



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2021

Pupillage

[Law Society Gazette](#), [LawCareers.net](#) – The legal media reports that the Bar Council has warned that the pandemic could cause a 'persisting' shortage of barristers, after the number of pupillages registered last year fell by 35%.

Derek Sweeting QC, Chair of the Bar, said the number of cancelled recruitment processes and deferred pupillages from 2020 are likely to leave a “persisting pandemic gap at a time when legal needs are likely to increase”.

He added: “This will disproportionately affect publicly funded work and highlights the need for a thorough review of the legal aid system to allow to ensure recruitment into this vital part of the justice system.”

A new report by the Bar Standards Board says 386 pupillages were registered in 2020. This compares with 592 pupillages registered in 2019: a fall of 35%.

Covid rule-breaking

[LBC Radio](#) (at 2hrs 39mins 25secs) – Mark Fenhalls QC, Vice Chair of the Bar, told LBC listeners about the law surrounding plans announced by the Health Secretary to impose 10 year custodial sentences on some who breached Covid rules.

Mark Fenhalls QC said that the government appeared to be planning on using existing laws to impose the sentences, but that those laws were rarely used to for custodial sentences that long and that usually the laws were used for non-custodial sentences.

Meanwhile, former members of the judiciary and former Lord Chancellors said it was unlikely that 10 year custodial sentences would be imposed.

#10000BlackInterns

[New Law Journal](#), [Legal Cheek](#) – The legal media reports that law firms, legal businesses and chambers have been urged to join the [#10000BlackInterns](#) initiative, which aims to broaden career opportunities for Black people in the UK.

Recent supporters include the Bar Council, family chambers 4PB as well as Matrix, Keating, Littleton, QEB and the Law Society.

Extended Operating Hours

[The Times](#) (print & online) – The Times looks at whether plans to extend court operating hours have been abandoned or simply delayed and looks at the arguments for and against the move.

Derek Sweeting QC, Chair of the Bar, is quoted. He says that extending court hours “would leave many barristers unable to balance their home and work life, forcing them out of the profession”.

Civil legal

Legal Action - Further coverage appears of the Bar Council’s new report “Running on Empty”, which says the civil law legal aid system in England and Wales is “running on empty” because of cuts imposed eight years ago that are having a “damaging effect” on barristers.

Legal Services Board

[Legal Futures](#) - The Legal Services Board (LSB) is pushing ahead with plans to introduce continuing competence checks for lawyers.

This could include feedback from consumers, judges and peers, assurance visits and even formal revalidation.

The Bar Council said this should be gathered informally and it did not think there was a role for formal feedback from judges and that it would support encouraging clerks to pass on positive and negative feedback from solicitors.

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Young Barristers' Committee

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PUPIL BARRISTERS: Please spend 5 minutes completing [@thebarcouncil](#) survey about the impact of Covid-19 on your pupillage, to help gather important data.

Deadline is Monday 15 February: r1.dotdigital-pages.com/p/4CGD-DG2/cov...

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