



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2019

Court sitting days

[Evening Standard](#) (online and print), [The Sun](#) (print, page 4), [The Times](#) (print and online), [Yorkshire Post](#) (print), [Law Gazette](#), [PA News Wire](#) – Mainstream and legal media report that the decision not to step up efforts to cut the backlog of criminal cases was 'political', the senior presiding judge has said.

The senior presiding judge was responding to a letter from Bar Council chair Richard Atkins QC, who raised concerns in July about Crown court sitting days, trial delays and recorder numbers.

Chair of the Bar Richard Atkins QC spoke after it emerged the number of days crown courts will sit has been cut by about 15 per cent – despite almost 25,000 outstanding cases.

He said: "I have already commented on the number of crown courts sitting empty and the effect it has on victims of crime who have to wait for justice. I am grateful to the senior presiding judge for answering my questions.

"It is depressingly clear that a political financial decision has been taken to keep the backlog of cases in courts at the existing level.

"Whilst I am pleased that the Government has recently shown more interest in our justice system and has provided much needed funding, this demonstrates how much more investment is needed to ensure that victims of crime receive the justice they deserve and criminals are dealt with speedily."

There will be 82,300 sitting days in criminal courts in 2019/2020, down from 97,400 in 2018/2019.

Spending round

[LawCareers.net](#) – Further reports that the government has announced a 5% budget increase for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and an extra £80 million for the [Crown Prosecution Service](#) (CPS), but lawyers see the increases as nowhere near sufficient to deal with problems in the justice system.

Chancellor Sajid Javid announced the measures in the government's spending review on Wednesday, but as the *Law Gazette* reports, the Bar Council has described the budget increases as “drops in the ocean”.

Malcolm Cree CBE, chief executive of the Bar Council, commented: “The budget boost for the MoJ and CPS is necessary and overdue. But, although welcome, they are drops in the ocean in budgetary terms and will only go so far in restoring a justice system which is falling apart at the seams. We need a longer term vision of how public confidence in tackling crime can be restored.”

Javid's spending review announcements are widely seen as election giveaways as Boris Johnson's minority government gears up to go to the polls.

Anti-bullying and harassment app

The Daily Telegraph (print) – The Telegraph releases an exclusive report that an app created to log reports of bullying and sexual harassment is being launched for barristers, to “call out” inappropriate behaviour. The Bar Council, which represents barristers in England and Wales, has partnered a Silicon Valley tech company to develop the app to support members of the bar who are victims of – or witnesses to – discrimination, harassment or bullying.

The app, called TalkToSpot, will be rolled out to barristers this autumn.

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



The Bar Council  @thebarcouncil · Sep 8

Bar Council warning in @standardnews over court days being cut despite backlog of crime cases after Government audit



Court days cut despite backlog of crime cases after Government audit

The number of court sitting days are being slashed despite a backlog of criminal cases, it has emerged. Dozens of courtrooms will continue to si...
[standard.co.uk](https://www.standard.co.uk)

 9

 56

 53





The Bar Council @thebarcouncil · Sep 6

We are pleased the BSB has now agreed with our view on the proposed Pupillage Timetable - that it is unrealistic to expect chambers & others who do not currently recruit through Gateway to be ready to comply with the timetable from Nov'19.

See more: bit.ly/2k30bwO



The Bar Council @thebarcouncil · Sep 5

We're delighted to be in Colombia with @LSInternational @ANDI_Colombia for our 1st ever #EnglishLawDayColombia. Looking forward to strengthening the legal ties and having informative talks on Fintech, Energy&Infrastructure, Insurance/Reinsurance, Arbitration & Anti-corruption



The Bar Council @thebarcouncil · Sep 5

The Bar Council said the announcements were "drops in the ocean in budgetary terms and will only go so far in restoring a justice system which is falling apart at the seams".



The Independent @Independent · Sep 5

Police could lose powers to arrest criminals wanted by EU countries without a court warrant independent.co.uk/news/uk/politi...

