



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2021

Race at the Bar

[Eastern Eye](#), [The Voice](#), [LawCareers.net](#), [Legal Cheek](#), [New Law Journal](#) – Further coverage appears of the new Bar Council report on race at the Bar, which found barristers from ethnic minority backgrounds in England and Wales find it harder to enter law and progress their careers, are paid less and are at greater risk of bullying and harassment.

Barbara Mills QC and Simon Regis, co-chairs of the Bar Council race working group, said in a joint statement: “Data in the report categorically and definitively evidences, in quantitative and qualitative terms, that barristers from all ethnic minority backgrounds, and especially black and Asian women, face systemic obstacles to building and progressing a sustainable and rewarding career at the Bar.

“Quite rightly, practising barristers within the profession have expressed frustration over the amount of talk about race inequality at the bar, and the lack of action and failure to bring about change.”

The report contains a number of recommendations including identification of goals for improving diversity within a fixed timescale and annual monitoring of data. There are also more specific recommendations relating to access to the profession, retention, progression and culture.

The Bar Council has committed to provide an annual update on actions taken against the recommendations as well as a comprehensive review in 2024.

Derek Sweeting QC, Chair of the Bar, said: “We should reflect honestly on whether long held, and perhaps defensive, assumptions about the bar can survive the evidence and data which the report draws together. The bar is, for most of its members, a modern profession in which hard work and talent offer individuals the opportunity to thrive and contribute to our justice system. That opportunity needs to be open to all.”

Budget

PA Media, Express & Star, Shropshire Star – Further media coverage appears of the Bar Council's reaction to the recent Budget statement, which saw extra funds for the Ministry of Justice and for tackling the backlog in the courts announced.

Derek Sweeting QC, Chair of the Bar, is quoted in media reports. He said, "there will still be a shortfall of funding to tackle the justice crisis, restore public confidence and reduce the backlogs in our courts and tribunals."

Wellbeing

[Legal Futures](#) - Only 47% of barristers feel generally content with their working lives, a report for the Bar Council has found. A similar proportion, 45%, felt they could "cope with the competing demands" of their job in terms of workload.

The figures are taken from an analysis conducted by Portsmouth University's quality of working life research group using data from this year's barristers' working lives survey. The survey received almost 3,500 responses from barristers in April and May.

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It's 2021 and yet there are only 23 senior black lawyers in the whole of England and Wales. I must have met at least half of them. We can and must do better



theguardian.com

Barristers from ethnic minority backgrounds 'face systemic obstacles'
Report by Bar Council's race working group says ethnic minority barrister are paid less and are at greater risk of bullying

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