



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – WEDNESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2018

Welsh language

BBC Wales (Online and BBC Radio Wales x3), The Brief, Law Gazette, South Wales Argus (print) – Broadcast, online, and print media report on the Bar Council's submission to the Lord Chancellor's Standing Committee on Welsh language requirements for police interviews in Wales.

Standards imposed by the Welsh Language Commissioner include a duty to provide a simultaneous translation service if an interview cannot be conducted in Welsh. Chief constables in Wales have complained this requirement is 'unreasonable and disproportionate'.

Rejecting those arguments, the Bar Council's Law Reform Committee have said simultaneous translation does not contravene the PACE and is less disruptive to interviews than the stop-start nature of consecutive translation.

In an interview with BBC Wales, Cardiff-based barrister Rhodri Williams QC said: "The police constables' argument does not stack up so the standard should be applied.

"Instantaneous translation is in place in courts up and down the land and works very well."

Wellbeing

Legal Cheek, PoliticsHome report that a new partnership has this week been announced between the Bar Council and Health Assured to offer a new Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to the entire self-employed bar.

The new programme, funded by Bar Mutual Indemnity Fund, will offer confidential telephone support and counselling services to barristers, as well as a wide range of wellbeing fact sheets, videos and self-help programmes. Available from yesterday, the scheme builds on a similar programme launched last year by the Criminal Bar Association (CBA) but extends coverage to the whole of the self-employed bar.

It's not just barristers who can call on the additional wellbeing support. The Bar Council today confirmed the EAP will be available to members of the Institute of Barristers' Clerks (IBC) and the Legal Practice Management Association (LPMA).

Andrew Walker QC, Chair of the Bar, said

“The wellbeing of barristers in all areas of practice is something that cannot be taken for granted. The pressures that they now face are such that we need to make sure that ongoing support is available, whenever it might be needed. The findings of our ‘Barristers’ Working Lives’ survey in the last year clearly indicated immense levels of stress felt by members of the bar, with those at the criminal bar being among those most badly affected, so we are grateful for the crucial work of the CBA in taking a lead by offering a bespoke telephone helpline for the last 12 months.”

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COUNSEL In this month's Counsel, Bar Conference Chair Lucinda Orr provides a host of good reasons to devote a day of your life to the Annual Bar Conference on Saturday 24 November. Read more here: bit.ly/2zMhaZV @thebarcouncil

