



## BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 22 MAY 2020

### Jury trials

[Sky News](#), [Yahoo News](#), [Financial Times](#), [LBC](#), BBC Radio 5, Law Gazette, Sunderland Echo, Capital FM, Heart, Classic FM, Kingdom FM, Wessex FM, Vibe1076 FM, KL FM, Island FM, Mix 96, Three FM, Eagle Radio, Signal 1, [Televisor.co.uk](#), Sunrise Radio, The Beach, Swansea Sound, Manx Radio, Minster FM, Spire FM, Town 102, Signal 107, Gaydio, Compass FM, Spirit FM, Smooth Radio, Revolution 962, Pulse 1, Lincs FM, MyGoldMusic, LoveSports Radio, Radiox, Radioexe, Deame FM, The Wave, Yorkshire Coast Radio, Star Radio Online – The Bar Council is quoted across national and regional media on the resumption of jury trials this week in London, Cardiff, Bristol and Manchester.

The construction of temporary "Nightingale courts" to tackle a massive backlog of legal cases in England and Wales is being actively considered, the Justice Secretary has confirmed.

A small number of jury trials have started on Monday, after thousands were halted because of the coronavirus lockdown.

**Amanda Pinto QC** said: "I expect there will need to be some adjustments over the next few weeks. Apart from anything else, all of this is a bit new and we're rightly feeling our way.

"But I really think people have tried very hard to think in detail about what measures are necessary to keep people safe."

### #MakeTheCase

**BBC Sheffield, Hampshire Chronicle, Telegraph & Argus** – Regional media of Hampshire and Yorkshire report that local barristers are calling on the Treasury to give urgent financial backing to the Bar in order to prevent it from collapse post Covid-19.

Chair of the Bar, **Amanda Pinto QC**, appeared on BBC Sheffield to explain why barristers are urged to #MakeTheCase for justice. Hear more about it [here](#).

As part of a campaign, 'Make the Case', The Bar Council is urging barristers to write to and Tweet their local MP to press the Treasury on a package of five measures to help the profession.

## YBC

**The Times (print and [online](#))** – Chair of the Bar Council's Young Barristers' Committee, **Katherine Duncan**, writes in a special Times Law piece on safety concerns in Magistrates' Courts and the importance of support for the Young Bar during the times of Covid-19.

She said: "Without a thriving junior Bar, the profession itself is unsustainable. It means that fewer barristers will be available to prosecute crimes, represent parents who cannot see their children, or represent clients in employment disputes. There will be fewer barristers to deal with the inevitable backlog of cases, which means witnesses, claimants and defendants will have to wait even longer for decisions."

## Pupillage

**The Times** – A dozen years since the financial crisis and there is a feeling of groundhog day in the legal profession as prospective law firm trainees and chambers' pupils face having their futures deferred.

At the Bar, competition for pupillage is fierce at the best of times. Every year around 2,000 hopefuls chase fewer than 500 places. The financial pressure on chambers caused by the lockdown has made things even harder.

**Carolyn Entwistle**, Head of Services to the Bar, says that 2,142 applicants had applied for a total of 206 pupillages offered by 103 providers. Since the lockdown began, nine providers offering 19 pupillages have withdrawn and a further seven offering 16 pupillages have deferred decisions until later in the year. "This means that no more than 171 offers were made by the 87 remaining providers," she explained.

**Katherine Duncan**, chairwoman of the council's young barristers committee, explains that the decisions to defer or reduce pupillages should help with chambers' cash flow.

## Civil Legal Aid

[PoliticsHome](#) - The Bar Council have responded to the changes made through the Civil Legal Aid (Remuneration) SI laid on Monday, which comes into force on 8 June 2020.

**Amanda Pinto QC**, Chair of the Bar, said: “Whilst we recognise that the Legal Aid Agency is working hard to address hardship in the legal profession for those doing publicly funded work, regrettably, for so many barristers working in the area of immigration, the announced plans will be insufficient. Many proposals that would make a real difference to the livelihoods of immigration practitioners have not been adopted, even, for example, hourly rates that mean counsel is paid fairly for work done. We are especially concerned by the lack of meaningful consultation with representative bodies on this new structure. The new fee structure will result in immigration practitioners continuing to be underpaid for their work. These measures ought not to be implemented. The LAA must properly hear and consider the views of those immigration practitioners actually doing the work. So far this obvious step has not been taken.

“Ongoing liaison between practitioners and the LAA which allows those affected by these changes to give their input on the operation of this system is crucial. The system cannot afford to wait a year until the sunset clause kicks in, only to find the financial damage to barristers’ practices is irreparable and a cohort of experts has left the profession to the detriment of the public they serve. At the very least, the LAA must commit to regular reviews to understand the impact on the profession and whether it is able to withstand the changes, particularly in light of the additional challenges that Covid-19 presents to justice and those working for it.

“The Bar Council fully supports the position of the Immigration Law Practitioners’ Association, as outlined in their statement.”

## Women at the Bar

[Legal Futures](#) – The Western Circuit Women’s Forum (WCWF) called for guidance issued by the judiciary during the pandemic to take into account the needs of lawyers who are carers.

The WCWF said: “The pandemic brings pressure to all self-employed barristers. Most chambers recently surveyed by the **Bar Council** have said they cannot survive beyond 12 months.

**BAR COUNCIL TWEETS** <https://twitter.com/thebarcouncil>

Pinned Tweet



**The Bar Council** @thebarcouncil · 19 May

Barristers spend their careers making cases on behalf of others.

Now they're making the case to government for their own futures, the futures of colleagues & the future of the justice system.

Find out how you can help [#MakeTheCase](#) in 10 mins or less:  
[barcouncil.org.uk/media-campaign...](http://barcouncil.org.uk/media-campaign...)



You and 5 others



Retweets 23

Likes 35



**The Bar Council** @thebarcouncil · 21 May

Katherine Duncan, Chair of @YoungBarristers @KatherineAbdn writes in today's @TimesLaw on safety concerns in the Magistrates' Courts & the many reasons why the young Bar must be supported now more than ever [#MakeTheCase](#)

[thetimes.co.uk/article/young-...](http://thetimes.co.uk/article/young-...)



Retweets 7

Likes 6





**The Bar Council**  @thebarcouncil · 20 May

"Covid 19 has made us all more aware of our mental health and how we are feeling."

New [#WellbeingAtTheBar](#) blog from Valerie Charbit from [@RedLionChambers](#) who shares how your own [#MentalHealthAwareness](#) can help you but also those around you.



Mental Health and me (Mental Health Awareness We...  
Mental Health Awareness Week 18 – 24 May 2020 I  
am aware of how much being aware of my mental ...  
[wellbeingatthebar.org.uk](https://wellbeingatthebar.org.uk)



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**The Bar Council**  @thebarcouncil · 18 May

Our Chair Amanda Pinto QC is at the Old Bailey this morning and has just watched the first jury being sworn in. First trial back is now starting...

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