

## LAW SOCIETY OF ENGLAND & WALES UPDATE FOR LOCAL LAW SOCIETIES

5<sup>th</sup> March, 2018

Dear colleagues,

This week's update includes:

- Early advice campaign
- Legal and regulatory policy update
- Parliamentary meetings
- Media
- Brussels

### **Early advice campaign**

Earlier this week we held a drop-in event in Parliament for our early advice campaign. The event was a great success:

- 25 MPs and researchers attended
- This included members of the Justice Select Committee, including David Hanson MP, Victoria Prentis MP, Bambos Charalambous MP and Ellie Reeves MP
- Six parliamentarians who attended the event were legally qualified – including the host of the event and solicitor Bambos Charalambous MP.

Other notable attendees included:

- Justice Select Committee Chair, Bob Neill MP
- Former Conservative leader Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP
- Shadow Lord Chancellor Richard Burgon MP
- Prominent Labour MPs such as David Lammy MP and Rosie Winterton MP

All attendees had their photo taken with our sign, saying "I support the Law Society's early advice campaign", which we will be sending to them with a template press release which they can forward to their local media.

The images have also been shared widely on twitter – you can see them all on the [@TheLawSociety](#) Twitter account, and [here](#). More than 60 people have retweeted these photos so far.

### **Legal and regulatory policy update**

*Legal Service Board's strategy consultation - Law Society response*

The Legal Services Board (LSB) [consulted](#) on its draft strategy 2018-21 and business plan 2018/19.

### *National Apprenticeship Week*

We are hosting an event called Apprenticeships in the Legal Sector at Chancery Lane on 5 March as part of National Apprenticeship week. The free event is aimed at those in the legal sector already providing apprenticeships, as well as those considering doing so, to help firms make the most of education and training opportunities. Speakers include Petra Wilton, director of strategy at the Chartered Management Institute; Claire Tunley, head of employability at City of London Corporation; Paul Wilson, head of regulatory affairs at the Law Society; and Gun Judge, head of resourcing at Addleshaw Goddard. More information and booking is available on our [website](#).

### *Default Judgments*

We [responded](#) to the Ministry of Justice's consultation on default County Court judgments, which sought views on money claims processes and limiting the circumstances in which a respondent may have a judgment issued against them in default without their knowledge. Our response demonstrated support of more guidance for consumers being made available and argued it would be reasonable to set aside a judgment if a consumer can give evidence they did not receive any notice.

#### *Advocates Graduated Fee Scheme (AGFS)*

The MoJ has [responded](#) to the AGFS consultation (issued a year ago). They have made some changes to the proposals, including increasing fees for junior advocates. The main change however is that the proposals are no longer cost neutral. We issued a strongly worded press [release](#) expressing our concern that the MoJ has chosen to put money into the AGFS to pay for 'work done', yet they are cutting money from the Litigators' Graduated Fee Scheme to pay for the same work; considering the same documents and evidence.

#### **Parliamentary meetings**

I met Justice Minister Lucy Frazer QC MP to discuss access to justice, the LASPO review, courts reform, Grenfell and Brexit.

I also met Kenneth Clarke CH, QC, MP.

#### **Media**

The [BBC News](#) website reported on the creation of new English language courts in other European jurisdictions such as France, the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium. Law Society head of international Mickaël Laurans is quoted saying: "England and Wales's jurisdiction has a number of strengths which are completely independent of Brexit [including] high quality judges who understand highly complex cases. "Just having English language proceedings would not be enough to attract foreign litigants away from England and Wales," he predicted. [Huffington Global](#) and [Rocket News](#) also reported on the story.

I warned that a customs union with the EU won't save UK professional services and was quoted in the [The Times Brief](#) (subscription required) saying: "It covers some goods but not the UK's all-important professional services. But whatever the final deal, it is imperative we have transitional arrangements in place to cover the intervening period. Let's not adopt a scorched earth policy, abandoning in an instant the protections and advantages afforded by EU membership."

Head of justice Richard Miller spoke to BBC Inside Out London about legal aid cuts and the issue of Mackenzie friends. Richard outlined the risk to clients of hiring Mackenzie Friends without qualifications and insurance, and without regulatory supervision. You can watch the clip [here](#). The story begins at 9:45 and Richard's appearance is at 14:30 (TV license required).

The Law Society gave extensive briefings to [BBC File on 4](#) for their programme devoted to disclosure failures. More than half of lawyers surveyed said they saw disclosure failures on a daily or weekly basis. Full story on [BBC News](#).

[South Wales Argus](#) carried a report on news the Welsh Revenue Authority (WRA) encouraging law and conveyancing firms carrying out residential and non-residential property transactions in Wales from April 1, 2018, to register for its new online tax system. The WRA has been working with representative bodies, including The Law Society and the Chartered Institute of Taxation, to prepare professionals for land transaction tax since last October. Kay Powell, Wales policy adviser for the Law Society, said: "Our members have played a key role in the design and development of the system and their insights and comments have been invaluable at every stage in the process. Our aim has been to ensure the seamless introduction of the Land Transaction Tax."

Don't forget you can read all Law Society press releases by clicking on this [link](#). For live updates follow us on [Twitter](#).

### **Brussels**

On 27 February Helena Raulus, head of office, spoke at an event organised by the Matrix Chambers on Brexit and the new dispute settlement system. Other speakers included: Hugh Mercer, Catherine Barnard, Murray Hunt and Rhodri Thompson.

On 1 March the Brussels office hosted the LDEG (Liberal Democrat European Group) study visit to Brussels. Rita Giannini and Eoin Lavelle, EU policy advisers addressed the audience about Brexit and its implications for business and citizens' rights. There were 31 people including staff.

If you have any questions please contact me.

As always, please feel free to share this update with your constituents unless otherwise specified.

Kind regards,

Joe

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