

Dear colleague,

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 this week.

Influencing on behalf of the profession and promoting the profession

The Law Society's media profile this week:

[Politics Home](#) reports on joint efforts across the legal sphere to support LGBT+ pride events. The Law Society will be joining the Bar Council and CILEx this summer at pride events across the UK – marching together under the banner of #LegalPride. I said “it’s important to show the public the legal profession will constantly and unequivocally support LGBT+ people and their rights”.

[The Gazette](#), [New Law Journal](#), [Guardian](#) and the [Times](#) report on the launch of the FDA's 'Manifesto for Justice' – supported by the Law Society, Bar Council and the Secret Barrister. In a foreword, I called for more resources for the creaking criminal justice system. See our full [press release](#). The manifesto was unveiled at the Law Society.

IT glitches are causing major delays to grant-of-probate, the [Gazette](#) reports. Council member Melinda Giles says that delays have been acknowledged across the country, and that HMRC is also facing a backlog.

Meanwhile, the [Daily Express](#) reports that the proposed increases to probate fees are still on the House of Commons agenda despite being delayed by Brexit. “This is a tax on grief,” I said.

Further coverage in [FN Talk](#) and the [Business Telegraph](#).

[Today's Conveyancer](#) has a detailed overview of the changes to the Conveyancing Quality Scheme (CQS), which came into effect on the 1 May 2019. Joanna King, legal and compliance analyst at Ochresoft, says that “active promotion of the CQS quality mark is reflected in added credibility and gravitas for member firms”.

The [Times](#) (£) reports on why access to phone data is needed for a fair trial. “Being up front about the need for proper disclosure is important,” said Richard Atkinson, co-chair of the Law Society's criminal law committee.

The [Times](#) (£) and [Legal Cheek](#) report the Law Society's junior lawyers division (JLD) has written a letter to the Solicitors Regulation Authority warning that aspiring solicitors risk being exploited if they are not paid a minimum salary while completing the work experience element of the new Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE).

[Legal Cheek](#) also reports that according to research by the JLD, junior solicitors are under high levels of stress and one in fifteen have experienced suicidal thoughts in the past month.

[Content Live](#) reports on how to create good cyber security. “The most vulnerable people are at the two ends of the scale,” said Peter Wright chair of our GDPR working group.

Chair of the Law Society’s employment law committee Max Winthrop was interviewed on *BBC Money Box* on a recent employment law case. You can listen to the interview [here](#). Max’s interview starts at 04:35.

The [Gazette](#), [Legal Voice](#), [Exeter Daily](#), the *Leicester Mercury*, *Lancashire Telegraph* and *East Anglian Daily Times* cover our legal aid deserts campaign showing the sparse provision of housing legal aid across the country. You can see our legal aid desert map [here](#).

In a comment for the [Gazette](#), Dr Judith Bourne wrote on Gwyneth Bebb, one of the first women to apply to the Law Society to sit her preliminary exams and qualify as solicitors.

The [Gazette](#) also reports on my work on women in the law.

Richard Atkinson and Ian Kelcey – who co-chair our criminal law committee - along with Jonathan Black, president of the LCCSA and Bill Waddington, chair of the CLSA have a letter in Friday’s [Times](#) (£) responding to media coverage of the standardised consent form giving police access to digital devices belonging to complainants and other witnesses. They write: “Following high profile cases, such as that of Liam Allen, we know that if relevant evidence found on a complainant’s digital device is not disclosed it can risk a miscarriage of justice.”

Head of justice Richard Miller was on *ITN London’s* 6pm [bulletin](#) on Wednesday talking about funding of the justice system in the context of a breach of court security.

The [Times](#) (£) reports on our support for Law Commission-proposals to extend the right to manage to include owners of leasehold houses and not just flats. We said the proposals were “consistent with the need to make the process more efficient”.

[Legal Futures](#) covers the LSB’s decision to conduct a consultation process on revising its internal governance rules (IGR) moving away from a position that would have hampered representative bodies in their role lobbying on behalf of their members. I’m quoted: “We believe the IGR should not hamper legitimate influencing activities by professional bodies, so we’re pleased the LSB appears to have taken our views on board.”

