



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2017

Ethics and practice

[Law Society Gazette](#) – Online hub to guide barristers on ethical issues

With more than 6,500 calls and emails made last year from barristers on practice and ethics, the Bar Council set up a website to answer barristers' questions on obligations and standards required by the regulator.

Chair of the Bar, **Andrew Langdon QC** said: 'This is a step up in the services that the council offers to barristers and chambers in the crucial areas of professional ethics and practice. These should be the first port of call for barristers and their staff who are looking for help in these areas, whether they need to deal with an ethical issue urgently or are looking for a more in-depth consideration of good practice'.

National Pro Bono Week

[Lawyer Monthly](#) - National Pro Bono Week takes place from 6th to 11th November 2017, it is an annual event in its sixteenth year, sponsored by the Law Society, the Bar Council and the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx). It unites the legal profession in a celebration of the commitment and dedication to supporting individuals, charities and local communities.

National Pro Bono Week is a great opportunity to highlight the incredible volunteering provided by law students and legal professionals in their communities.

Read the full article [here](#) on how to celebrate National Pro Bono Week.

Also, [The Exeter Daily](#) reports on Citizens Advice Exeter marks National Pro Bono Week.

HR Support for Chambers

[Law Society Gazette](#) – Barristers to receive HR support

The Bar Council has revealed that it is making external human resources support available for barristers.

The future of the chambers model of self-employment has been called into question in recent years with the arrival of new bar 'entitles' and alternative business structures. However, according to the Bar Standards Board, while 'new and innovative' business models are available, most barristers prefer the status quo.

HR matters in chambers are traditionally dealt with by barristers' clerks. However, **Isabel DiVanna**, Commercial Director at the Bar Council, said chambers often report that they need additional insight on HR matters as 'it's easy to get things wrong – and costly when this happens'.

Veale Wasbrough Vizards has been retained to help chambers and barristers manage their concerns. Read more [here](#).

Annual Bar and Young Bar Conference special

[UK Authority](#) – The Ministry of Justice's **£1 billion plan for technology based reform of the courts system** seems set for a rough ride from lawyers and trade unions.

According to UK Authority 'legal leaders criticise £1 billion digital courts scheme'.

Speaking at the Annual Conference of the Bar Council, HMCTS's chief executive, Susan Acland-Hood, attempted to build bridges with critics.

According to UK Authority, she attacked as “myths” criticisms that digital processes would threaten citizens’ access to justice. “We are going to bring parts of the system within reach of people who currently don't have access,” she said. She also introduced lawyers to the benefits of agile project management. “How are we going to make sure it works? By building in small bits, components, put them out in use then changing them quickly.”

But **Andrew Langdon QC**, Chair of the Bar Council, warned the Government that, after decades of cuts in legal aid, the legal profession was in no mood to cooperate. “We believe that justice is undervalued,” he said, adding that the way it is treated by officialdom “borders on contempt”.

He said that lawyers would oppose plans for more flexible court sittings. “We are also concerned about the quality of court proceedings that become virtual. What is the impact on open justice? We suggest there has been insufficient research, particularly in relation to wider public confidence in the delivery of virtual justice.”

Read the full story [here](#).

[Law Society Gazette](#) – Chair of the Bar, we don’t accept your constraints.

Ongoing reforms to the courts system, including closures, virtual courts and extended sittings came under particular fire at the Annual Bar and Young Bar Conference.

Andrew Langdon QC, Chair of the Bar “We do not like the sound of so-called “flexible operating hours”. Sitting intermittent early and late shifts will deter those with caring responsibilities,’ he said - adding to the problem of creating a more diverse profession. He also raised concerns about the new online court's effect on open justice and access to legal advice. The profession has a duty to call out ‘ill-conceived reform’.

Full article available [here](#).

[Legal futures, Legal Cheek](#) – Chair of the Bar sounds warning bell over shrinking junior Bar

While the Bar continues to increase in size, the junior Bar is shrinking, in part because of competition from solicitors, the profession's leader has warned.

Andrew Langdon QC, Chair of the Bar highlighted wellbeing and diversity as two further challenges to a Bar that he said was otherwise changing with the times and following the market.

“Our flexibility to the markets is one of our strengths,” he told Saturday’s Annual Bar and Young Bar Conference. “However let me strike three notes of caution.

“First, the Bar is increasing in size, but the size of the junior Bar is shrinking. Our international income is increasing but our income for publicly-funded work is shrinking.

“Although the research is incomplete, most believe the lack of confidence in public funding is partly what has caused chambers to recruit fewer junior members. The growth in the number of higher court advocates is another.”

More to read [here](#).

[Legal Cheek](#) also reports **Bar Council backs cheaper, two-part BPTC run by the Inns of Court**.

Quoting Chair of the Bar, **Andrew Langdon QC** “We support the initiative taken by the Inns to design a professional course that is cheaper and that does something to stem the flow of those who pass the final exam but have very little chance of obtaining pupillage.”

[Legal futures](#) – **Bar recognises wellbeing pioneers** and CBA identifies the importance of mental illness among the profession.

The Bar Council has issued its first series of certificates to recognise efforts made to support the wellbeing of barristers, clerks and chambers' staff. The CBA has a wellbeing initiative for which it received its recognition, including a policy and dedicated Twitter account.

The certificates were handed out at the Bar's Annual Conference on Saturday and the Bar Council said that whilst many of the recipients had introduced new policies, governance arrangements and a wide range of initiatives, "we also acknowledge others who are just starting out with something simple like a yoga or mindfulness class".

CBA wellbeing officer Sarah Vine, who practises at 187 Fleet Street, wrote "Most seem to agree that mental illness (stress-related conditions, wellbeing issues) should not be a source of shame, but few are prepared to admit to them. It is a brave barrister who blinks first...

We carry huge burdens of responsibility for those we represent." Full news post available [here](#).

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

Pinned Tweet

 **The Bar Council** @thebarcouncil · Nov 6
We've launched a new Ethics & Practice Hub for barristers and chambers
barcouncilethics.co.uk

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Ethics & Practice Hub

Click above to browse the library or search by keyword

1 37 37

You Retweeted

 **YBC** @YoungBarristers · 14h
"When a citizen is on the wrong end of a decision that's turned their life upside down [it's important] that they are properly represented"



You, Andrew Langdon QC, NationalProBonoCentr and 2 others

1 8 3



The Bar Council @thebarcouncil · 15h

'Cutting welfare might be harsh, but dont pretend welfare is there and make it impossible to access.' #wedoprobono



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The Bar Council @thebarcouncil · Nov 6

How do citizens challenge poor state decision-making w/out access to justice? Role for #probono Bar? Event tomorrow: bit.ly/2iBdC3Z

The **CITIZEN** and the **STATE**

Poor decision-making and the role of the pro bono Bar

Tuesday 7 November 2017, Bingham Room, Gray's Inn,
17.30 registration for 18.00 start, followed by a drinks reception

Speakers

- Sir Ernest Ryder, Senior President of Tribunals
- Nicholas Easterman, Tribunal Judge
- Sir Henry Brooke CMG PC
- Andrew Langdon QC, Chair of the Bar
- Jonathan Peacock QC, Barrister, 11 New Square
- David Wolfe QC, Barrister, Matrix Chambers

Henry Brooke and Bar Pro Bono Unit

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