



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2020

Diversity in the judiciary

The Daily Telegraph, [Yahoo News](#) - The Supreme Court has confirmed that it will use positive discrimination to appoint a new justice in a bid to boost diversity. The retirement of Lady Black means that the UK's highest court now only has one woman, and no BAME representation.

Barrister Harini Iyengar, who sits on the retention panel for the Bar Council, is quoted in the Telegraph. She said: "We have all known for years that the Bar has a problem retaining experienced, qualified, skilled women barristers in the profession. It's tragic to discover the Supreme Court has a retention problem, too, with Lady Black retiring early at 66."

Spending Review

Ashbourne News – Local media reports that the Bar Council has warned that Derbyshire is facing a severe backlog of court cases, with 6,000 waiting to be heard in Derby and Derbyshire Magistrates' Courts and 380 in the Crown Courts as of July 2020.

The media report that in a paper to the Treasury ahead of the Spending Review, the Bar Council writes:

"Levelling up is a key Government commitment to help communities, particularly in the Midlands and the North, and to reduce regional inequalities. "There is an opportunity as part of this strategy to regenerate towns and cities by modernising and investing in courts and tribunals, which are often in the centre of these towns and cities such as Blackpool, Carlisle, Preston, Cardiff and York."

Chair of the Bar Council, Amanda Pinto QC, is quoted. She said: "Levelling up should focus on people as well as the areas they call home. The Government has a

chance right now to help support the most vulnerable in society and balance the scales.

“Many in the North and Midlands are in dire need of early legal advice to help them resolve issues such as housing, debt or unemployment. In the long run, this early advice saves the Government money and resources across several Ministries.

“The sooner we can stop cases snowballing, causing further delays to the court system and cost and misery to the people involved, the better.”

Income at the Bar

[The Guardian](#), [Daily Telegraph](#), [The Times](#) – The broadsheets report that women barristers from minority ethnic backgrounds are the lowest paid while white male counsel receive the highest incomes, figures published by the Bar Standards Board show.

That disparity in earnings holds true across the profession when looking at those with similar levels of seniority or working in the same parts of England and Wales or practising in similar areas of the law.

“Income differences are particularly stark when looking at gender and ethnicity together,” [the report](#) says, “with female BAME [Black, Asian and minority ethnic] barristers the lowest earning group, and white male barristers the highest earning group.”

Pro bono

[The Times \(online\)](#) – The Times reports that politicians, the media and even the wider public generally fail to notice work that many lawyers do for free, but Pro Bono Week, which started on Monday, is a chance to promote their volunteering efforts.

The pandemic has not only pushed events for the 19th annual week online but caused a dramatic rise in the number of individuals in need of help – particularly those with employment, housing and family problems, where legal aid is either no longer available or limited.

The Times reports that in 2018 the Bar Council, which represents them, estimated that the amount of work done through Advocate – formerly the Bar Pro Bono Unit – equated to almost 11,000 hours of assistance, with a value of almost £2.3million.

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