



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 9 OCTOBER 2020

Prime Minister and Home Secretary

Daily Telegraph, [Metro](#), [Evening Standard](#), The i Paper, [The Independent x 2](#), The Guardian x 2, [The Times](#), Daily Mail, [The Scotsman](#), Politics Home, MSN, Law Society Gazette, PA Media, Legal Cheek, Roll on Friday, The New European, Irish News, Lawyer Monthly, LawFuel, Australasian Lawyer, Denbighshire Free Press, Borehamwood Times, Wandsworth Guardian, Penarth Times, The Lancaster and Morecombe Citizen, The Herald Scotland, The London Economic, Barhead News, The Scottish Farmer, Northern Farmer, Impartial Reporter, Asian Image, Yahoo News, Epping Forest Guardian, Swanage and Wareham Voice, Prestwich and Whitfield Guide, News and Star, Tivyside Advertiser, Evesham Journal, Bridport News, **The National Scot** – The national and other media report on the Bar Council's response to inappropriate comments about lawyers made by both the Prime Minister and Home Secretary in their respective speeches at the Conservative Party Conference.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar, responded to comments made by the Home Secretary that “leftie lawyers” would not hinder the Government’s asylum plans. Amanda Pinto QC, said: “Attempting to paint lawyers with the ‘leftie’ brush seeks to demonise the very people helping constituents every day, without agenda, simply because they provide a vital public service.”

The Bar Council was also quoted across the national media in response to comments made by the Prime Minister in his keynote speech at the Conservative Party Conference, in which he said that he wanted to stop “the whole criminal justice system from being hamstrung by what the Home Secretary would doubtless and rightly call the lefty human rights lawyers and other do-gooders.”

In response, Amanda Pinto QC said: “It is shocking and troubling that our own Prime Minister condones and extends attempts to politicise and attack lawyers for

simply doing their job in the public interest. Lawyers – including those employed by the Government itself - are absolutely vital to the running of our grossly under-funded criminal justice system. Their professional duty is to their client and to the court, and not to play political games.”

Backlogs

The Sun, The Guardian, The Times, [Politics Home](#), Yorkshire Post, Hampshire Chronicle, Express and Star, Reading Chronicle, Ilford Recorder, Oxford Mail, Shropshire Star, Witney Gazette, Hucknall Dispatch, Luton Today, Herald Series, Eastwood Advertiser, Evesham Journal, Bournemouth Echo, The Chad, Buxton Advertiser, Ilkeston Advertiser, Banbury Cake, Derbyshire Times, Ripley Advertiser, Matlock Mercury, Malvern Gazette, Peterborough Today, Worcester News, Worksop Guardian, Bicester Advertiser, Lancashire Telegraph, The Star, Northampton Chronicle - The backlog of criminal cases facing local courts has swelled during lockdown, as new figures show a rise in the number of cases waiting to be heard in the Crown Court during the period of March to August 2020.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar, is quoted in The Sun and The Guardian, as well as local media.

She said: “These latest figures make depressing reading for the British public, victims of crime and those involved in the justice system.”

Black History Month

[Lawyer Monthly](#), [Law.com](#), [Politics Home](#) - The Bar Council has produced new guidance for the profession on racial inequality. The release comes at the start of Black History Month.

The three guides, titled “[Framework for Taking Action on Race Equality](#)”, “[Positive Action Guide for Chambers 2020](#)” and “[Short Guide to Positive Action 2020](#)”, outline the key challenges facing race equality at the Bar.

Issues identified focus on pupillage, bullying and general culture, noting specific indications of race inequality such as the fact that calls made to Bar Council helplines regarding bullying are disproportionately written by black women. Callers in these cases often experienced shouting and exclusion by co-workers.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar, is quoted. She says: “Although Black History Month in many ways looks back, it is a particularly pertinent time for us all to look forward, to turn words into action and shape a new history for Black people in the legal profession.

“The Bar Council guidance aims to help people do just that, at every level of the profession – when recruiting pupils into chambers, when addressing the culture of the Bar, right through to supporting Black barristers to become QCs and judges.”

Positive action guide

[Legal Futures](#) – Legal Futures reports that positive action – such as giving female barristers preferential access to briefs after returning to chambers from career breaks – can bring about real change in addressing under-representation at the Bar, the Bar Council has said.

In its newly published [Positive action guide for chambers](#), the Bar Council’s equality and diversity committee said positive action “can and should make a difference”, but there was “nervousness” about using it.

Committee member Rachel Crasnow QC, who practises at Cloisters, wrote that “positive action can be used effectively for real change in addressing under-representation in training including pathways to pupillage, for career development via targeted access to specific streams of work and also the mitigation of disadvantage to under-represented groups via fixed bursaries or scholarships.

I am the Bar

[Asian Sunday & Asian Standard](#) – One of the new Bar Council ‘I am the Bar’ campaign Social Mobility Advocates Samreen Akhtar, is interviewed by Asian Sunday about being a Social Mobility Advocate, becoming barrister and life at the Bar.

Judicial Review

[Law Society Gazette](#) – The Gazette reports that the Bar Council has urged all Government Legal Department barristers to respond to a call for evidence around judicial review, saying it is important to provide a ‘broad range of perspectives from as many parts of government as possible’.

The Independent Review of Administrative Law is seeking feedback from government departments over whether judicial review strikes the right balance between enabling citizens to challenge the lawfulness of government action and allowing the executive and local authorities to carry on the business of government.

The panel, chaired by Lord Faulks (Edward Faulks QC), was set up in the wake of the Conservatives’ 2019 manifesto commitment to end the ‘abuse’ of judicial review.

Chair of the Bar, Amanda Pinto QC asked government barristers to provide feedback on how, if at all, judicial review impacts on their decision-making and the ability of departments to discharge their functions.

She said: “It is important that the review receives a broad range of perspectives from as many parts of government as possible. The call for evidence’s questionnaire also seeks feedback about codification of the judicial review process, as well as posing broader questions about the judicial review process and procedure.”

Spending review

[Law Society Gazette](#), [LawCareers.net](#) – Further coverage that the Treasury has been warned that the justice system is at a “tipping point” after decades of underfunding, with some barristers earning less than the minimum wage.

The Bar Council said those on government fees could earn the equivalent of £6.25 an hour “despite their central role in clearing the 500,000-plus backlog of cases in the criminal courts”.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar, said: “The spending review is the government’s chance to protect the rights of the British public and restore confidence in law and order in this country.

“For too long, there has been a dismal failure to invest in the Ministry of Justice budget, and many barristers were left unsupported by the government, struggling to get by, as courts closed during the pandemic and their work dried up.

“The justice sector is now in a dire state: outrageously long delays to people’s cases and shockingly low fees for legal professionals are undermining the government’s commitment to law and order.”

BAR COUNCIL TWEETS <https://twitter.com/thebarcouncil>



The Bar Council  @thebarcouncil · Oct 6

"Shocking and troubling." Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar's reaction to the Prime Minister's comments about lawyers in his Conservative Party Conference speech today.

Read her full statement: barcouncil.org.uk/resource/prime...



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The Bar Council  @thebarcouncil · Oct 5

Chair of the Bar's statement following Home Secretary's asylum speech:
"Lawyers carry out their duty & apply the law, irrespective of political persuasion...The law, not politics, is what matters to a profession that upholds the rule of law."

Full response [linkedin.com/posts/general-...](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/general-...)



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