

The offshore interview: Q&A with Tim Clipstone

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In a recent interview with Taylor Root, Ogier partner Tim Clipstone spoke about working in an offshore firm.

You moved Offshore when you were 8 years' PQE. What prompted you to make the move at that stage?

Before going out to the BVI I was working as a corporate lawyer at Olswang in London, doing quite a lot of downstream work with venture capital funds and their targets, especially around the time of the dotcom boom, and I got increasingly interested in the funds world – where the money was raised and how it was structured. I joined a BVI funds practice and spent four years there during the last big boom. Lots of new funds were being formed and restructured at the time.

When I was looking for my next career move last year, Guernsey was an easy choice – I knew that quality of work wouldn't be compromised and I was keen to be nearer the UK, without sacrificing island life. Guernsey is a real hub of financial activity and I've been fascinated by the developments that I've experienced since I've been here. It's fast-paced work, offset by a slower paced lifestyle, which is seemingly a well-kept secret.

How easy (or not) did you find the transition from onshore to offshore legal practice?

It was a surprisingly easy transition, mainly because the law in BVI rests on English common law principles. More recently, the move to Guernsey has also been easy and Ogier has plenty of resources available to support this. The main change was going from a large team where you would work on a smaller number of matters and be directly involved in an entire project to being part of a team assisting on a larger number of projects usually in a supporting role for onshore advisors, often involving quite detailed questions of legal interpretation.

Guernsey is home to several impressive global law firms, so what was it that made you choose Ogier?

I've been a partner at three other offshore law firms – but all through that, Ogier has always been a firm that I've liked and admired. I always thought they were a good bunch of people. What was attractive about this role, and what I enjoy, is the feeling among the partners that the firm as a whole is very much looking after its people.

We're very focused on information technology and a flexible working culture, and accept that people work in different ways. Ogier is a top quality law firm, and there is a different feel to it. We want to be at the forefront of technology and innovation in the way legal services are delivered - and we're not just saying that as a marketing line, we're really doing it.

What do the next couple of years hold for Ogier's funds practice?

We've had three new associates joining, a new paralegal and we're due to get two new associates this summer - and that's just in my team. There's a real investment in people. A lot of firms will say, 'our people are our most important asset' but to actually live by that is

something else – Ogier walks the walk.

It's fantastic to be part of a very positive and growing environment. Even though the world is quite uncertain there's a very positive outlook at Ogier and a very strong belief that we will grow both in Guernsey and in our other jurisdictions of Jersey, Luxembourg, Hong Kong, Cayman and BVI.

Finally, with the benefit of hindsight, if you were a junior associate now would you choose to go offshore again?

I would certainly consider it very seriously as a career option. It has provided me with a varied, fascinating and highly rewarding career.

About Ogier

Ogier provides practical advice on BVI, Cayman Islands, Guernsey, Jersey and Luxembourg law through its global network of offices. Ours is the only firm to advise on these five laws. We regularly win awards for the quality of our client service, our work and our people.

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