

Dear colleague,

You might notice when you click some of the links in my update this week that our main website has been updated with the new branding agreed by Council. This is part of the gradual roll out of the new look, which I hope you agree reflects our Law Society brand “trusted, knowledgeable and authoritative, but accessible”. You will also see the new look in Professional Update this week.



### Your weekly Law Society update

As the professional body for solicitors, every week the Law Society is working hard to influence the legal and regulatory environment on behalf of our profession and to promote solicitors at home and abroad. We support practice excellence, are an informed source of legal sector news and support members at every stage of their career.

Here are some highlights from our work this week.

### Influencing on behalf of the profession and promoting the profession

#### The Law Society's media profile this week:

The 'extra £23m spending for barristers' trial fees' in serious criminal cases, such as robbery, rape and murder announced by the government was covered this week by [BBC News](#) and the [Times](#) (£). We pointed out that "advocacy in the Crown Courts is only one small part of the system". I urged the MoJ to revise its approach to the AGFS, as well as fees paid for work undertaken in the magistrates' court and police station to "ensure solicitors are fairly paid for the work they have to do".

A huge increase in probate charges was branded “a misuse of power” by a House of Lords committee. Peers raised serious concerns about proposals by the Ministry of Justice to raise probate fees by as much as 3,771% in England and Wales. Ian Bond, who chairs the Law Society's wills and equity committee, said: “Parliament did not intend these powers to be used in this way and we hope the Ministry of Justice will rethink its proposals.” The [Times](#) (£) reports.

Solicitors in England and Wales will be forced to publish fees for conveyancing on their websites from next month. It typically costs about £1,000 in legal fees to sell the average home, and around £1,200 when buying, with stamp duty on top. The Law Society, during the consultation over the new rules, warned that “one size fits all” pricing did not suit legal services. Report in the [Guardian](#).

The number of solicitors working in-house has more than doubled over the last 15 years, from almost 13,000 in 2002 to almost 28,000 in 2017. According to the latest figures from the Law Society more than one fifth of the profession now works in-house for commercial or not-for-profit organisations. Full report in [Times Raconteur Supplement](#).

Council member and former children's law sub-committee chair Denise Lester spoke to BBC News 24 yesterday about the law around the involvement of rapists in family and childcare proceedings following a public outcry involving the Rotherham abuse ring. She said: "The issue here is the law as it stands allows rapists and other abusers to participate in care and other public law proceedings." The story was picked up on BBC Radio Wales and you can listen [here](#). The story begins at 2:03:00. The report is also on [BBC Online](#).

Uncertainties caused by Brexit have given rival jurisdictions a 'stick to beat us with', Law Society vice president Simon Davis told MPs. He warned the benefits of England & Wales should neither be taken for granted nor overlooked by lawmakers. But he added judges, solicitors and barristers will still be of a 'high calibre' and that Rome I and II Regulations will be unchanged, meaning that Brexit should have no impact on a party's choice of applicable law. Full report in the [Gazette](#).

In a letter to the Guardian, a number of legal sector and family organisations call for changes to the laws on divorce. I signed the letter on behalf of the Law Society. Full letter in the [Guardian](#).

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

### **Consultation responses and parliamentary activity, influencing on behalf of the profession:**

#### *Parliamentary*

On Tuesday the Second Reading of the Courts and Tribunals Bill took place in the House of Commons. The Law Society were mentioned in the debate 11 times and our parliamentary briefing and arguments used extensively. On Wednesday Richard Miller, head of justice, gave evidence to the Women and Equalities Committee on the work of the EHRC and enforcement of the Equality Act. He raised concerns regarding access to justice and the availability of legal aid.

#### *Speeches*

I addressed a workshop on Artificial Intelligence and employment at Oxford University on Monday. I also spoke at Winchester University on technology and women in the law on Tuesday. Vice president, Simon Davies, spoke at an event hosted by Interlaw on diversity champions. On Wednesday I was at London Law Fair where I talked about becoming a solicitor. I also spoke at Legal Week's conference on diversity, inclusivity and talent in law and the First 100 Years Inspirational Women Awards on Thursday.

#### *Meetings*

I attended a roundtable on Thursday with Justice Minister Lucy Frazer MP, to discuss technology and access to justice.

#### *Campaigns*

##### Secretary of State backs Global Legal Centre campaign

This week the secretary of state for international development, Penny Mordaunt MP, backed our global legal centre campaign, which promotes the benefits of English law, courts and legal profession. This took place at a parliamentary reception attended by MPs, government officials, representatives from City firms and members of our committees and council. The event was hosted by Conservative MP Bob Seely, who is a member of the foreign affairs select committee. Read more [here](#).

##### Women in leadership in the law

There were five male 'champions for change' roundtables this week, two in London facilitated by the director of strategic relationships Stephen Denyer, as well as one in Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester facilitated by chief executive, Paul Tennant.

