



Good morning everyone.

My name is Professor Cillian Ryan and I am the Pro Vice Chancellor for International matters here at Nottingham Trent University.

It is my very great pleasure to welcome all of you to NTU this morning for this year's Insolvency Service Forward Thinking Conference.

We were absolutely delighted when the Insolvency Service chose Nottingham Law School to host this conference and it has been a real privilege for our team to work with Paul Bannister, Laura Nicholls, Sarah Littlehales, Keverne Howell and their team in putting the arrangements in place for today – so thank you all very much.

Hosting the conference here at NTU does, of course, give us a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate to those of you who are outside the region, what a wonderful and vibrant place Nottingham is, as well as just how much is going on here in the insolvency space.

By way of background for those who may not know much about us, Nottingham Law School is a full-service law school, with a reputation for excellence in research, teaching and scholarship.

We also have our very own, award winning, SRA regulated teaching law firm, NLS Legal, which provides fantastic opportunities for our students to obtain real world, practice experience alongside their studies.

We are proud that NLS Legal is a force for good in the local area, supporting the local economy by helping those unable to afford access to legal services. This support includes resolving issues relating to benefits, housing and debts and – increasingly, as cost of living issues start to bite – assisting those in dispute with utility companies. NLS Legal has successfully recovered almost six million pounds in compensation and benefits for its clients to date.

Our undergraduate students often stay on with us for their post-graduate study whether by undertaking an academic master's course or doctorate, or by pursuing qualification as a solicitor, barrister or trade mark attorney.



Some of them may now even become members of the insolvency profession after your Insolvency Service colleague - Claire Hardgrave's - talk to our students on Wednesday this week!

On the research side, we currently have a thriving group of LLM students studying insolvency, and over the last decade have had 14 insolvency PhD students from 11 different countries.

We are very proud of our excellence in research and, in particular, our recent Research Excellence Framework result: at the last assessment, 100% of NTU's research submitted to the Law Unit of Assessment was considered world-leading or internationally excellent in terms of research impact. We were ranked 15th of all law schools across the UK, a remarkable climb of 37 places from the previous REF in 2014. The research of colleagues within the Centre for Business and Insolvency law was pivotal to this success.

But at Nottingham Law School, we see a key part of our mission as looking beyond the academy. We are always delighted to work with firms and businesses to promote Knowledge Exchange opportunities.

Which is why, for all of us at Nottingham Law School, being able to host the Insolvency Service conference is so important to our work: this conference is a vital Knowledge Exchange mechanism, enabling the work of academics and practitioners to be shared and discussed with a view to resolving real-world problems in the most effective way.

I am particularly delighted that we have been able to have practitioner representatives here today from a number of local firms who work closely with Nottingham Law School, as part of our Employers Advisory Board, including Eversheds Sutherland, Freeths and Browne Jacobson.

And now, before I hand over to Mark Austen, Chair of the Insolvency Service, it only remains for me to wish you all the very best for an exciting and thought-provoking conference. I understand from Sarah and Laura that although the conference theme:

“Insolvency response in uncertain times”



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was set almost a year ago, it has proved prescient. Today's conference papers will certainly reflect upon some important issues facing our communities.

And so let me turn to Mark –

Mark, a very warm welcome to Nottingham Law School - it is wonderful to have you here today...

Professor Cillian Ryan's Opening Speech at the Insolvency Service Forward Thinking Conference
18.11.22

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