



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 10 MARCH 2017

Junior Bar

[City AM \(print edition and online\)](#), **The Brief** – City AM reports on the Bar Council's concerns over the impact the recent Budget will have on the junior Bar.

City AM reports that those trying to make a name for themselves in the courts have been dealt a blow by the impending hike in national insurance.

Chancellor Philip Hammond revealed in his maiden Budget that the class 4 National Insurance rate would be increased by one percentage point to 10 per cent from April.

A Bar Council spokesperson is quoted as saying: "Any increase in the national insurance contribution will be felt in particular by junior barristers who work at legal aid rates which have been repeatedly cut. The long term impact any national insurance increases have on the self-employed Bar must be considered in light of the many challenges the Bar and other self-employed professionals face, such as the costs associated with maternity and paternity leave, pensions and overhead costs to name a few, not to mention the large costs associated with qualifying to become a barrister. Many of the costs do not impact in the same way on employed professionals."

Women at the Bar

[Legal Cheek](#) – Legal Cheek reports that the Bar Council has released a "heart-warming" video to celebrate International Women's Day.

Featuring some of the country's most notable female QCs, the video encourages people, particularly senior women, to #payitforward and inspire junior barristers to take the next step in their careers.

AGFS

[Law Society Gazette](#) – The Gazette reports Chairman of the Bar has weighed into the debate on plans to restructure the Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme (AGFS), claiming the body is in danger of losing confidence in the government's proposals.

In a strongly worded letter to the Ministry of Justice, **Andrew Langdon QC** urges the department to commit to index-linked increases and regular reviews to test the assertion that the scheme is cost-neutral.

The letter is distinct from the council's official response to the proposals, which it submitted last week. In that document the [council said](#) it supports a general restructuring of AGFS but that it does not necessarily believe that the rates proposed are adequate. It also raised concern over whether the new scheme would be cost-neutral, as the government had suggested.

"What is clear is that there should be ongoing reviews of the scheme by some method, so that adjustments can be made in the light of experience," the Bar Council said, adding that many barristers who had compared the fees paid to them under the current scheme with the fees that they would be paid under the proposed scheme had calculated a fee cut. In his letter, sent last week, Langdon says the council had 'repeatedly set out' concerns over cost neutrality. Cost neutrality, the letter says, was established against the year 2014/15.

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Junior Bar could feel hit from hike in national insurance, warns Bar Council

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Junior legal eagles hit by hike in national insurance

Those trying to make a name for themselves in the courts have been dealt a blow by the impending hike in national insurance.

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