



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 25 JANUARY 2019

Court IT failures

[The Guardian](#), [The Times](#), [The Yorkshire Post](#) - The computer network collapse that disrupted courts across England and Wales for days has prompted calls for compensation and improved funding for the beleaguered criminal justice system.

The Justice Minister Lucy Frazer was forced to answer emergency questions in parliament on Wednesday as trials were adjourned because lawyers could not access the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) network.

The chair of the Bar Council, Richard Atkins QC, said: "The Ministry of Justice is structurally underfunded and its budget is based on achieving year-on-year savings of hundreds of millions through the hugely ambitious court reform programme. After years of underfunding, parts of the court estate and IT systems are in a shocking state. The Treasury must not turn a blind eye any longer. The Ministry of Justice needs more money for investment in our legal system."

[Computer Weekly](#), [The Week](#), [Yahoo! News](#), and [The Leicester Mercury](#) also covered the story as it broke.

PA News and **The Yorkshire Post** report that Ministry of Justice Chief Digital and Information Officer Tom Read, and CEO of HMCTS Susan Acland-Hood have both apologised to Chair of the Bar Richard Atkins QC for the disruption.

Mr Atkins said: "Tom has conveyed to me his apologies to the Bar and other court users for the IT problems which have affected the courts as well as the CJSM secure email system over the last week.

"He has assured me that the ministry is working with its IT suppliers who are doing all they can to rectify the faults.

"Susan Acland-Hood has also personally apologised for the problems and promised to notify the Bar Council in future of any problems as and when they arise."

Mr Atkins went on: "I will be meeting with Tom Read in the near future to discuss these matters and to seek assurances that the IT systems will be properly funded so that the chaos that has been experienced over the last few weeks does not re-occur."

Regulation

Legal Futures - The Law Society has said it is "deeply concerned" that new rules proposed by the Legal Services Board (LSB) could largely prevent it from either lobbying or criticising the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA).

The society said the internal governance rules (IGR), which aim to ensure that the SRA and other regulators are independent, could also create a situation where "disagreements are more likely to arise".

The draft rules were **strongly criticised** last month by Richard Atkins QC, new chair of the Bar Council, who warned that the Bar could be "sleep walking into a nightmare scenario" where it had no involvement with its regulator, the Bar Standards Board.

Wellbeing

Manchester Gazette - Women in the Law recently held an event promoting Wellness, Wellbeing and Mindfulness for both men and women. With a special focus on the importance of wellbeing at the Bar, attendees at this event heard from a range of speakers on wellbeing under Chatham house rules. More importantly speakers offered strategies and tips for coping with a variety of issues, from stress, anxiety to depression to work life balance.

The Wellbeing at the Bar Working Group consists of representatives from the Bar Council, the Inns of Court, Specialist Bar Associations, the Circuits, the Institute of Barristers' Clerks (IBC) and the Legal Practice Management Association (LPMA).

Family legal aid

openDemocracy has republished one of the Bar Council's original Justice Papers written by Frances Judd QC, Chair of the Family Law Bar Association for Justice Week.

Frances Judd QC's paper begins:

"In the UK we are lucky enough to have a fair and impartial judicial system. But judges can only do their jobs properly if they have the right evidence and if the cases are properly presented. They also need enough time to listen to people, and to make and record their decisions. Most barristers in the family courts will tell you that this is happening less and less."

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

FRU FRU
@FreeRepUnit

Following

Many thanks to @AtkinsQC with Malcolm and Natalie from @thebarcouncil for a very positive meeting today. Fantastic for FRU to have the continued support of the Bar Council for our work. @thebarcouncil remain one of our main funders.

12:57 PM - 24 Jan 2019

3 Retweets 6 Likes



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The Bar Council @thebarcouncil · 21h

Today is #DayOfTheEndangeredLawyer with a focus on Turkey. In the past couple of years, we have examined the situation in #Turkey & urged both the UK PM @10DowningStreet & Turkish authorities to stand up for the rule of law.

Read what we've said here: barcouncil.org.uk/media-centre/n...



Counsel Magazine @CounselMagazine · 22h
COUNSEL 'What has the Bar Council ever done for me?' Richard Atkins QC tackles the perennial question asked of the Bar Council in February's Chair's Column: read it at bit.ly/2CF6ZHV @thebarcouncil @AtkinsQC



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A portrait of Richard Atkins QC, a middle-aged man with grey hair, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

The Bar Council @thebarcouncil · 21h
We were at Nottingham Trent law fair earlier this week with @TheInnerTemple - thanks to our volunteer barristers! @TrentUni #NTU



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A photograph of a booth at a law fair. The booth has a black table with brochures and a laptop. Behind the table are three red banners with the Bar Council logo and the text: 'DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO RAISE THE BAR?', 'BECOME A BARRISTER', and 'DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO RAISE THE BAR?'. A woman in a black dress is on the left, and a man in a dark suit is on the right. A man in a wig is visible in the background.



The Bar Council @thebarcouncil



Bar Council steps in over MoJ court IT system meltdown. Update from Chair of the Bar, Richard Atkins QC r1.dmtrk.net/4CGD-H1UR-32/s...



10:48 AM - 24 Jan 2019



The Bar Council @thebarcouncil · Jan 23



Almost 50 chambers, Inns, Specialist Bar Associations & Circuits have been awarded our #WellbeingAtTheBar Certificate of Recognition to date. Join their ranks by applying for a certificate by 1 February 2019.

More info here: wellbeingatthebar.org.uk/case-studies/

#WellbeingWednesday



The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, Middle Temple, Gray's Inn and 5 others

