

HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS PROVIDES CROSS-PRACTICE PRO BONO SUPPORT TO STEEL WARRIORS IN UK-WIDE CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE KNIFE CRIME

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Deals and cases

Herbert Smith Freehills has been advising [Steel Warriors](#), a charity created to reduce the number of young people carrying knives in the UK, on a multi-million pound project to construct 20 community fitness centres around the country.

Against a backdrop of figures suggesting 1 in 5 people cautioned, reprimanded or convicted for carrying a knife were under the age of 18*, Steel Warriors has devised a project working in collaboration with youth centres, the police, ex-offenders and other anti-knife crime charities to create a constructive meeting environment for young people. Using metal from knives confiscated by the police - equating to approximately one tonne each month across the UK - the charity's ambition is to create a network of outdoor calisthenics gyms from recycled knife steel.

Herbert Smith Freehills has been providing a pro bono service to Steel Warriors since December 2018. To date more than 550 hours of pro bono legal support has been provided; with advice covering corporate, planning, construction, real estate, employment, insurance and tax.

A key aspect of the firm's recent work involved the negotiation of a strategic partnership agreement between Steel Warriors and The Co-Op Group, under which the retailer has agreed to fund the construction of the gyms, the cost of running bi-annual calisthenics competitions and up to three free training sessions a week at each gym.



From left to right: Paul Chases, Somers Brewin, Harry Edwards, Andrew Barton, Matthew White and Rhiannon Harrison

Herbert Smith Freehills is also advising Steel Warriors on its negotiations with the local councils for the construction and upkeep of the gyms in different parks across the UK. Steel Warriors currently has a gym set up in Poplar which has proved immensely popular and as of 2 September 2019, construction has started in Ruskin Park, Lambeth for the next site which is due to complete on 27 September.

Paul Chases, partner at Herbert Smith Freehills, says: "Knife crime has risen across the UK in recent years and sadly the figures suggest that young people are increasingly carrying weapons as a result. The determination of Steel Warriors to create a positive force for good is something which we are very proud to be associated with and we are delighted to provide Steel Warriors with continued support as part of their efforts to provide free access to outdoor gyms to young people."

Herbert Smith Freehills's team was led by Paul Chases (corporate real estate partner) and Somers Brewin (corporate real estate associate) and included Rebecca Perlman, Andrew Barton, Mehdi Tedjani, Naomi Ofori, Annika Holden, Rebecca Butterworth, Iain Suttie, Casey Dalton, Geoffrey Mead, Sarah McNally, Isabel Rigby, and Hamish Hunter. Litigation partner Harry Edwards has also been appointed as a trustee of Steel Warriors.

MEDIA CONTACT

For further information on this news article, please contact:

**MIKE PETROOK, COMMUNICATIONS
MANAGER**

LONDON

Tel: +44 20 7466 3939

Mob: +44 7850 516 778

Email: mike.petrook@hsf.com
