

§ 01 - THE PROBLEM

The Work Was Done. The Bills Were Not.

Ashford & Partners LLP had 38 fee earners across five practice areas — corporate, property, litigation, employment, and private client. Combined annual revenue was £6.2 million. The firm operated a practice management system, but its reporting module required a dedicated billing manager to produce meaningful output, and the reports were produced monthly — too slow to course-correct on individual matters.

Write-offs were running at 22% of all billed time — nearly a quarter of fee earner work was being written off before invoicing, without any systematic analysis of why. The managing partner suspected that certain fee earners and certain matter types were driving the majority of write-

offs, but had no data to confirm it or act on it.

Work In Progress (WIP) was sitting at £2.8M at any given time. Partners could not see, in real time, which matters had accumulated large WIP without corresponding bills. Matters were being closed at a loss – sometimes without the partners responsible being aware until the post-matter review, weeks after the fact.

"We knew our realization rate was poor. We didn't know that three fee earners were responsible for 61% of all write-offs. That changed things."

22% WRITE-OFF RATE BEFORE SYSTEM – FIRM-WIDE

£2.8M WIP BALANCE – NO REAL-TIME VISIBILITY BEFORE SYSTEM

£84K UNTRACKED BILLABLE TIME RECOVERED IN FIRST 90 DAYS

34% WRITE-OFF RATE REDUCTION AFTER DASHBOARD DEPLOYED

§ 02 – THE DASHBOARD

Every Matter.
Every Hour. Every Pound.



ACTIVE MATTERS

184

ACROSS 5 PRACTICE AREAS

WIP BALANCE

£2.8M

REAL-TIME – ALL FEE EARNERS

WRITE-OFF RATE

14.5%

DOWN FROM 22% – TARGET: 10%

REALIZATION RATE

86%

UP FROM 72% AT DEPLOYMENT

MONTHLY BILLED VS WIP COLLECTED – 12-MONTH VIEW

REVENUE TREND

WRITE-OFF RATE BY PRACTICE AREA

WIP AGE PROFILE – DAYS OUTSTANDING

MATTER REGISTER – HIGH WIP / AT-RISK MATTERS

FILTERED: TOP WIP

MATTER REF	PRACTICE AREA	PARTNER	FEE EARNER	WIP (£)	DAYS OPEN	WRITE-OFF RISK	STATUS
ASH-2024-0842	Corporate M&A	J. Ashford	C. Barnes	£84,200	142	HIGH	ACTIVE