#### *Regulation*

We hosted a live webinar on the SRA's price and service transparency rules. The on-demand version of this webinar will be available to download from our website from next week.

Our head of regulatory affairs, Paul Wilson, chaired roundtables on price and service transparency in Birmingham and Bristol.

### *Access to Justice*

#### Solicitor judges and advocacy Michaelmas event 2018

As the Michaelmas legal term draws to a close and we look ahead to welcoming in the New Year, the Law Society's solicitor judges division and advocacy support will be hosting a Michaelmas drinks evening with solicitor advocates and solicitor judges. This celebratory networking event is aimed at solicitors working in the courts, solicitor judges, and those aspiring to join the judiciary. Any Council members wishing to attend can book through our [events](#) page.

### Judicial diversity

We attended the Judicial Diversity Forum on 15th November. We sit on the Judicial Diversity Forum alongside members of the judiciary, the Bar Council, JAC, Ministry of Justice, and Chartered Institute of Legal Executives to look at ways of improving judicial diversity. The head of justice, Richard Miller, and myself attended and to demonstrate support of the pre-application judicial education (PAJE) initiative the Law Society endorsed a memorandum of understanding.

We are working closely with the above bodies on the implementation of the PAJE initiative which is primarily aimed at under-represented groups in the judiciary – BAME, women, disabled and LGBT lawyers.

The aim of the initiative is to create and provide additional support resources to these groups which will assist them in making more successful judicial appointment applications.

### *Implementing reforms to the leasehold system consultation - Law Society response*

We [responded](#) to the ministry of housing, communities and local government consultation on implementing reforms to the leasehold system in England.

This consultation builds on an earlier consultation in December 2017 looking to tackle unfair practices in the leasehold market.

### **Our influencing work internationally:**

On 29 November Rita Giannini, EU policy adviser, spoke at a roundtable on the future of civil justice cooperation after Brexit at the British Institute of International and Comparative Law in London. On 30 November, she spoke at a roundtable on the legal implications of Brexit at the the UAE (European Lawyers Union) General assembly in Lisbon.

### **Supporting members at every stage of their career**

We've now published [‘Your professional body – the value of your membership’](#) aligned to the member offer. It clearly shows how we influence for impact and promote the profession. It also showcases the services we offer to support practice excellence, keep members up to date, and as a career companion. All new members will receive a copy in the post. A [simple summary](#) of our member offer is also available.

### **Changing career direction - options for flexible working**

This event will be hosted by Adaptive, the flexible resourcing model from Simmons & Simmons. Adaptive was created to respond to the shifting legal landscape of Law, by providing clients with technically excellent first-rate lawyers, who are available to work on defined contract assignments and projects. The model is designed to strengthen client relationships by providing a commercial solution that meets both the needs of our clients and the firm. This event has been designed in partnership with Adaptive and the Law Society, specifically for those who are interested in finding out more about how they can adopt a flexible working pattern and the benefits of doing so. As the legal marketplace evolves, clients are also actively seeking flexible resourcing solutions to meet the changing demands.

The flexibility of working through a model like Adaptive, lets you keep control over when and how you work: you can choose your assignments in terms of work content and the defined periods you choose to undertake them.

### [Judicial appointments: interview training for solicitors - 8 February 2019 - London](#)

In view of increasing competition for judicial appointments, this interactive course will equip delegates with the skills to help enhance your application and interview performance. This workshop has been developed specifically for solicitor applicants but the content is relevant for anyone serious about submitting a credible judicial application.

### [Day of the Endangered Lawyer 2019](#)

Since 2010, the Day of the Endangered Lawyer is organised to draw attention to the situation of lawyers at risk in a particular country. In 2019, the focus will be on Turkey, because of the widespread arrests, detentions, and dismissals of members of the legal profession in the country - especially since the attempted coup in 2016. This seminar, organised jointly by the Law Society and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, will focus on the circumstances that lawyers in Turkey face (pre and post the failed coup), the enactment of emergency decree laws, the lack of admissibility of Turkish cases before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), specifics of litigating Turkish cases before the ECtHR, trial observation in Turkey, and advocacy efforts.

### [March 4 Women](#)

2019 will be 100 years since the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act was passed, which finally paved the way for women to practise law – an important milestone in the slow progress towards the rights of women to fulfil their potential and gain ownership over their lives and futures. The [March4Women](#) in London, supported by the Law Society will mark this occasion next March and is [seeking sponsors](#). Please do assist if you can.

## [Supporting practice excellence](#)

Some of our upcoming events are:

### [Lexcel consultant training 2019](#)

This course provides an in-depth understanding of Lexcel England and Wales v6 and what evidence is required to meeting the standard requirements.

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

Kind regards,

Christina

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