARAGE on Their First UK and Flagship Store on Oxford Street, London

Lawrence Stephens Advises on Sale of FMS Foils Group to WZ Packaging

Lawrence Stephens Advises Maidenhead Aquatics on Acquisition of New Nottingham Store

Lawrence Stephens Advises HFMC Wealth on a Series of Strategic Acquisitions

Lawrence Stephens Appointed to Aspen Bridging's Legal Panel

Lawrence Stephens acts in Landmark Case for Domestic Abuse Victim Protection in the Family Courts

Lawrence Stephens Swiftly Completes Two Loans for Castle Trust Bank after Recent Appointment to their Legal Panel

Lawrence Stephens acts for premium retailer MAKSU in securing lease of new flagship store on King's Road, London



Lawrence Stephens Ranked Band 1 in Chambers UK 2026 SME Guide

Lawrence Stephens is proud to announce its ranking in Band 1 in Chambers UK 2026 SME-focused Firms category. This ranking illustrates our commitment to and excellence in the owner-managed business (OMB), founder-led and SME sector. You can read how we support this sector below.

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The Fineprint* Flash Alert

Director Verification: What You Need to Know

Following on from [our previous article](#), the new director verification rules have arrived as a legal requirement – but they're being phased in.

Existing directors (appointed before 18 November 2025) only need to verify their identity when filing the next annual confirmation statement.

New directors (appointed after 18 November 2025) must verify at the point of appointment – when submitting an AP01 or incorporation form.

Verification can be completed via [Gov.UK](#) or through an Authorised Corporate Service Provider (ACSP).

Please note: Lawrence Stephens will not be registering as an ACSP, so if you prefer not to self-verify, we can refer you to an accountant or another ACSP.



About

We are a London-based full-service law firm providing proactive, expert advice to ambitious businesses and individuals for all their legal needs.

We advise entrepreneurial, fast-growing businesses, often founder-led, privately-owned, or backed by private equity, including challenger banks and similar institutions.

Clients value our practical, commercial advice and our deep understanding of their goals.

We also support larger corporates on specialist legal matters, offering a more personal and open alternative to larger firms.

In addition to our strong business law expertise, our private wealth team provides tailored, discreet services for clients with significant assets and the needs associated with these.



Lawrence Stephens in London is deeply involved in the SME and entrepreneurial ecosystem, advising clients in all manner of business sectors on incorporation, commercial contracts, commercial property, employment, funding rounds and M&A transactions. The firm also advises private equity firms looking to develop successful businesses in fragmented sectors with high growth potential.

– **Chambers 2026**



Our Services