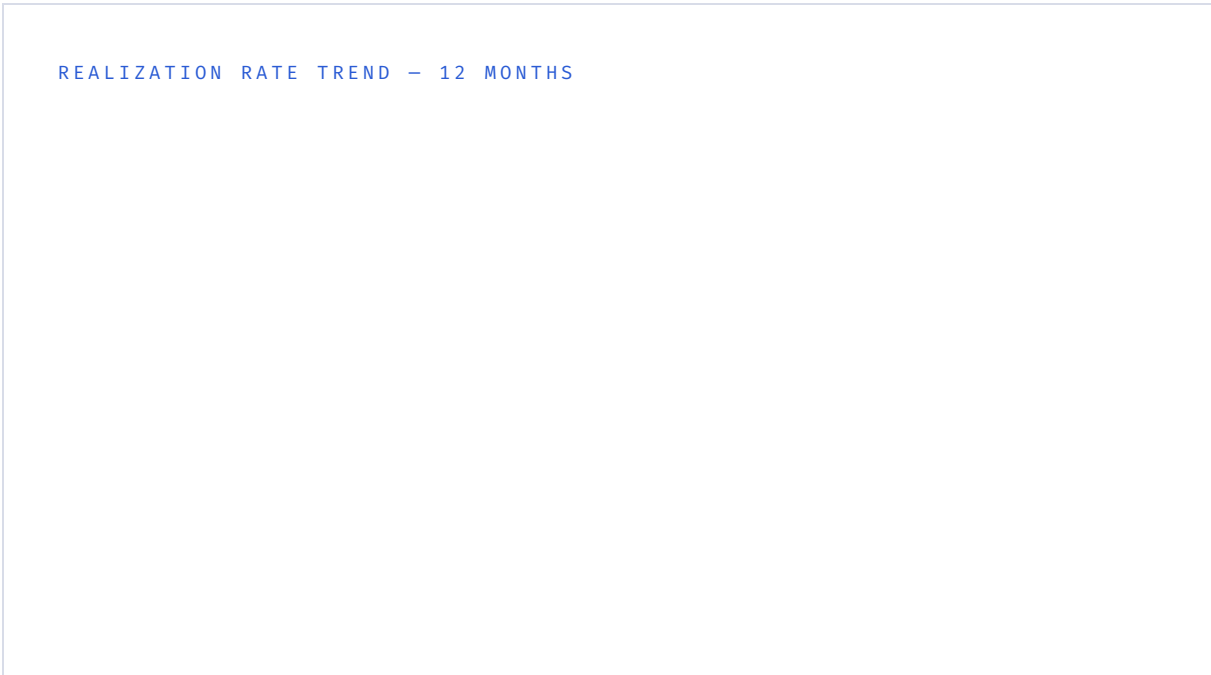
ASH-2024-0756	Property	R. Chen	L. Morris	£62,400	98	MEDIUM	AT RISK
ASH-2024-0901	Litigation	S. Williams	T. Park	£48,800	201	HIGH	AT RISK
ASH-2024-0688	Employment	J. Ashford	M. Singh	£38,600	64	LOW	ACTIVE
ASH-2024-0803	Private Client	A. Patel	E. Davies	£22,100	312	HIGH	BILL PENDING
ASH-2024-0644	Corporate M&A	R. Chen	C. Barnes	£18,400	45	LOW	BILLED
ASH-2024-0790	Property	S. Williams	L. Morris	£16,800	88	MEDIUM	ACTIVE
ASH-2024-0911	Litigation	A. Patel	T. Park	£14,200	156	HIGH	AT RISK

§ 03 - PARETO ANALYSIS

Three Fee Earners. 61% of All Write-Offs.

The Pareto analysis delivered the firm's most operationally significant insight in years. Three fee

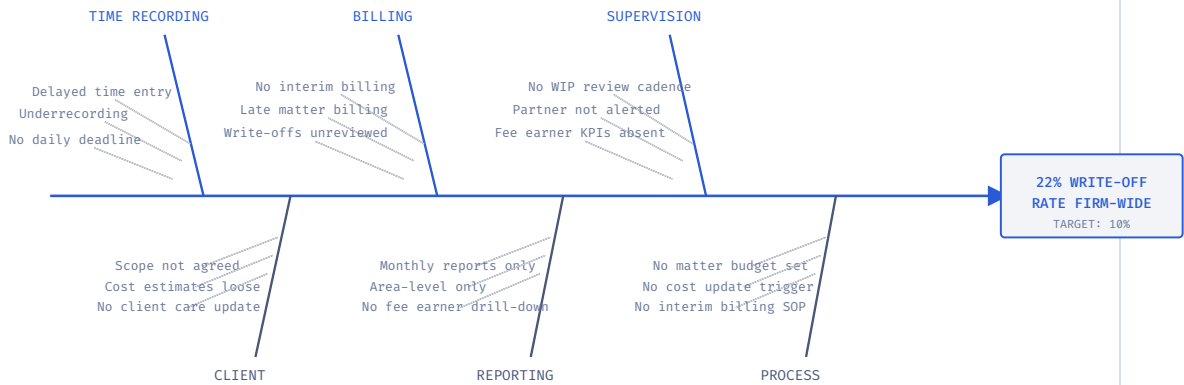
earners — out of 38 — were responsible for 61% of all write-offs by value. Two of them were mid-level associates in the Litigation practice area. The pattern had been invisible in the practice management system's standard reports, which aggregated write-offs at practice area level, not at fee earner level.



