



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – MONDAY 6 MARCH 2017

AGFS

[Legal Voice](#) and [the Gazette](#) write about the Bar Council supporting the Ministry of Justice's plan to restructure the Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme (AGFS) in criminal cases. However, the Bar Council also warned that AGFS should be 'closely monitored' to ensure advocates do not lose out on fees, reports **the Gazette**. Supporting for restructure does not mean that the Bar Council 'considers the rates proposed as adequate'.

The Bar Council "said many barristers and chambers had undertaken their own calculations comparing the fees paid to them under the current scheme with the fees that they would be paid under the proposed scheme – and that many calculations had shown a fee cut", writes **the Gazette**.

Legal Voice recalled that the consultation divided the profession, as "the Law Society, which had pulled out of a working group on the reforms, accused the government of handing the senior Bar 'a New Year pay hike' as a result of proposed reforms to the Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme (AGFS) which, it argued, favoured QCs over their more junior colleagues."

Legal aid

[New Law Journal](#) publishes John Ford's appeal to solicitors to help with a fighting fund to take on the Legal Aid Agency over its assessment of legal aid and payment of costs. John Ford, the sole principal of John Ford Solicitors in London, wants to fund a legal challenge against a decision that could mean the end of funding for any appeal solely concerned with costs.

"The attempt to save legal aid money by reducing the scope of legal aid is now seen as a stripping of the system which must now operate without people who need it receiving adequate representation. I hope that readers of this article can take all the steps possible to encourage the decision-makers and lawmakers to start reversing the disastrous progressive effect of the legal aid changes that have been forced upon us for more than two decades now", writes John Ford.

Supreme Court

Brice Dickson, professor at the School of Law, Queen's University Belfast, examined the activity of the Supreme Court in an article published by **The New Law Journal**. Writing about the prominent issues dealt with by the Supreme Court, Brice Dickson writes: "As usual public law featured frequently. Thirteen cases were judicial reviews of administrative action, 11 concerned immigration, deportation or extradition and 11 raised human rights or discrimination arguments. Nine cases dealt with matters of EU law. Six focused on insurance law. There were four cases each on family law, taxation law and social security law."

Changes in personal injury compensation payments

New Law Journal reports about the mixed reaction lawyers had to the Lord Chancellor Liz Truss's decision to reduce the discount rate for personal injury compensation payments from 2.5% to minus 0.75%.

"The discount rate is the calculation of lifetime earnings through low risk investment that is used by courts when working out appropriate lump sum compensation payments for victims of life-changing injuries. It will change on 20 March, the first time since 2001," writes the New Law Journal.

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



The screenshot displays three tweets from a social media feed. The first tweet is from 'The Bar Council' (@thebarcouncil) dated Mar 4, with a blue verified badge. It features a circular profile picture with a scale of justice icon. The text reads: 'Last chance to book your place for next week's @FamilyLawBar seminar. Don't miss out! Register now bit.ly/2IPx4Nf'. Below the text are icons for replies (1), retweets (1), likes (1), and a share icon. The second tweet is also from 'The Bar Council' (@thebarcouncil) dated Mar 3, with a blue verified badge and the same profile picture. The text reads: 'Speaker applications for our English-Polish Law day must be in soon barcouncil.org.uk/supporting-the...'. It has icons for replies, retweets (1), likes (1), and a share icon. The third tweet is a retweet, indicated by a green 'You Retweeted' label. It is from 'Direct Access Portal' (@DirAccessPortal) dated Mar 5, with a purple profile picture. The text reads: 'Even the AG (#AttorneyGeneral - UK version, not US #sessions) wants people to know about direct access barristers'. Below this is a quote box containing a tweet from 'JJ!' (@JJ_brum) dated Mar 5, with text: 'AG: we must educate politicians about direct access. so constituents, who need legal advice get told about seeing a barrister #barcouncil'. The retweet has icons for replies, retweets (4), and likes (4).