



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2021

10,000 Black Interns Scheme

The Times (print and [online](#)), [BBC Radio Four Today](#) – The Times and Today report on the 10,000 Black Interns scheme, which sees Britain’s biggest and most influential companies give thousands of internships to black students as part of an initiative to improve diversity in business.

GSK, NatWest and Marks & Spencer are among the 700 companies that have signed up to the 10,000 Black Interns scheme, which will give 2,000 black students and recent graduates paid summer internships every year for the next five years.

The media report that the **Bar Council**, Keating Chambers and four other chambers were teaming up to deliver internships under the scheme at the Bar. Marcus Taverner QC, head of Keating Chambers, is quoted in the media reports.

Cybercrime

[Today’s Conveyancer](#) – Today’s Conveyancer reports on increased ransomware attacks in the legal sector and the recent Hiscox Cyber Readiness report, which shows that cybercrime gangs are using even more sophisticated ransomware to extort millions from firms across the UK.

Today’s Conveyancer reports that the **Bar Council** said of the attacks on chambers that the incident, “should act as a wake-up call for everyone to check the security of their information networks, and that their critical business interruption plans are up to date and effective”.

Bar Course Aptitude Test

[Law Society Gazette](#) – The Gazette reports that the BSB is considering whether to scrap a student aptitude test that weeds out fewer than one per cent of candidates, after concluding that it is ‘not operating as an effective filter’.

The Bar Course Aptitude Test (BCAT) was introduced in 2013 because the number of students failing the bar training course was deemed too high. Aspiring barristers must pass the test before enrolling on a Bar training course. However, just 89 out of the 12,663 candidates (0.7%) who took – or retook – the assessment between 2013 and 2019 have not yet passed, reports the Gazette.

The Gazette reports that according to **Bar Council** figures published in April, 3,301 candidates applied for just 246 positions via the pupillage gateway this year. (The figures do not include applications submitted outside the pupillage gateway). The situation has been made worse by Covid-19.

Speaking to the Gazette in May, **Chair of the Bar, Derek Sweeting QC**, said there are “far too many people doing Bar courses and paying a great deal of money when the attrition rate is so high. I can’t think of many other instances where you would train with such a low prospect of success”.

BAR COUNCIL TWEETS



The Bar Council ✓
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On behalf of the Bar, we are responding to the Women and Equalities Committee inquiry into how the menopause affects women at work. If you're a barrister or chambers professional affected by this issue, you can contribute anonymously to our response:



Women and Equalities Committee inquiry: Menopause and the workplace

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