

Tom West Appointed New PLS Chief Executive

Embargoed until 00:01am Monday 17 July 2023

Publishers' Licensing Services (PLS) is delighted to announce the appointment of Tom West as its new Chief Executive, effective from 1 November 2023. Tom, who is currently serving as PLS's Chief Operating Officer, will be taking over from Chief Executive, Sarah Faulder, who retires from PLS at the end of October.

Tom joined PLS in 2001 and has been an integral part of the organisation since then, becoming Head of Operations and, in 2017, PLS' first ever Chief Operating Officer. During his time at PLS, Tom has had lead responsibility for developing and managing PLS' collective licensing operations and has played a key role in the diversification of its services in recent years, including the award-winning permissions service PLSclear.

Tom will succeed Sarah Faulder, PLS Chief Executive since 2010. Over her 13 years in the role, Sarah has overseen several significant developments at PLS. These include forging a new licensing channel for magazine publishers with NLA Media Access, enabling free access to over 40 million academic articles in public libraries through the Access to Research service launched in 2014, the first ever rights valuation which now governs the shares in licensing revenues between authors, visual artists and publishers and, in 2015, the Independent Publishers Guild became the first new member of PLS since its formation by the Publishers Association, the Professional Publishers Association and the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers in 1981.

Tom West said:

“Two years ago, PLS celebrated 40 years of service to UK publishing and the distribution of more than £500 million in licensing revenues. It has been a privilege to have played a part in that history, helping to support the wonderful range of publishers whose interests we are here to represent. I have been fortunate to have worked with Sarah for the past 13 years and I am very grateful for her support throughout that time.

I am thrilled and honoured to now be taking the helm and I look forward to working closely with publishers, our licensing agents, and our other valued partners as we continue to deliver vital revenues and services.”

Sarah Faulder said:

“It has been a privilege to have led PLS, being an organisation which is valued by so many publishers for the monies we distribute - some £42m last year alone. I am particularly proud that we have been able to leverage PLS’s central position in the industry to broaden our range of services to publishers.

My tenure at PLS has been all the more enjoyable for being able to work with so many partners in publishing, collective licensing and the all-important world of copyright, both in the UK and internationally, and I have been well supported by my excellent staff and the Board. I am confident that Tom will take PLS to another level, drawing on his deep knowledge of PLS and his genuine passion for all that it stands for.”

PLS Chair, Rosie Glazebrook, said:

“I am delighted that following a competitive open selection process Tom has been appointed as CEO from 1st November. PLS will be in excellent hands going forward and Tom will provide strong leadership of the team and will build future success for PLS by working with publishers, industry partners and members.

I would like to thank Sarah for the enormous contribution she has made to the success of PLS over the past 13 years. She has led PLS through a period of significant growth and change, and has put the interests of publishers at the heart of its work and greatly strengthened our partnerships in the UK and internationally.”

About Publishers' Licensing Services (PLS):

Since its establishment in 1981, Publishers' Licensing Services (PLS) has provided rights management services to the publishing industry. PLS’ primary remit is to oversee collective licensing in the UK for book, journal, magazine, and website copying. In addition, it also provides a range of rights management services, including the award-winning PLSclear. A not-for-profit organisation, PLS distributed almost £42m from collective licensing in 2022/23 and has more than 4,000 publishers signed up to their services.

For media inquiries, please contact:
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Note to editors:

High-resolution photographs of Tom West and Sarah Faulder are attached to the email received.