



## BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 2 JUNE 2017

### Judicial Diversity

**The Brief, The Times** – Chair of the Equality and Diversity Committee Robin Allen QC is quoted in The Brief's coverage of the [Judicial Appointments Commission \(JAC\) statistical release on the equality and diversity](#) of this year's judicial appointments.

He said: "We cannot go on having no BAME [black, Asian and minority ethnic] applications for senior judicial roles. The rule of law requires a fully diverse judiciary. Once again the figures reveal the urgent need for positive action to make BAME applicants more successful and to increase the number of eligible women applicants.

"These figures stress the importance of the Bar Council's ongoing training and coaching programmes for BAME and women lawyers who wish to serve as members of the judiciary."

### Manifesto for justice

[Counsel Magazine](#) – Public Affairs and Communications Adviser at the Bar Council, Luke Robins-Grace writes about '[The Value of Justice](#)' the Bar Council's justice manifesto for the 2017 General Election:

"Justice is not a commodity but as the saying goes: you get what you pay for, and most people would agree that the price recent governments have been prepared to pay for our system of justice does not reflect its value to society. So the Bar Council's message to politicians during the 2017 General Election campaign is that if we want a justice system that works for everyone, we cannot wait for an upturn in the economy before taking the necessary steps."

### Ethics

[Counsel Magazine](#) – Chair of the Ethics Committee Rachel Langdale QC and Head of Policy on Legal Affairs, Practice and Ethics, Ellie Cumbo write about the work of the Ethics Committee, including the Ethical Enquiries Service.

**Rachel Langdale QC** writes: “The value of this service to members of the Bar – who are frequently anxious and at court when making the call – is one of the reasons I encourage people to pay the Bar Representation Fee on an annual basis. The service is of particular support to less experienced barristers, but it is not exclusively for them.”

**Ellie Cumbo writes:** “Rule C20 of the Handbook is clear that barristers are responsible for their own conduct, and we don’t aim to usurp its judgment. Instead, we set out the obligations and guidance that exist, and suggest how these should or could be interpreted in practice.”

“Confidential and specific though each query is, they nevertheless add up to a picture of a profession that takes ethical practice seriously, adapts to change quickly, and aims to serve the interests of individual clients and wider society alike.

### Flexible Court Operating Hours

[The Guardian](#), [Yahoo UK](#) - Plans to launch a pilot programme of flexible early morning and evening courts from next month are encountering growing opposition from lawyers. The Ministry of Justice proposals, put on hold during the general election, are expected to start at six court centres in England in June despite protests by the Law Society, Bar Council and an online petition. The proposals would involve extended working hours, with some court sessions starting as early as 8am and other sittings continuing until 8.30pm for a six-month test period.

**Andrew Langdon QC, Chair of the Bar**, is quoted.

He said: “These arrangements will make it almost impossible for parents with childcare responsibilities to predict if they can make the school run or to know when they will be able to pick children up from the child-minders. The biggest impact will be on women. Childcare responsibilities still fall disproportionately to women, many of whom do not return to the profession after having children. It is hard to see how these plans sit with the government’s commitment to improving diversity in the profession and the judiciary.”

### Court reporting

[BBC Radio Four \(The Media Show\)](#) – Chair of the Bar, Andrew Langdon QC, appears on BBC Radio Four to discuss the impact of the decline of court reporters. He told listeners that the decline has led to inaccurate reporting in the media as cases are misreported by individuals on social media. The Chair also highlights the impact cuts to legal aid has had on our justice system and the rise of litigants in person.

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