



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2021

Race at the Bar

The Daily Telegraph, p2, [The Times](#), [The Guardian](#), [Politics Home](#), [Legal Futures](#), [Law Society Gazette](#), [Public.co.uk](#), [Yahoo.com](#) – The national and legal media report on a 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

[BBC Radio Four, Law in Action](#) – Law in Action interviews Derek Sweeting QC, Chair of the Bar, on the government measures to tackle the court backlog which were announced in the recent Budget.

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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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