

Proclaim provides flexible, scalable solution for rapidly expanding PI firm

In January 2002, Jeff Winn and Ghazala Bashey formed Newcastle-based Winn Solicitors to specialise in providing a full, non-fault accident claims service. The firm was born out of an existing north-east practice (at which Jeff was Managing Partner) and, since inception, has seen staff headcount grow from 10 to 200.

Winn Solicitors is a respected, progressive law firm and a member of the key industry panels for its specialist expertise: the Motor Accident Solicitors Society (MASS), the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL), and the Law Society's Personal Injury Panel.

At its formation, Winn Solicitors researched the legal IT market for suitable software platforms, and made the decision to expand its incumbent Proclaim Case Management system. Proclaim provides a complete desktop solution to fee earner needs, integrating a core database with document creation and storage, time recording, diaries and task management. Director and co-founder, Jeff Winn (pictured), talks us through the firm's experience and ongoing use of Proclaim.

Why did you initially select Proclaim?

We chose the system because of its inherent flexibility. Our business has always operated in very close conjunction with credit hire / repair companies, medical agencies, and related broker and claims services. The fact that Eclipse's clientbase contains all of these organisations means that the firm has great experience both in creating systems for these areas of work, and in enabling separate – but complementary – systems to communicate with one another.



What day-to-day benefits do you see from the system?

As a fee-earner tool, Proclaim provides a wide range of features to both streamline caseloads and enhance overall quality. Consistency is of huge value – all case handlers access a centralised data and document repository, so we can ensure that every communication sent is in the 'Winns' style. On this note, we have also created a series of workflow steps and scripts to ensure that all advice given to our clients is consistent, correct, and in keeping with our overall client care approach.

Additionally, Proclaim's flexibility and the ease of adapting documents, screens, fields, workflow, etc has meant that we are able to effectively tailor the system around the needs of our teams.

This 'streamlining' of the system means that we can 'cut our cloth' to suit the type of cases being progressed – essentially, Proclaim works around our needs and not vice versa. The result is a fantastic saving in overall time spent progressing cases.

Do you use Proclaim for practice analysis and business development?

Yes – it's surprisingly easy to create, manage and distribute reports from the system. Any amount and type of data can be compared and analysed – driven from a straightforward 'drag and drop' toolkit. We fire out approximately 20 regular, monthly reports from Proclaim to the Directors and Management team. The beauty of this is that we can schedule the reports to run and distribute automatically at set days and times every month – no manual intervention is required, which speeds up our access to critical data no end!

As for business development, we have created links with our partners to import and export case information – particularly with medical agencies, credit hire / repair firms, and broker services. The advantage in doing this is clear – no data entry errors, seamless (and nigh-on instant) information sharing, and as a result, much better commercial relationships.

We also use the 'FileView' online case tracking tool to allow our clients to view details of their case histories via our website. It's a very efficient way of keeping people informed without overloading them, and it does cut down on the number of 'update' calls and questions we receive. The overall sense of reassurance that it gives to clients is invaluable.

How well does the system suit your ongoing and future needs?

We have seen a constant downward shift in the 'cost per claim' figure, as Proclaim has been adapted to match our ongoing needs. Speed of case progression has improved markedly – overall time taken per file has been driven down whilst allowing us to maintain an impeccably high level of service to the client. I would say that without Proclaim, our overall profit would be cut by at least 70 or 80%.

One of the key benefits of Proclaim is its suitability for ongoing tailoring. As business needs change, then we can be sure that Proclaim will adapt with them. With so many legal software systems, it's impossible to tailor them, and any new functionalities have to wait until you receive a 'big bang' upgrade... which then necessitates a whole new way of doing things. Proclaim allows measured and controllable growth, and offers vast flexibility in how it is used.

Over the past year or so, our expansion has been rapid. It is testament to the strength of the software that both new and existing staff have been able to get to grips with its usage quickly and in a manner which provides immediate benefits to their day-to-day case progression. As our volumes of business have increased, Proclaim has continued to match our needs perfectly. As these volumes keep increasing, so the overall 'efficiency per case' quotient has to be constantly driven upwards. In my opinion, the cost savings and business development options that Proclaim brings – and will continue to bring – position the system as a real market-leader.

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