



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 3 DECEMBER 2021

Rape prosecutions

Daily Mail, [Evening Standard](#), The Independent, Metro, BBC Radio Four News, Press Association, Yahoo News + 190 other media outlets – The national, local and other media report on the Chair of the Bar, Derek Sweeting QC's, oral evidence to the Parliamentary Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry into the investigation and prosecution of rape.

The Chair of the Bar, who gave evidence alongside the CBA and Law Society, told MPs that a lack of resources could be one of the main reasons behind a drop in rape prosecutions, telling MPs: "I'm suggesting it's a very significant cause of the problems that we have within the system at the moment."

The reduction in "capacity, ability and experience" among lawyers and police officers in this area was "endemic", he added.

"Without some guarantee that there'll be sufficient resourcing, then we're not going to be in a position to make good all of those deficits."

Annual Bar & Young Bar Conference

[Roll on Friday](#) – The media continues to report on the Bar Council's Annual Conference, focusing on the fact the Lord Chancellor chose not to attend the conference, sending a recorded message instead.

Courts

The Times – The Times reports on the poor condition of the court estate and how some courts have shut due to being unable to cope with the colder weather.

The Times quotes the Lord Chief Justice and others from the legal sector, including Chair of the Bar, Derek Sweeting QC, who said that improving court infrastructure

will be an important pillar in reducing the backlog of Crown Court cases, which at present hovers at around 61,000. “With the backlog of cases in the courts showing no signs of shrinking,” Sweeting says, “court buildings have to be fit for purpose in order for cases to be heard. Victims of crime should not have to face a longer wait to see justice done because radiators aren’t working.”

Practising Certificate Fees

[Law Society Gazette](#) – The Gazette reports that an ‘extraordinary’ proposed increase in Bar Standards Board staff, requiring an uplift in practising certificate fees (PCF) for most barristers next year, is not ‘reasonable or proportionate’, the Chair of the Bar Council has said.

The General Council of the Bar, which incorporates the Bar Council and the BSB, published a [consultation](#) on proposed PCF increases and its budget for 2022/23 this week.

Derek Sweeting QC, Chair of the Bar, is quoted. He said: “We do not think, on the material we have seen, that an extraordinary uplift in BSB staff of up to 40% over three years (mainly this year and next), requiring a substantial increase in practising fees, is reasonable or proportionate.

“In our view, the BSB has not provided a robust business case, exploring alternatives or suggesting other, non-core regulatory work, that could be delayed or stopped to free up capacity.

“Sweeting added that the Bar Council will be asking the Legal Services Board ‘to investigate further when we submit our plans for the budget and practising fees in the new year”.

[BAR COUNCIL TWEETS](#)



The Bar Council  @thebarcouncil · Dec 1



Bar Council, @YoungBarristers have teamed up with @ABALitigation @actl for this free 'boot camp':

“Anatomy of a Trial” Boot Camp Trial Skills

@BarCouncilChair Derek Sweeting QC, Chair-Elect of the Bar Council, Mark Fenhalls QC, + more

Free to sign up eventbrite.co.uk/e/boot-camp-tr...

