



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE –  
FRIDAY 31 MARCH 2017

**Brexit**

[LexisNexis Blog](#), [New Law Journal](#), [Lawyer Monthly](#), [Counsel](#) – The legal media report on the latest developments on Brexit and the Bar Council’s latest work in relation to leaving the EU.

LexisNexis reports that in an update to its Brexit Papers, the Bar Council Brexit Working Group published a [new paper on financial services](#), in which it has called on the government to aim for a bespoke agreement with the EU, replicating the status quo as far as possible and covering the gaps created by the loss of the passport regime.

New Law Journal reports that Hugh Mercer QC, of Essex Court Chambers, who chairs the Bar Council’s Brexit Working Group, said: “The giving of notice under Art 50 is the beginning of a process, or perhaps the end of the beginning. It sets time running for the two-year period after which the EU treaties no longer apply to the UK. It is to be hoped that an agreement with the EU, in all likelihood a transitional agreement, will be reached within that time limit. I would expect there to be informed debate at a political level on the options open to the UK which are less than EU membership.”

Lawyer Monthly reports that the Bar Council has responded to the Justice Select Committee Brexit [report](#) published last week. The report reflects many of the issues raised by the Bar Council both in evidence to the Committee and in [The Brexit Papers: Second Edition](#).

A spokespersons said: “The Justice Committee have reached some sensible conclusions in their report. Effective cross-border arrangements to ensure continued co-operation with the EU on criminal justice need to be maintained. Likewise in civil justice, choice of jurisdiction together with mutual recognition and enforcement of judgments (as well as equivalent arrangements in family

law) are in the UK's interest as well as in the EU's interest post-Brexit. They are recommendations for which the Bar Council, the Family Law Bar Association, and the Criminal Bar Association have been arguing."

## Poland

**Press Association, Daily Telegraph (print)** – News coverage appears of the Bar Council and Polish Bar Foundation jointly hosted "English-Polish Law Day" seminar in Warsaw on May 15.

It is reported that "cross-jurisdictional matters" are "generating significant legal work" and point to family court cases involving Polish people in England and criminal cases involving European Arrest Warrants.

The Telegraph reports that middle-class migrants from eastern Europe are having a "significant financial impact" on Britain's judicial system by bringing divorce and child custody cases to UK courts, says a senior judge. Lady Justice Macur, a judge at the Court of Appeal, said the growing need for translated documents and interpreters was putting an extra burden on local authorities and family courts. It adds that the Bar Council is holding an information day with Polish counterparts to discuss the legal issues involved.

## LASPO

**[Morning Star](#), Bradford Telegraph, Press Association** – Deep cuts to legal aid have reduced publicly funded justice to "carnage," Chairman of the Bar, Andrew Langdon QC, has said.

The chairman said that repairs to the system are needed after cuts of more than 40 per cent were made over four years. Lawyers are "losing patience" over the situation that affects their earnings and the lives of those who may not be able to afford legal fees and representation, he wrote in legal magazine Counsel. He pointed out that April will mark the fourth anniversary of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, a measure which removed legal aid from many sections of our community.

He added: "No other sector of public funding has come close to suffering that sort of carnage. Practitioners are losing patience. This is not hyperbole. Any

responsible and knowledgeable commentator will tell you that the wheels are in urgent need of repair.”

## Bar Mock Trials

**Law Diary (The Times)** – The Times’ Law Diary writer Edward Fennell reports on the Bar Mock Trials final which took place at the weekend.

Fennell writes: “The final of the national Bar Mock Trial Competition took place at the Royal Courts of Justice on Saturday under the auspices of the Citizenship Foundation and the Bar Council. Restricted to state school pupils, the annual event offers young people the chance to “hone their advocacy and speaking skills, with training from practising barristers”. The star of the judging panel was Strictly Come Dancing’s Robert Rinder, equally well known for his ITV persona, Judge Rinder. However, to underline that it was a serious business, Sir Brian Leveson, Robert Buckland, QC, MP, the solicitor-general, and Andrew Langdon, QC, the chairman of the Bar, also took part. After two hard-fought final rounds Plymouth High School for Girls emerged as winners. I guess they could have danced all night.”

## Entities

**Legal Futures** - A Bar Standards Board-regulated (BSB) entity has acquired more than 800 clients in less than 18 months, which it claims makes it the largest in the country, by capitalising on barristers’ relatively new right to conduct litigation.

Manchester-based personal injury specialists Barrister-Direct Limited said having the involvement of barristers from the start of a case speeds them up, and predicted consolidation between barristers and solicitors using its model.

The entity employs 11 staff, with solicitor Laura Watts heading the employers’ and public liability (EL/PL) department. Separately, Mr McKie and Mr Skeate also have practices as self-employed direct access barristers with the online barristers network Clerksroom Direct. Each client has a **BARCO** account – the Bar Council’s vehicle to manage payment and legal costs – into which damages and costs are paid. Both principals work out of the Manchester office.



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A video message from Andrew Langdon QC, Chairman of the Bar [#itsabarristerthing](#)



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2:18 PM - 30 Mar 2017



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**Robin Allen QC - It's a barrister thing**  
Robin Allen QC on supporting barristers  
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Barrister chief says enough is enough - cuts have reduced justice system to carnage [morningstaronline.co.uk/a-ca4c-40-cuts](http://morningstaronline.co.uk/a-ca4c-40-cuts) ...

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