

Partner, London

Mergers and Acquisitions



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Education

Legal Practice Course, University of the West of England, Bristol, 1997

LL.B., University of Birmingham, 1996

Bar Admissions

England & Wales

George Knighton has a wide range of experience advising on public and private mergers and acquisitions, private equity transactions and restructurings.

Mr. Knighton is ranked as a leading lawyer in *Chambers Global* for Corporate/M&A and *Chambers UK* for M&A: High-End Capability, in which clients describe him as “excellent,” with advice that “is considered, clear and succinct,” as well in *The Legal 500 UK* as a leading individual for high-end M&A.

Since joining Skadden, Mr. Knighton’s experience includes advising:

- Sampo plc in the US\$907 million acquisition, from Rand Merchant Investment Holdings Limited, of the remaining 30% stake in Hastings Insurance Services Limited that it did not already own;
- companies owned by investment funds managed by TDR Capital LLP in their investment in Jaja Finance;
- EG Group in its acquisition of LEON Restaurants Limited;
- DuPont in its US\$2.3 billion acquisition of Laird Performance Materials;
- Zelon Holdings Inc. in its participation in Aston Martin Lagonda Global Holdings plc’s capital raise;
- Zuber and Mohsin Issa, owners of EG Group, and TDR Capital LLP in their acquisition of a majority stake in ASDA Group Limited from Walmart Inc.;
- Sampo plc in the debt financing and shareholder arrangements with joint offeror Rand Merchant Investment Holdings Limited to support their £1.66 billion takeover bid for Hastings Group Holdings plc;
- Iceland Foods in the acquisition by founder and executive chair, Sir Malcolm Walker CBE, and chief executive officer, Tarsem Dhaliwal, of a 63% stake in Iceland Foods from Brait, a South African private equity fund; and
- Phoenix Group Holdings plc in its US\$4.1 billion acquisition of ReAssure Group plc from Swiss Re.

Mr. Knighton’s M&A experience prior to joining Skadden includes representing:

- HBOS in its merger with Lloyds;
- Misys in its acquisition of a majority holding in Allscripts (a Nasdaq-listed company), including advising on the company’s new board arrangements. Mr. Knighton also advised on the subsequent disposal of the holding and return of the profit via a tender offer and B share scheme;
- the independent directors of DTZ in their response to a takeover approach from its majority shareholder and in managing the first formal sales process under the Takeover Code that led to a delisting and sale of the business by prepackaged administration;
- the board of Misys in a potential merger with Temenos, and its response to a takeover approach made jointly by its largest shareholder and its takeover by Vista;
- the founders of B&M Stores in the sale of a majority stake to Clayton Dubilier & Rice and the subsequent IPO;
- Blackstone in the takeover of Max Property Group plc;
- Virgin Money in its acquisition of Northern Rock plc and its IPO;
- Iceland Foods in its £1.5 billion management buyout and subsequent high-yield bond issues;
- Virgin Money in its takeover by CYBG; and
- ICAMAP, the largest shareholder of easyHotel, in its takeover offer to acquire a majority stake in the business and its negotiations with founder Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou.