



## BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 10 JANUARY 2020

### Disclosure

**The Daily Telegraph (print and [online](#)), [The Guardian](#), [Law Gazette](#), [PoliticsHome](#), [Yahoo.com](#)** - A shortage of prosecutors and experienced police officers has left investigators “struggling to cope” with obligations to disclose key evidence to defendants in criminal trials, according to a critical inspectorate report.

Amanda Pinto QC, chair of the Bar Council, which represents barristers in England and Wales, said: “We must not forget that victims of crime and those accused of committing crimes can be the most affected by disclosure failures, and the fact that in less than 50% of the cases inspected was disclosure done properly is not reassuring to the public.

“As the report acknowledges, there has been further investment in the CPS. Despite help from the Bar and solicitors to improve disclosure in all cases from the smallest to the most complex, there is more to do.

“There still needs to be more investment in people, training and resources in the police, the CPS and the criminal justice system generally, to tackle the pervasive problems with disclosure.”

### Social media

**Evening Standard (The Londoner) (print and [online](#))** – The Evening Standard reports on barristers’ use of social media and a blog from family barrister Lucy Reed.

On her Pink Tape blog she writes: “We are too often pompous, tone deaf, macho, always bloody right, sanctimonious, pedantic, holier than thou — and we have a specialness complex. And we just seem incapable of saying nothing.”

Indeed, the Bar Council’s guidance warns: “You should always take care to consider the content and tone of what you are posting or sharing.”

But Amanda Pinto QC, chair of the Bar Council claimed: “Social media is largely a force for good in the barristers’ profession.”

## Criminal justice

**The Times (print and [online](#)), [Irish Legal News](#), [Scottish Legal News](#)** – The use of corroboration in the English criminal justice system should be resisted, the new chair of the Bar Council has said, in an interview with *The Times*.

Ministers south of the border are understood to be considering the use of the Scottish evidential requirement but Amanda Pinto QC has warned against its use in rape trials.

“We’ve rightly come away from requiring corroboration [in England and Wales],” she says. “Because if you require corroboration in something that is typically between two people, then you restrict access for justice for some victims entirely.”

While Pinto agrees that the motivation behind the use of video witness evidence is well intentioned, she says: “There is evidence to suggest that something on a screen is less real to the recipients and more like television than real life. [...] Video interviews are perceived differently than if they are able to pick up the signs, which can be very tiny [in a face-to-face] interview.”

The QC also said Parliament must not take up the demands of some who would like juries abolished in rape trials.

“Juries are really good arbiters of what the evidence shows,” she said.

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

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**Katherine Duncan** @KatherineAbdn · 19h

A reminder that YBC is still looking for @YoungBarristers to participate in focus groups for working lives surgery @thebarcouncil . First group on 14th Jan in London.



**Katherine Duncan** @KatherineAbdn · Jan 6

The YBC is looking for young barristers to participate in 1 of 3 focus groups for the Working Lives Survey. 4-5.30pm on 14th Jan in London, 22nd Jan in Manchester and 30th Jan in Winchester. DM if interested@YoungBarristers @thebarcouncil [barcouncil.org.uk/support-for-ba...](http://barcouncil.org.uk/support-for-ba...)



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**FLBA** @FamilyLawBar · 17h

Our 1st FLBA meeting was electric last night. 30 hard working & talented Committee members turned up to plan 2020. Amanda Pinto QC Chair @thebarcouncil joined us. She shares our Vision and has great energy and va va voom. She will shine for us all. Watch this space. CLQC



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