



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2019

Pro bono week

[Legalcheek](#) - The number of barristers undertaking pro bono work hit record highs last year, new stats reveal.

Never shared publicly before, the **Bar Council figures** show that one in every four barristers practising in England and Wales undertook pro bono work in 2018.

The legal charity Advocate (previously known as the Bar Pro Bono Unit) says the new numbers demonstrate the “growing commitment” of individual barristers to “fighting inequality” in the legal system. It goes on to acknowledge that whilst pro bono cannot substitute for a properly funded legal aid system, the figures highlight the important contribution made by volunteer lawyers.

Armed with its own stats, Advocate revealed its volunteer barristers clocked up over 10,000 hours of pro bono work in 2018. This equates to just shy of £2.25 million in uncharged fees.

Richard Atkins QC, chair of the bar said: “I am delighted to acknowledge the valuable work done by many busy barristers, who give of their time freely to support those who would not otherwise be able to enforce their legal rights. Pro bono work is essential because of the limits of public funding. Those who do pro bono work provide a vital public service. I am very grateful to all involved.”

Court reform

[Legalfutures](#) - The government’s court modernisation programme may not be completed by the deadline of 2023, the House of Commons public accounts committee (PAC) has warned in its latest report on the project.

The committee described the HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) as “struggling to deliver all it promised” and said it was “not doing enough to understand the impact on court and tribunal users” before pressing ahead.

The PAC said this was particularly the case with court closures.

The committee said the courts service had improved the way it communicated with stakeholders, such as the Law Society and **Bar Council**, but “representatives from the legal profession do not feel listened to”.

Pro bono awards & annual bar conference

Family Law – The Bar Pro Bono Awards recognise excellence in pro bono across the Bar. This year headline sponsor is LexisNexis and supported by the **Bar Council**. The judges include the Secret Barrister, the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales Lord Burnett, and the Chairs of many of the Bar’s leading associations and committees.

The awards ceremony will be in the presence of the judges on 6th November 2019. However, the Life time Achievement in Pro Bono and Young Pro Bono Barrister of the Year awards will be given by Lady Hale at the **Bar Council’s Annual Bar & Young Bar Conference on 23rd November**.

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Barristers undertook pro bono through us to the value of over £2.25 million in fees in 2018, had they charged 🤔
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