



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – WEDNESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2017

Wellbeing at the Bar

[AllAboutLaw](#) – AllAboutLaw reports that the Bar Council has proposed the introduction of a new measure to recognise efforts across the Bar in sustaining good mental health.

To mark the first anniversary of the Wellbeing at the Bar website, the Bar Council will introduce a Certificate of Recognition to recognise efforts made to promote wellbeing across the Bar. In line with the theme of One Bar at this year's Annual Bar and Young Bar Conference, everyone - including chambers, Specialist Bar Associations, Circuits, Inns and organisations that employ barristers - will be able to apply. The Certificate will act as a beacon of good wellbeing practice at the Bar for those who receive it.

With over 100,000 hits in less than a year since its launch, the [Wellbeing at the Bar](#) (WATB) website, set up to provide wellbeing and mental health support tools for barristers and chambers, has been a resounding success for the profession.

Flexible Operating Hours

[Public Law Today](#) – Further coverage appears of the news that HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) has put back the launch of the Flexible Operating Hours pilots until February next year.

Andrew Langdon QC, Chair of the Bar, said: “Whilst plans for flexible courts have not been dropped, it is encouraging to see HMCTS not only take on board the Bar Council’s concerns about the plans, which include the impact they will have on barristers with child and other care responsibilities, but they also commit to ensuring robust evaluation measures are in place before proceeding with the pilot.

“Past experience shows that rushing into decisions can backfire on the government, employment tribunal fees and the impact of LASPO on vulnerable people being just

two examples. We will continue to talk with HMCTS, who are in listening mode, on this issue."

Remote justice

Press Association – PA reports that Andrew Langdon QC, Chair of the Bar, has said society has much to lose if "face-to-face court contact" is lost and replaced by a "second-best form of remote justice".

The Chair outlined his fears in [Counsel magazine](#) about "open justice" being undermined. In every society, he says, justice has always been dispensed at a "particular place", but a planned new civil Online Solutions Court is a sign of change.

"Most cultures and most jurisdictions have made it a prominent building," he said. "A back office, or a pop-up court, lacks the majesty or the solemnity befitting the purpose."