



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – WEDNESDAY 17 OCTOBER 2018

AGFS

[The Times](#), [Law Gazette](#) – Responding to the Ministry of Justice’s (MoJ) consultation on injecting £15m into the advocates graduated fee scheme (AGFS) the Bar Council said ‘we are now at a pivotal point’.

“Many advocates now seriously question whether there is a financially viable future career at the criminal Bar,” the council said in its response to a Ministry of Justice consultation on a proposed reformed pay scheme for work in the crown courts.

“We believe that the MoJ has started to recognise this danger and the review is a step in the right direction.” However, ministers “must go much further”.

The council, which represents more than 15,000 barristers in England and Wales, argued that the government must stem the haemorrhaging in the crime legal aid budget as not doing so would “lead to the loss of the ablest” and “form a barrier to and impact on the future social and broader diversity of the criminal Bar”.

The response references a survey the Bar Council conducted earlier this year which showed that 48% of the criminal bar are unable to balance their home and work lives and that 33% said they would leave the profession if they could.

Sexual harassment

[LawCareers.Net](#), [Legal Futures](#) – The Bar Council is to publish new guidance for barristers and chambers on dealing with sexual harassment, amid claims that many chambers’ existing policies are “wholly ineffective”. This is because either “victims don’t have confidence in those handling complaints” or simply they do not know where to find the policy or even if it exists.

There will also be a push to educate barristers about what constitutes inappropriate behaviour.

Sophie Garner and Esther Gamble, chair and vice-chair respectively of the Midland Circuit Women's Forum, and members of the Bar Council's equality and diversity retention panel, are among those who have been working with the Bar Council to produce a new and comprehensive package of guidance for barristers and chambers.

Writing in the [latest issue](#) of *Counsel* magazine, they said the package would include a new model policy to be adopted or adapted to help prevent and deal with harassment; an interactive training course designed to educate and equip everyone at a set, from its head to the junior clerk; a flowchart with a clear guide as to what steps can be taken in the event of a complaint arising; and a revised version of the Bar Council publication, *Tackling Sexual Harassment: Information for Chambers*.

The pair wrote that "front and centre has to be education about inappropriate behaviour". It was, they said, time to acknowledged and tackle "uncomfortable truths".

EU Law Committee

[The Lawyer](#), [The Business Desk](#), [Midlands Business News](#), [Express & Star](#) (print)

- Local, business and legal press report that Richard Gibbs of No5 Barristers' Chambers in Birmingham has been asked to join the EU Law Committee of the Bar Council.

The Bar Council's EU Law committee monitors and addresses legal issues emanating from the EU including policy and legislative proposals from the various EU institutions, and then co-ordinates responses to policy issues which arise.

Gibbs said: "I am delighted to have been appointed to the EU Law Committee at this crucial time in the development of the legal framework which will surround Brexit but which will also shape our future interplay with the EU.

"Of course, Brexit is front and centre as the biggest legal, constitutional and political issue of our age but these other issues are all still being addressed by the committee and I am very much looking forward to playing a part in this important work on behalf of the Bar Council."

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COUNSEL The vital work of the in-house barristers was recognised at the second Bar Council Employed Bar Awards ceremony. Melissa Coutinho profiles today's employed practice and quizzes the winners in this month's issue of Counsel: bit.ly/2CL2mOW @thebarcouncil



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Daniel Holt @holtdan · Oct 13

I'm delighted to be on the disability panel at the @barcouncil Pupillage Fair on 27th October.

The Fair is a great opportunity for anyone interested in pupillage . I hope to see you there.

#disability #DisabilityRights #diversity #aspiringbarristers

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