



Meet the experts

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Modern Law met with **Nick Ethelstone**, Head of Commercial Report and Advisory Services, **Andy Simpson**, **Clare Tasker** and **Lisa Conway** from the Coal Authority's Mining Reports Retail Team (MRRT), to understand how their work impacts the property market, recent innovations and why they are keen to gather feedback from the conveyancing industry about what they do.

Q Explain the role of the MRRT and how it fits into the wider role of the Coal Authority

Nick Ethelstone: The MRRT is made up of ten individuals, including a client services and account management team. We provide commercial products and services to a wide range of customers, including conveyancers, specifically including the Coal Authority's official CON29M (2018) reports – as required – for properties on the coalfield.

The introduction of an account team in March 2016, enabled us to improve our understanding of our customers and get closer to what was important to them. By using customer feedback continuously, we are able to feed that into the development of our products and services, creating the high quality service that the property industry needs today. We provide a wide choice of products to suit all our customers [listed at the end of this feature].

Whilst the mining reports retail team is relatively small in comparison to the wider the Coal Authority we are very proud that we are able to provide extensive support to our customers and offer a variety of market leading mining reports to meet their needs. We work closely with our Coal Authority experts to further enhance our customer service support; this is a unique offering our customers really have come to value when faced with questions about mining activity.

Clare Tasker: All of our account management team work directly with the conveyancing community and are on hand to act quickly, whatever the need. We continually keep in touch with our customers via email, face-to-face meetings, webinars and regional events. These also contribute to us gathering valuable feedback and building strong working relationships with all client and customer groups whom we share our wealth of information with. Most importantly, we understand how we can contribute towards keeping the property market buoyant. Customer service is so fundamentally important to us and we are incredibly passionate about delivering an exemplary service. Meeting regularly with clients and customers – helps us to understand how we can develop and deliver even more.



The Coal
Authority



11%

of the UK is
situated on
the coalfield

600

surface hazards
reported each
year

27%

of the coalfield
is at risk of
groundwater
flooding

7,424

historic landfill
sites on Britain's
coalfields

15%

of the coalfield
is affected by
radon

1 in 4

properties lie
on Britain's
coalfield

For further information please contact the
Coal Authority:

0345 762 6848 option 1

groundstability@coal.gov.uk

www2.groundstability.com/modernlaw



“Our success is based on how well and how easily we can interact with our colleagues across the Coal Authority; our experts who work in the field and our experienced mining surveyors”

Our MRRT is the central contact point for all mining reports enquiries. All types of queries come into the team and our highly skilled customer service advisors are on hand to enable conveyancers to do their job effectively and efficiently, as well as providing guidance to homeowners and homebuyers themselves when needed.

Over the last two years we have invested a significant amount of time in exploring our customer relationships, gathering first-hand feedback on what we do well, what we could do even better and also where the property market is going next. This has helped us to refine our offering and be confident that when conveyancers choose us, they will receive a fast, first-class, market leading and accurate service. Part of our success is based on how well we interact with our colleagues across the Coal Authority; our experts who work in the field and our experienced mining surveyors.

Lisa Conway: The aim of our mining reports service is to ensure the information contained within our reports is clear and easy to share with your clients. We have a summary table within our Coal Authority CON29M report

to help view the findings quickly. For those customers who prefer to discuss the report over the telephone, our customer service advisors are there to offer more detail, answer any questions you might have and ensure that support is there throughout the transaction. The Coal Authority's purpose is to safeguard the public and provide peace of mind enabling stakeholders to make informed decisions. In doing so, we work with our customers to inform, help and support them; this helps to sustain a buoyant and vibrant property market.



Clare Tasker

Andy Simpson

Lisa Conway

Q How do you work with conveyancers?

