



Meet Gemma Bellfield: GRR Future Leader nominee

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Restructuring and insolvency specialist Gemma Bellfield, a GRR Future Leader finalist, is keeping a watching brief on the retail, real estate and construction sectors for movement in the R&I space in 2025.

Taking stock near the close of 2024, Gemma says that while we're still emerging from the post-pandemic market, there has been an uptick in restructuring activity in the past six months, particularly in the UK, where we have seen the popularity of the cross class cram down regime under Part 26A restructuring plans, and latterly Hong Kong.

"We're now starting to see the consequences of inflation, interest rate rises, global supply chain disruption, and multi-year debt facilities coming to an end.

"It started with internal corporate reorganisations, for example capital reductions and member schemes of arrangement and take-privates, when the cost of external capital was too high. While we're still seeing refinancing or forbearance from lenders with respect to existing defaults, attributable to a lack of liquidity in the market, we've also received a broader range of R&I inquiries and mandates," she observes.

As the restructuring and insolvency (R&I) landscape continues to evolve, Gemma stands out as a leader and innovator. Her nomination as a GRR Future Leader is recognition of her work, her resilience, and her dedication to excellence.

Part of Ogier's multi-disciplinary Restructuring and Insolvency team, Gemma continues to develop and adapt her practice to meet industry challenges. Her keen eye for evolving trends in R&I leads to frequent industry speaking engagements for Gemma, who co-chaired this year's INSOL Offshore Day.

Gemma specialises in formal and informal insolvency procedures, statutory remedies, and investor and shareholder rights / actions, with experience in distressed funds and private equity. Her

experience has led to industry recognition in recent years including her selection as one of INSOL's "future forty" in 2022 and a member of the American Bankruptcy Institute's 40 under 40 class of 2024.

Mentoring new talent and fostering collaboration within the industry are among Gemma's priorities. As a recognised Rising Star herself, Gemma believes that the characteristics a new R&I lawyer needs to develop include collaboration and client focus. To those aiming to build their own career in R&I she says:

"Client focus is the lawyer's 101. You need to understand what your client wants to achieve from a restructuring deal or insolvency process - and that can change from client to client or for the same client over time. Given the variety of stakeholders in many R&I processes, you also need to be able to collaborate to get the deal done for the benefit of your client."

A former chair of the Cayman Islands branch of the International Women's Insolvency and Restructuring Confederation (**IWIRC**) and current director on its international board, Gemma has a particular passion for nurturing women in their professional roles.

Reflecting on her own career journey, Gemma shares some advice: "Relationship building is crucial. R&I is a relationships business - not just with clients, intermediaries and insolvency practitioners but also with lawyers on the other side. Start building those relationships early and preserve them for career longevity."

Finding champions is also essential, she believes. "As a junior, especially a junior female, it's important to have champions within your organisation and the industry. These are the people who will put you forward for opportunities when you're not in the room," Gemma explains. She credits her own success to those who have championed her along the way.

Finally, Gemma highlights the importance of finding ways to contribute. She has built strong relationships within Ogier by sitting on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (**DEI**) committee and has developed extensive networks across the industry through her involvement with various industry boards and committees.

She explains: "Whether it's through internal or external networks, pitching in can bring all sorts of benefits. You can raise your profile, learn something new and make great connections."

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