



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 12 MARCH 2021

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill

[The Sun](#), [Daily Mirror](#), [Daily Express](#), [Law Society Gazette](#), [New Law Journal](#) – The red tops report on the Bar Council's reaction to the Government's new crime Bill.

Chair of the Bar, Derek Sweeting QC, is quoted in the coverage of the Bill. He said: "The public are entitled to expect that tackling serious crime will be a priority, but politicians have to join up the dots.

"A crackdown on crime will mean more work for hard pressed courts and those who work in them. Decades of underfunding and mounting backlogs will not be turned around by increases in police numbers and tougher sentences.

"Restoring confidence in the criminal justice system will require sustained investment. We hope the measures announced in the Bill will not just be cosmetic but will be matched by a real commitment to getting the justice system on its feet again and truly protecting the victims of crime."

Court backlog

[Law360](#), [Daily Mail](#), The i Paper, ITV, PA Media, [Evening Standard](#), Herald Scotland, Leigh Journal, Evening Express, St Helen's Star, Knutsford Guardian, Times Series, Evening Telegraph, Romsey Advertiser, The Lancaster and Morecambe Citizen, Halesowen News, Penarth Times, The Scottish Farmer, Northern Farmer, Impartial Reporter, ThisIsMoney, Swanage & Wareham Voice, Epping Forest Guardian, Barhead News, Belfast Telegraph, Jersey Evening Post + **170 other media outlets** – Law360 reports that the pandemic has exacerbated the already-long backlog of unheard cases in England's criminal justice system and exposed the crumbling state of the country's court infrastructure, which lawyers warn will have grave consequences for the administration of justice.

"That is going to have a really significant effect going forward and tackling the backlog is going to be a pressing issue beyond the health emergency," said **Derek Sweeting QC, Chair of the Bar**. "It has been a real emergency for justice as well."

Law360 reports that even before the pandemic struck, the criminal justice system was labouring under the weight of more than 37,000 outstanding cases at the end of 2019. According to Ministry of Justice figures, the number of crown court cases is now 44% higher than it was in February 2020.

Elsewhere, the national and local media report that the backlog in the crown court has increased to 54,544, the highest level in a year. The media reports also point to a survey by the Bar Council, Law Society and CILEX showing that the public are concerned about the backlog.

Bar Council Sustainability Network

[Business Green](#), [Legal Futures](#), [LawCareers.net](#), [Future Net Zero](#) – Legal and 'green' business publications report that the Bar Council is supporting barristers in the battle against climate change with the launch of a new [Bar Sustainability Network](#).

The new initiative will provide a range of services to support barristers' chambers in adopting more sustainable ways of working. Joining the Bar Sustainability Network includes membership of the Bar Renewables Pledge, access to a carbon calculator, and a range of other resources and events.

Chair of the Bar, Derek Sweeting QC, is quoted. He said: "It might seem that barristers can't make much of a difference to saving our planet, but climate change affects us all. The Bar wants to do its part and take action on the global climate emergency. The Bar Council's Bar Sustainability Network is designed to provide the tools and resources for the Bar to achieve that ambition. We also envisage that by becoming members of the network, chambers and others may be able to save costs through exploring cheaper 'green' options - which, given the financial uncertainty caused by the pandemic, will be a game-changer for many."

Budget

Romsey Advertiser – Further coverage of the Bar Council's initial reaction to the Budget announcement is reported in the local media.

Chair of the Bar, Derek Sweeting QC, is quoted. He said: "With parts of our justice system facing unprecedented challenges, a 56,000 case backlog in the Crown Court and some victims of crime having to wait until 2023 before they are likely see justice done, it is disappointing to see no extra funding emerging from the Treasury in today's Budget announcement.

"The Chancellor has turned a blind eye to law and order and settled for stretching last year's commitments to cover the future survival of our justice system. It's not enough."

Justice Week

PA Media – PA Media reports on new findings from a Justice Week survey carried out by the Bar Council, Law Society and CILEX which showed 73% of the 2,000+ respondents were concerned about the backlog in the courts.

BAR COUNCIL TWEETS



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Figures show crown court backlog reaches highest level in a year (56,544) as new poll reveals public concern about backlog



Crown court backlog reaches highest level in a year – figures
The Ministry of Justice data was published on Thursday.
[standard.co.uk](https://www.standard.co.uk)

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BREAKING NEWS: Bar Council launches new initiative to help barristers, chambers and other organisations to tackle the [#climatecrisis](#) and cut costs:

More information: barcouncil.org.uk/bar-council-se...



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