



## BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – WEDNESDAY 31 JULY 2019

### Legal aid

[Daily Mail](#), [ITV.com](#), [The Metro](#) (print and [online](#)), [Yahoo.com](#), [Express and Star](#), [The Press and Journal](#), [The Messenger](#), [The Argus](#), [The Northern Echo](#) (print and online), [NW Mail](#), [Chelmsford and Mid Essex Times](#), [Belfast Telegraph](#), [Surrey Comet](#), [Chorley Citizen](#), [Swindon Advertiser](#), [Oxford Mail](#), [The Milford Mercury](#), [Jersey Evening Post](#), [Shropshire Star](#), [Bromsgrove Advertiser](#), [Richmond & Twickenham Times](#), [Stroud News and Journal](#), [Whitchurch Herald](#), [Wharfedale Observer](#), [Yorkshire Post](#) (print, page 2) [ThisisMoney](#), [News Shopper](#), [This is Local London](#), [Smallholder](#), PA News Wire - Mainstream national and local media report on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of legal aid.

The 70th anniversary of legal aid, introduced on July 30 1949 to help pay for representation in court proceedings, comes amid growing calls for an urgent overhaul of the system, which professionals claim is floundering amid steep cuts and a raft of errors when handling applications.

Richard Atkins QC, chair of the Bar Council, noted that legal aid spending fell by 37 per cent from 2010/2011 to £1.6 billion in 2017/2018. He said: “You can’t have that sort of cut and maintain the quality that you had however many years before.

“It is a lot less than the figure that was spent and all of the problems that we see – people unrepresented, people having to pay vast amounts of money that in the past they would have had assistance with, people being acquitted having faced charges brought by the state and then not getting their money back, people deciding they will turn to unqualified people (for legal help) who may not assist them in the way they should be assisted – that can’t be a good thing.”

He said there is a feeling among the public that families of terror attack victims should be entitled to legal aid so they can get the best out of an inquest into their loved ones’ deaths.

Richard Atkins QC also said cuts to the legal aid system which came into force in 2013 ‘went too far’ but he is ‘more optimistic now than I have been in a long time

that things are being addressed'. Under former chancellor David Gauke, who was replaced last week by Robert Buckland, there seemed to be 'a greater understanding' the issue needed attention. Mr Atkins warned 'all of this could potentially go up in the air' if someone new 'just ripped it all up' and decided to start again.

### New Lord Chancellor

**Western Daily Press (print, page 4), [Shropshire Star](#), [Times and Star](#), [Aol.co.uk](#) -** The fifth Lord Chancellor in four years has been welcomed to the role by leading figures in the legal profession.

Former criminal barrister Robert Buckland, who was previously Solicitor General, was sworn in to the ancient office at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on Tuesday morning.

Mr Buckland, who was recently promoted to Justice Secretary, became the first Lord Chancellor to swear his oath of office in Welsh as well as in English.

Richard Atkins, chair of the Bar Council, said: "I am genuinely delighted to welcome him today and hope, given the alleged current political volatility, that now I have joined the party to welcome a Lord Chancellor I am not the first chair of the Bar to welcome two in a year."

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COUNSEL. The Bar continues to survive, thrive and make history as @thebarcouncil celebrates 125 years and goes on Circuit for the first time: read more from @AtkinsQC in August's Chair's Column, at [bit.ly/2Yg9BK0](https://bit.ly/2Yg9BK0)



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Today is both #NameOurStorm day and the 70th birthday of the UK's legal aid system.

@MetOffice – what do you think of the idea of Storm Justice?

Its perhaps a fitting metaphor for the legal aid funding crisis forecast by @thebarcouncil



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#HappyBirthdayLegalAid

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**Joshua Rozenberg** @JoshuaRozenberg · Jul 30

The attorney general Geoffrey Cox QC notes that both law officers and the lord chancellor are members of the bar — "as it should be". The chairman of the bar points out that @RobertBuckland is the first lord chancellor for some time to wear a judicial wig at today's ceremony.

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