AS: The Coal Authority is well-versed in working with professionals, to share our expertise and explain our mining report information. More recently we have been working even closer with conveyancers to understand their needs as part of the report requirements, especially in terms of delivery. Although we are nationally recognised for our wide choice of mining reports, the support doesn't end there. We are incredibly proud of our customer service team who interpret our information in a user friendly way to identify any potential risks and key information. This enables conveyancers to have professional and insightful conversations with their clients.

CT: With our account management team in place, we are actively seeking more opportunities to be able to provide training and information for anyone who would like it. We spend a lot of time on the road creating opportunities for conveyancers to meet us, ask us questions, feedback to us and learn. We hold a number of CPD accredited training events, seminars and sessions in addition to our various webinars.

Q What do people need to think about when purchasing a property on a coalfield? How can the Coal Authority help?

AS: What we want everyone to know is that the Coal Authority is here to support the public with coal mining related incidents. Having a mineshaft under or near a property shouldn't deter people from buying or selling a property.

Encouragingly, the inclusion of a mine entry in a report doesn't always deter people from buying a property. People are starting to appreciate when they are purchasing a building in a coalfield area. However, occasionally some lenders and solicitors raise questions about the related risk.

Our team often respond to letters and emails from homeowners, conveyancers and sometimes MPs (who correspond with us on behalf of their constituents). We share our information as part of our role in protecting the public. Often this correspondence can lead to a positive outcome for the home or land owner.

Q How are you continuing to evolve and innovate the MRRT and what you do for conveyancers?

AS: Following the account managers joining MRRT in 2016, we have become even more customer facing and interactive with our clients and customers. We share more widely how we have helped conveyancers and other customers to support the purchase of properties sited on coalfields.

CT: We have an incredible online ordering system and we have streamlined the information without compromising on the quality of the information, the clarity or accuracy.

AS: We are very proud to say that our report turnaround is superfast. We can have a mining report sent to a customer's inbox within minutes of ordering. Whilst we are continually complimented on our speed of service, we're looking to develop this even further. We are again in the process of taking recent feedback from the market to refine our reports and the advice we provide to help conveyancers do their job with greater speed.

CT: As a team we have helped drive how we do things differently across the authority - thanks to our in-house IT being more responsive and agile for business requirements. Everything we do is now embedded culturally in the Coal Authority, helping to ensure we are responsive to all customer needs and that we continue to evolve what we do. We have recently helped the conveyancing market by:

- Launching our new market leading coal mining and environmental search report, the Enviro All-in-One, in partnership with Groundsure (as a direct response to customer feedback).
- Working with the Cheshire Brine Compensation Board to allow them to take back their information on Cheshire Brine, enabling it to produce its own reports.
- Collaborating with The Law Society on rewriting its guidance documents (parts 1, 2 and 3) as to how conveyancers can order mining reports.

AS: We are proud of our achievements; becoming more outwardly facing, responding to customer needs and supporting our partners. We want to continue our relationships and support with conveyancers, they are important in the work that we do. If there is anything more readers would like to hear about or would like one of our account team to arrange a personal visit, please contact our customer service team. Alternatively when purchasing one of our mining reports, ask about our various events and help us do even more in the future.

Nick Ethelstone, Andy Simpson, Clare Tasker & Lisa Conway are from the Coal Authority's Mining Reports Retail Team (MRRT).

Core Reports	Coal Authority official CON29M	Ground Stability report	Enviro All-in-One report	Consultants report	No Search Certificate
Fulfills CON29M 2018 Law Society guidelines	✓	✓	✓		
Produced and delivered, with accuracy, in minutes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dedicated support and guidance from in-house experts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Includes key data from industry leading partners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reliable interpretation, highlighting risks, from the experts in the industry	✓	✓	✓		
Confirmation of statutory cover provided in the event of coal mining subsidence damage	✓	✓	✓		✓
Appropriate follow on information highlighted, for when you need it	✓	✓	✓	✓	
CPD accredited, free of charge support materials available	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

To find out more about working with our team please call **0345 762 6848** and select option 1. Alternatively you can get in touch via email at **intouch@groundstability.com**