



## BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 9 APRIL 2021

### Backlog

Southern Daily Echo (print, p2), [Reading Chronicle](#), [Oldham Times](#), Bucks Free Press, [Planet Radio](#), [The Telegraph & Argus](#), Lancashire Post, Times and Star, North West Mail, Hereford Times, News and Star, Bolton News, Cumberland & Westmorland Gazette - Further regional media coverage of the Bar Council's response to the most recent criminal court quarterly statistics and of regional court backlogs across the country.

Chair of the Bar, Derek Sweeting QC, is quoted across all media. He says: "With an end to social distancing in sight the Government needs to seize the opportunity to allow the courts to deal with as many cases as possible by investing in more court capacity, more court staff and adequate sitting days."

### 'Census' of the Bar

[Law Society Gazette](#), [New Law Journal](#) – Legal media report that the Bar Council is to undertake a profession-wide 'census' to help establish its priorities after the pandemic.

The voluntary survey, Working Lives, will ask barristers to answer questions about their working lives, including career progression, working practices, wellbeing, and remote hearings. The Bar Council said the anonymous results will help it better meet the needs of the profession.

The survey will open on 20 April and will play a part in shaping Bar Council policies, training programmes, and how it seeks to influence government policy and other decision makers on issues affecting the profession.

### China

**Financial Times (print and [online](#))** – The FT gives further coverage to the news that China has imposed sanctions on British lawyers and others accusing them of “gross interference” for their comments about Xinjiang, where more than 1m Uyghurs and other Muslims have been interned since 2017.

Derek Sweeting QC, Chair of the Bar, is quoted by the FT as describing China’s move as “an attack on the rule of law”.

## Diversity

**[Law Gazette](#), [Legal Futures](#)** - The Chair of the Bar has questioned the legal profession’s tendency to group black, Asian and minority ethnic lawyers together, saying the BAME label may ‘disguise the fact that there’s massive under-representation of black members of our community at the bar’.

Giving a Gresham College lecture about diversity, Derek Sweeting QC said ‘progress has been very slow in some areas’. ‘I think we need to be honest about why that’s the case and why sort of some bits of the bar are still what people thought they were years ago... dominated by people from private schools, perhaps Oxbridge, and also from a particular ethnic and social background.’ Sweeting backed the introduction of diversity targets to improve the situation.

The Chair added that the profession should consider whether BAME is ‘actually a cosmetic category’ to disguise a ‘massive under-representation of black members of our community at the bar still’.

## BAR COUNCIL TWEETS



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

Check your inbox for the latest edition of BarTalk from the Bar Council, out today, which includes a guest blog from co-creator of the new [@IvyandNormanton](#) court hijab, Maryam Mir, barrister [@DoughtyStreet](#)



**Sky News** @SkyNews · Mar 30

Two junior barristers design and launch hijabs for court [news.sky.com/story/two-juni...](https://news.sky.com/story/two-juni...)





**The Bar Council**  @thebarcouncil · Apr 7



CALLING ALL BARRISTERS: Ministry of Justice is hosting an urgent online meeting for the Bar on Wednesday 14 April, 17.00-18.30 on Govt plans to reform judicial review. Opportunity to ask Qs.

All welcome to join the session to get the Bar's views heard:  
[teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/...](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/...)

