



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – MONDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2020

Crown Court sitting days

[The Times](#) (print and online) – The Times reports that hundreds of Crown Court judges could be disqualified because they have not spent enough time hearing trials after Whitehall budget cuts closed courts.

The Times reports that under existing rules, recorders must sit for at least 15 or 30 days a year, depending on experience, to maintain the “ticket” that allows them to preside over crown court trials. As many as 70 per cent of recorders in England and Wales are at risk of losing the authorisation to sit because they cannot meet the annual requirements.

Senior barristers told The Times that “ministers and court bosses would have to authorise a “mass waiver” to ensure that part-time judges continue to sit during the next financial year.”

The Criminal Bar Association is quoted, as is **Malcolm Cree, Chief Executive of the Bar Council**, who said: “Every element of the system needs significant investment to repair the serious damage that has been done and restore public faith.”

Television cameras in court

Kent Messenger x 3 – Three editions of the Kent Messenger report on **Chair of the Bar, Amanda Pinto QC’s** cautious response to plans to televise sentencing in the Crown Courts. Former Canterbury Crown Court judge, Andrew Prentice, also urged caution.

Emergency terror legislation

Catholic Times, Catholic Universe – Further coverage appears of reports that lawyers have raised concerns about emergency legislation announced by the Justice Secretary in the wake of the terror attack in Streatham. Justice Secretary Robert Buckland QC MP said the Government will introduce emergency legislation "to

ensure an end to terrorist offenders getting released automatically having served half of their sentence with no check or review".

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar, said: "In light of this announcement, we would urge the Government to take care in considering any sentencing changes that may apply retrospectively.

"Sentencing is a complex exercise, requiring consideration of a range of factors, including the need to express clearly and publicly the nature of the penalty, which is being imposed, which we note was done in this case. It is important that any proposed reform which could retrospectively alter the punishment for an offence, should be the subject of careful consideration, to ensure that it complies with the rule of law."

Diversity

New Law Journal – NLJ reports figures released by the Bar Standards Board (BSB) last month reveal a miniscule 0.6% increase in the number of female barristers in the past year, with 61.3% men still outnumbering 38% women at the practising Bar (not all participants declared).

The percentage of Black and minority ethnic (BAME) barristers also increased by 0.6%, to 13.6% of the practising Bar. BAME barristers are more likely to classify themselves as 'Asian/Asian British' than 'mixed/multiple ethnic' or 'Black/Black British'.

Chair of the Bar, Amanda Pinto QC, is quoted. She said: "The Bar Council wants to accelerate progress, so we are pushing practical initiatives to make the profession more representative of the society we serve.

"These include pressing for a less expensive Bar course for entry to the profession, improving the fair allocation of work, mentoring and programmes designed to encourage professional development, especially for those from non-traditional backgrounds.

"As well as working with the BSB to identify and address the barriers to increasing diversity, this year the Bar Council is launching the future leaders programme aimed at ensuring that leaders across the Bar are more reflective of society at large."

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Good news: we are able to release applications to chambers two days early from the [#Pupillage Gateway](#) thanks to the smooth operation of this year's process. They'll be released on Monday.



Carolyn Entwistle @Centwistle1 · Feb 7

Genuinely pleased that, during my 1st yr as project lead, we've closed the #Pupillage Gateway w/o issue. She's not on Twitter but @thebarcouncil's Services Coordinator, Natalia, has provided an amazing amount of support. Credit also to @Jobsgopublic. Good luck, everyone! [twitter.com/thebarcouncil/...](https://twitter.com/thebarcouncil/)

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