Why Were Write-Offs *Running at 22%?*

A structured Ishikawa analysis was applied to identify the root causes driving a 22% firm-wide write-off rate. Six causal categories were investigated using time recording data, billing records, client file audits, and partner interviews.

ISHIKAWA - CAUSE & EFFECT · 22% WRITE-OFF RATE · ASHFORD & PARTNERS
LLP



ROOT CAUSE · REPORTING

MONTHLY

Write-off analysis was produced monthly at practice area level — too infrequent and too aggregated to identify individual fee earner patterns. By the time a problem was visible, the matter was often already closed.

ROOT CAUSE · TIME RECORDING

48hr

Time was being recorded 24-72 hours after the work was done. Reconstructed time entries are consistently less complete and less defensible than contemporaneous records — leading to conservative entries and systematic undercharging.

ROOT CAUSE · SUPERVISION

61%

Three fee earners responsible for 61% of all write-offs by value — invisible at practice area level.

Without fee earner-level visibility, supervisors had no data to trigger a coaching conversation

or matter budget review.

§ 05 - KEY FINDINGS

What the System Uncovered

FINDING 01

£84K

In unrecorded or under-recorded billable time identified in the first 90 days using the dashboard's time recording audit module. Time that had been done but never billed — recovered through matter-by-matter reconciliation.

FINDING 02

34%

Reduction in the firm-wide write-off rate after fee earner-level performance data was shared with practice area heads. Three coaching conversations and two matter management process changes produced the improvement within one billing cycle.

FINDING 03

312

Days — the age of the oldest unresolved WIP item in the private client practice. A £22,100

balance on an estate matter had been sitting unbilled for 312 days. It was identified, billed, and collected within 30 days of the dashboard flagging it.

FINDING 04

£2.8M

Total WIP balance now visible in real time across all 184 active matters. Partners can see, per matter, how much is at risk of write-off and when the last interim bill was issued — enabling proactive management of the WIP book.

FINDING 05

86%

New billing realization rate — up from 72% at deployment. Driven by earlier interim billing, better time recording practices, and clearer matter budgets agreed with clients at engagement stage.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

4

1) Mandatory same-day time recording. 2) Interim billing trigger at 60-day WIP age. 3) Weekly fee earner write-off review. 4) Matter budget set at file opening. Estimated annual benefit: £340,000 in recovered revenue.

£84K

Untracked billable time recovered in the first 90 days of dashboard deployment

34%

Reduction in firm-wide write-off rate — from 22% to 14.5% within one billing cycle

86%

Billing realization rate — up from 72%, approaching the firm's 90% target

£2.8M

WIP book visible in real time for the first time — across all 184 active matters

312d

Oldest WIP item identified and billed — a £22,100 estate matter sitting unbilled for nearly a year

\$0

Additional licensing — reads from practice management system export, no new software required

Precision Tools.

Trusted by Partners.

CORE LOGIC

```
# Load practice management export df = pd.read_csv("matter_wip_export.csv") #  
WIP age calculation df['wip_age_days'] = ( pd.Timestamp('today') -  
pd.to_datetime(df['last_billed']) ).dt.days # Write-off rate per fee earner wo =  
df.groupby('fee_earner').agg( written_off=('write_off_val', 'sum'), billed=  
( 'billed_val', 'sum' ) ) wo['wo_rate'] = wo['written_off'] / wo['billed'] * 100 #  
Flag high-risk WIP (>60 days, >£10k) risk = df[(df['wip_age_days']>60) &  
(df['wip_val']>10000)]
```

SYSTEM FLOW

[DATA IN]

↓ Practice management system export · daily

[PROCESSING]

↓ pandas · WIP age · write-off rate · realization

[ALERTS]

↓ Email to partner when WIP > 60 days or > £10k

[DASHBOARD]

↓ Streamlit · Plotly · matter register · Pareto

[REPORT]

↓ Weekly PDF for managing partner & practice heads

Python 3.11

pandas

Streamlit

Plotly

Practice Mgmt Integration

WIP Tracking

Write-Off Analysis

Realization Rate

Fee Earner KPIs

Pareto Analysis

Email Alerts

PDF Reports

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