



## BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE –

WEDNESDAY 31 MAY 2017

### Court hours

[Scottish Legal News](#) - Women barristers are up in arms over a plan to introduce night courts, which they say will make them work antisocial hours, *The Times* reports.

Under the scheme, to be piloted in six courts centres, crown courts would sit until 6pm, rather than 4pm; civil courts until 7pm and magistrates' courts until 8:30pm.

Quoting **Andrew Langdon QC**, Chairman of the Bar Council: "These proposals 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 childminders.

"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."

The **Association of Women Barristers** said the move "will lead to fewer women working as lawyers in criminal courts...".

Read the full story [here](#).

Reporting from a different angle, [The Guardian](#) - Ministry of Justice scheme due to be trialled in England sparks protests from solicitors, barristers and online petition.

The current proposals by the Ministry of Justice has been put on hold during the general election. According to HM Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) the proposal aims to improve access to justice “by making the service more convenient and [using] courtrooms as effectively as possible”.

**Robert Bourns**, the president of the Law Society, has warned that it will place extra pressure on poorly paid legal aid lawyers.

Read more [here](#).

### Parental leave

[Legal Loop](#), [New Law Journal](#) reports on the recent Bar Standards Board consultation. The new consultation allows self-employed barristers to take parental leave.

If approved by the Legal Services Board, chambers would have to offer at least one year’s leave from practice to any member who becomes a parent or carer of a child through birth or adoption. It would apply to mothers, fathers, and adoptive parents, as well as the married, civil, and de facto partners of biological or adoptive parents. Moreover, each parent would have their own parental leave rights regardless of their partner’s employment status or parental leave rights.

Both sources quote Chairman of the Bar, **Andrew Langdon QC** saying: “This challenges the assumption that one parent should have to take more time out of their career, and take on more caring responsibilities, than the other. We know that women who leave the Bar for extended periods of time, such as for maternity, find it hard to come back. This move will help to place both parents on a more equal footing.”

The policy that the Bar Council has enacted ought to be commended as it follows the Bar’s aims of promoting equality and diversity, through such means as access to the profession.

### Employed Bar Awards

Further coverage on the Bar Council Employed Bar Awards, **Essex Chronicle** reports ‘BIRKETTS is delighted to announce that Matthew Gowen is a finalist in the Employed Advocate of the year category’.

## Fair allocation of barristers' work

[Counsel Magazine](#) publishes an article by Rachel Crasnow QC on the seminar hosted by the Bar Council regarding the 'fair allocation of work and how clerks can demonstrate the fact of fairness'.

Key highlights of the article include: How can we demonstrate fairness; what are the risks; addressing unconscious bias, monitoring responsibilities and women at the Bar on work allocation.

Read the full article [here](#).

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





**The Bar Council** @thebarcouncil · 22h

Thumbs up for #Chambers model from @barstandards on innovation, flexibility & technology [bit.ly/2sgQGun](https://bit.ly/2sgQGun). Serving consumers well.



🔄 2 ❤️ 6 📊



**The Bar Council** @thebarcouncil · May 28

Regulator changes #parental leave rules for barristers following #campaign by Bar Council & @RachelCrasnowQC [barcouncil.org.uk/media-centre/n...](https://barcouncil.org.uk/media-centre/n...)



🔄 18 ❤️ 7 📊

You Retweeted



**Lawyer 2B** @Lawyer2Bmag · May 26

The @BarStandards changes to barrister parental leave rules are "watershed moment" for diversity says @thebarcouncil



**Changes to barrister parental leave rules are "wate..**

"This is a watershed moment which challenges the assumption that one parent should have to take more time out of their career, and take on more caring

l2b.thelawyer.com

1 13 6



**The Bar Council** @thebarcouncil · May 26

.@middletemple - the latest proud sponsors of the #EMPBarAwards. For info on more superlative sponsorship bundles: jprice@barcouncil.org.uk



3 4