



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 1 MARCH 2019

Judicial bullying

Jersey Evening Post (print) – Further coverage appears of the Bar Council’s guidance issued last week on judicial bullying.

In a letter accompanying the guide, Bar Council chair Richard Atkins QC said only a small number of judges 'engaged in bullying' and barristers should always 'address' it if possible, advising them to make a contemporaneous note and to seek advice.

Wellbeing

Legal Cheek – Legal Cheek covers the Bar Council’s latest Wellbeing at the Bar blog, which focuses on one barrister’s battle with addiction.

The unnamed barrister’s blog entry, [‘Addictions at the Bar – when a dry January is not enough’](#), was shared earlier this week by Wellbeing at the Bar, the Bar Council’s mental health website which offers a range of support tools for barristers and chambers.

They open with an honest confession, “I am a barrister. I am also a recovering alcoholic”. Yet, according to the barrister, coming to terms with this addiction wasn’t easy. “[I]f you told me then I had a drink problem, I would not have listened to you.”

Taking “one day at a time” the anonymous barrister eventually achieved sobriety and other positives gradually ensued – from the clearing of debts to starting a family. Several years on, the barrister reveals they have since returned to chambers. “The early days back had their moments of worry; after all, it had been a long time but after a few months it felt like being back home,” they write.

The blog also appears in Legal Cheek’s weekly round-up of the best legal blog posts.

Bar training

[Law Society Gazette](#) – Oversight regulator the Legal Services Board (LSB) has approved the Bar Standards Board's (BSB) proposals for changing the training regime for aspiring barristers, which includes reforms to pupillage but retains the role of the Inns of Court.

Originally, the BSB was intending to limit the Inns' influence but was forced to backtrack on its plans after criticism from the Bar Council, which lauded their 'fundamental role' in 'nurturing and developing the shared culture of the bar'.

Working hours

[LawCareers.net](#) – Further reports that criminal barristers will take action on their own against unreasonable hours and overnight working if the judiciary fails to heed their concerns.

Chris Henley hinted at friction between his body, which represents criminal law barristers, and the senior judiciary, saying that the CBA, together with the Bar Council, have "endeavoured to agree" parameters on working hours with the judiciary – apparently without success so far.

Insisting that barristers "can't go on like this," Henley warned: "We sincerely want to work together on this. But if we have to, we will come up with our own template for the hours we will reasonably work."

Legal aid for inquests

[Ekklesia](#) - Bereaved families and INQUEST have launched a campaign, Now or Never! Legal Aid for Inquests. This follows the decision by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to reject widely supported proposals and overwhelming evidence in favour of fair legal funding for bereaved people.

The campaign is calling for the government to reconsider this decision and urgently introduce automatic non-means tested legal aid funding to bereaved families following a state-related death. The detail of this proposal is outlined in a new briefing by INQUEST.

The campaign is supported by a range of organisations including Liberty, MIND, The Runnymede Trust, **The Bar Council**, Legal Action Group, and Cruse Bereavement Care, among others.

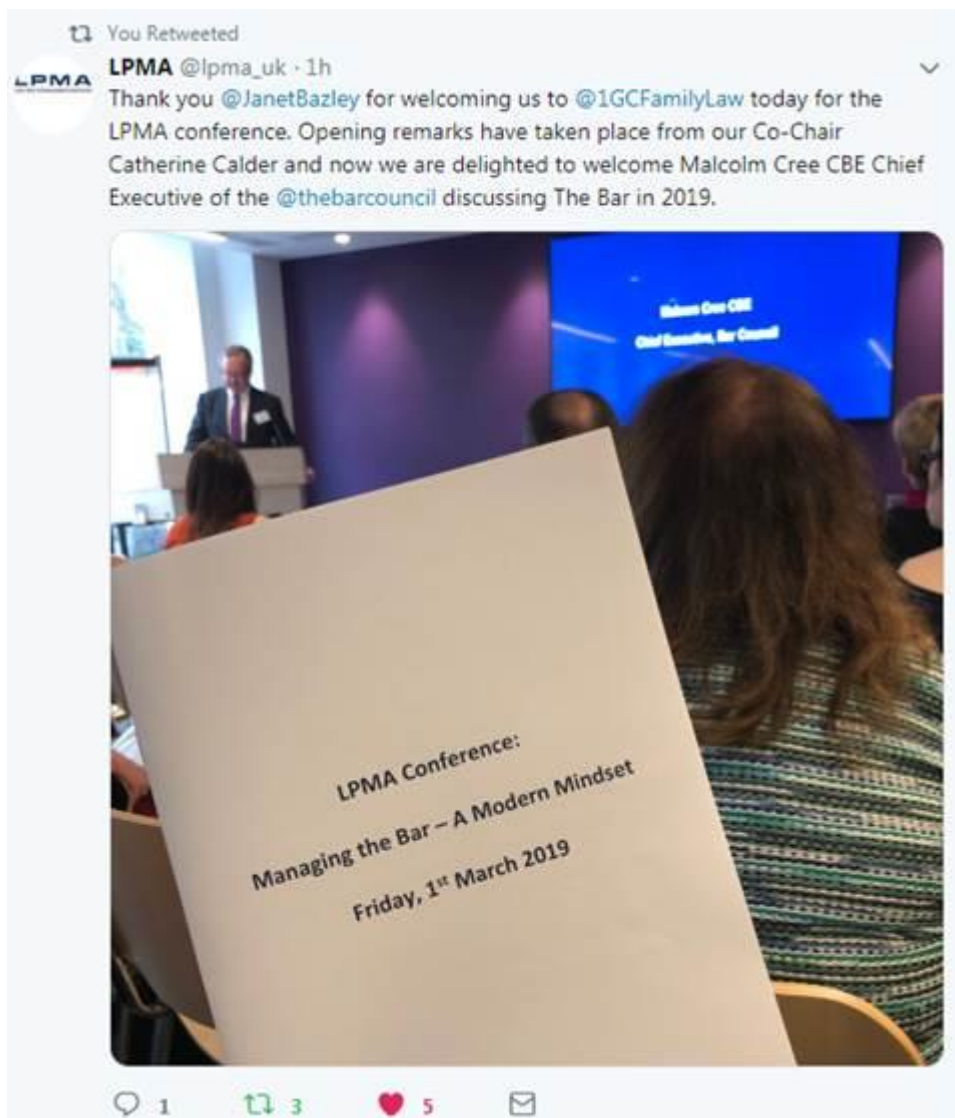
Prosecution fees

[Coventry Telegraph](#), [Legal Cheek](#) – Further reports of the story that barristers could earn more money flipping burgers.

Chris Henley, chairman of the Criminal Bar Association, said: "Too often fees for prosecuting produce hourly rates worse than wages at McDonald's," adding that this "sadly" was not hyperbole. He said one barrister was paid £46.50 for a full night of preparation and a day in court, working out at about £5 an hour, [reports the BBC](#).

Figures from the Bar Council show the average pay for a junior criminal barrister is about £40,000 a year, but subtract the fees to rent chambers and other costs, and that falls to £28,000.

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