



## BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 15 MAY 2020

### Jury trials

The Sun, [Daily Mirror](#) (print and online), [BBC News](#), [Daily Telegraph](#) (print and online), [Financial Times](#) (print and online), [Metro](#), The Independent (print and online), The i Paper (print and online), The Guardian (print and online), Yahoo News, Press Association x 2, Evening Standard, South Wales Argus, Legal Futures, Hartlepool Mail, Law Society Gazette, Shields Gazette – The Bar Council is quoted across the media in response to the news that jury trials in England and Wales will resume from next week, nearly two months after being put on hold amid coronavirus lockdown measures.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar, is quoted across the national media. She said: "It is very encouraging to see that jury trials will start up again from mid-May. Jury trials are essential to our criminal justice system and to the rule of law.

"It is reassuring that efforts to restart jury trials have involved a painstaking and cautious approach, that prioritises practical measures to ensure the safety of all those involved in the delivery of criminal justice. The decision has not been made lightly.

"The Bar Council sees these first steps in managing and, then, we anticipate, as soon as is safely possible, rolling out jury trials more broadly across the nation, as a positive sign that criminal justice matters."

[The i Paper](#) interviews Amanda Pinto QC on jury trials and criminal justice.

### #MakeTheCase

[BBC News](#), [Politics Home](#), [Law Society Gazette](#), [Dee Radio \(Chester\)](#) – The media reports that the Bar Council is calling on the Treasury to give urgent financial backing to the Bar to help it survive the Covid-19 crisis.

As part of a campaign, 'Make the Case', The Bar Council is urging barristers to write to and Tweet their local MP to press the Treasury on a package of five measures to help the profession.

### Bar Council survey findings

[Daily Mail](#), [Financial Times](#), [New Statesman](#), [Punchline Gloucester](#), [Yorkshire Post](#), [Shropshire Star](#) x 3, [Express and Star](#) x 5, [Northern Echo](#), [Telegraph & Argus](#) – The media continues to report that legal issues cannot be put off indefinitely, according to barristers who have warned that public access to justice is being hindered by the Covid-19 crisis.

Three-quarters (75%) of more than 3,400 barristers surveyed by the Bar Council said they do not think the public can currently access justice at an acceptable level, while just 7% said access is acceptable.

The Daily Mail quotes Chair of the Bar, Amanda Pinto QC, who told the Justice Select Committee that findings from a barrister-wide survey on the possible impact to their practices of the Covid-19 emergency shutdown was 'shocking'.

David Lammy MP points to a recent Bar Council chambers survey findings, which showed a similar impact, in his column on the impact of Covid-19 on criminal justice.

### Testing

[Politics Home](#), [Law Society Gazette](#), [New Law Journal](#) – The media reports that the Bar Council is helping self-employed barristers showing Covid-19 symptoms to get tested under the Department of Health & Social Care employer referral testing scheme.

The Bar Council is acting as a 'quasi-employer' for the profession and facilitating the tests for barristers who have been identified as essential workers because of their critical role in the justice system.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar, said: "The Bar Council's purpose is to support barristers and put their interests first, so it is only right that we step in and help in this way."

### Cost-saving measures

[The Times](#) - The Bar Council and Bar Standards Board (BSB) have implemented a series of cost-cutting measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Both bodies have implemented a pay and recruitment freeze, while the Bar Council confirmed it had also furloughed seven of its 35 staff.

### **New tech for the criminal justice system**

[ChannelWeb](#), [AV Magazine](#) - HMCTS is bringing in a new video platform to enable all parties in a criminal hearing to take part remotely – allowing all magistrate and crown courts in England and Wales to hold secure hearings, making it easier to make sure justice continues to be served.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar Council, said: “We must keep the justice system going in the public interest. Barristers, along with the judiciary, court staff and many others, are determined to adapt quickly to delivering justice during Covid-19, including delivering it remotely. The new CVP platform is crucial to these efforts, enabling more cases to be heard without everyone having to gather in a physical courtroom.”

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Today we launch [#MakeTheCase](#). We're asking you to contact your local MPs and share how Covid-19 has affected barristers directly, encouraging your MP to write to [@hmtreasury](#) [@RishiSunak](#) and help us [#MakeTheCase](#) for support.

Find more information here: [barcouncil.org.uk/media-campaign...](https://barcouncil.org.uk/media-campaign...)



👤 The CBA and 5 others

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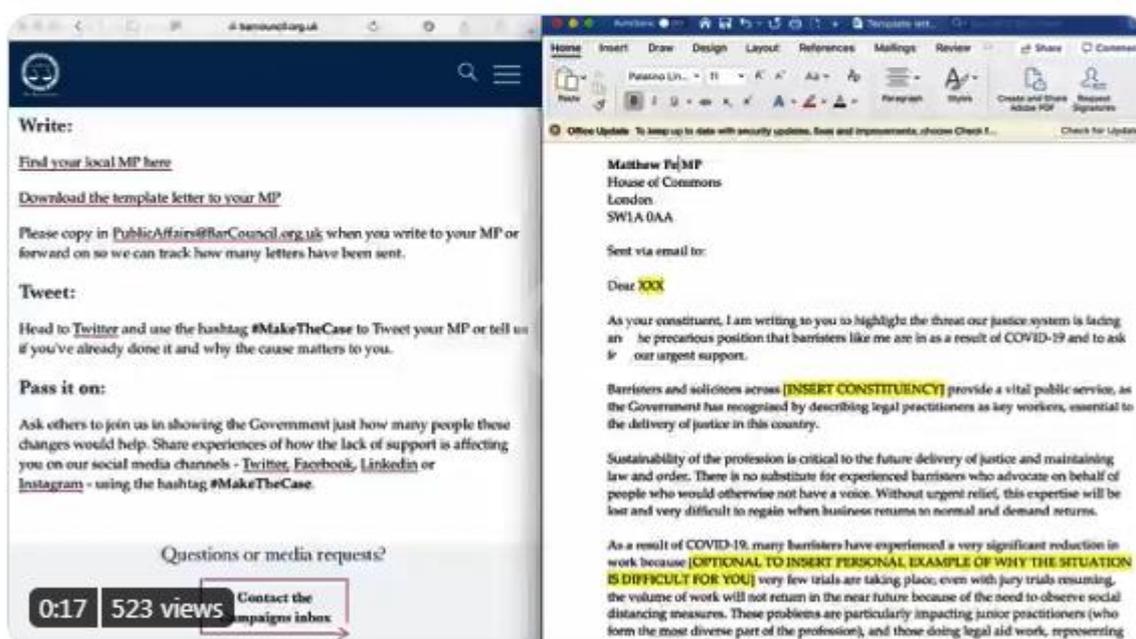


**Joanne Kane**  
@JoanneKane\_



You can [#MakeTheCase](#) to your MP in less than five minutes using the template provided by [@TheBarCouncil](#). [@YoungBarristers](#) particularly need (i) access to self-employed relief and (ii) support for chambers.

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