



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 23 AUGUST 2019

Courts

[Daily Star](#), [Peterborough Today](#); [Jewish Tribune](#), [Hampshire Chronicle](#) (print and online), [Politics Home](#), [BBC News local live feed](#) (various), [Leicester Mercury](#), [Derbyshire Live](#) - The media continue to report on the Bar Council's reaction to the news that, on Monday, nearly half of all crown courts across England and Wales were left empty, despite a backlog of criminal cases.

Richard Atkins QC, Chair of the Bar, continues to be quoted across local and national media on the issue. He said: "That so many crown courts are sitting empty will come as a devastating blow to those victims of crime who are waiting for their cases to come to court or who are waiting for justice to be done to those who have admitted committing crimes against them.

"Whilst I am encouraged by the news that the government intends to increase the number of serving police officers, funding must be provided to ensure that those who are alleged to have committed crimes can be placed before a functioning court without delay. Justice delayed is justice denied."

Criminal justice statistics

New Zealand Lawyer – Further reports, this time overseas media, on Bar Council's warning over the recently published criminal justice statistics.

Despite crimes increasing, the number of people prosecuted or handed out-of-court disposals has fallen to the lowest level ever, the data showed. Crime reported in England and Wales increased 8% to 5.9 million in the year ending March. The number prosecuted or handed penalties for crimes in the jurisdiction dropped 2% to 1.59 million in the same period.

"These statistics make for grim reading; however, the state of the criminal justice system is far worse than the figures show. The commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service said recently that 'overall police [crime] detection rates nationally are

woefully low' and that the 'courts are emptying, not filling.' If crime is not detected, it cannot be recorded, investigated or prosecuted, so the official figures are just the tip of an iceberg. Criminals are going about their business unchallenged: fraud goes virtually unpunished and is not even included in the statistics," said Richard Atkins QC, Chair of the Bar.

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