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 Wednesday the Law Society was referenced by a member of the Constitution Committee during an evidence session with the lord chancellor. Baroness Corston highlighted the Law Society’s map of legal aid provision for housing cases, and asked the lord chancellor how people could enforce their rights in areas which the map showed as having no housing legal aid provider.

On Thursday the government introduced a new Bill to provide for online procedures in civil and family courts in England and Wales, in the First-tier Tribunal, Upper Tribunal, in employment tribunals and the Employment Appeal Tribunal. The Law Society will be briefing parliamentarians ahead of the second reading of the Courts and Tribunals (Online Procedure) Bill, which will take place in the House of Lords on 14th May.

On 30th April 2019, the Law Society’s international human rights adviser, Dr. Marina Brillman, gave evidence to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee on the rule of law and human rights in

South America. The Law Society submitted written evidence in November 2018. The main subjects addressed in the session were:

- Regional challenges to the Inter-American system of human rights by PROSUR member states and lack of financing
- The rise in attacks against lawyers and human rights defenders in Colombia, especially after the signing of the peace agreement
- Challenges by the Colombian government to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace
- The lack of effective protection measures in Colombia for lawyers and human rights defenders
- The breakdown of judicial independence and rule of law in Venezuela
- Human rights violations committed in Venezuela by state authorities, including the use of military jurisdiction over civilians

The recording of the session can be watched here:

<https://bit.ly/2vCdd8h>

Access to Justice

On 25th April we relaunched our Advice Deserts campaign with a new housing map showing the shortage of housing practitioners across the country. It received good coverage on television and radio. Further information on the campaign is available on the [webpage](#).

Fast Entry to Courts for Professional Users

We attended the first meeting of the Professional Users' Access Scheme Project Board on 24th April and are engaging with member services colleagues as to the Law Society's position in respect of the project.

Solicitor Judges and Advocacy

As the Spring legal term draws to a close, the Law Society's solicitor judges division and Advocacy Support will be hosting a Spring drinks evening with solicitor advocates and solicitor judges on 14th May. Vice president Simon Davis and Alexandra Marks CBE will speak at this celebratory networking drinks evening, aimed at solicitors working in the courts, solicitor judges and those aspiring to join the judiciary and offering an opportunity to network with peers, make career contacts and discuss anecdotes and approaches to cases over a drink and canapes. Any members wishing to attend can book through our [events](#) page.

Criminal Law

As part of our ongoing criminal justice campaign, we have launched a petition calling for the government to increase investment in the criminal justice system. To add your digital signature to the 3,000+ already on the [petition](#), and for further details on the campaign, please visit the campaign [webpage](#).

At the justice questions session in the House of Commons on 23rd April, our criminal justice campaign was name-checked, in particular the increasing average age of solicitors and succession planning.

The criminal law committee and the Crime Practitioner Group have undertaken a review of the Legal Aid Agency's Crime Contract Standard Terms.

The comments from the Criminal Law Committee and Practitioner Groups have been shared with Matt Howgate of the Legal Aid Practitioners Group, who has been commissioned by the Access to Justice Committee to undertake a review of the Standard Terms from both a criminal and civil perspectives.

We have sent a further letter to justice minister Lucy Frazer MP to request an interim fee increase for crime practitioners following the 10% fee increase for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), which will encourage even more young defence lawyers to move to the CPS.

Our influencing work internationally:

On 7th May, Helena Raulus, head of our Brussels office, will be chairing a British Chamber of Commerce event on: cybersecurity and disinformation in the EU elections and the priorities of DG Connect with Claire Bury, deputy director general, DG Connect, European Commission. Anna Drozd, EU Policy Adviser will also be in attendance.

On 8th May, Helena Raulus will be chairing a Brussels-Based UK Organisations and Offices (BBUKOO) Plenary meeting in CBI Brussels Offices.

Supporting members at every stage of their career

Preparing 2nd year trainee solicitors for qualification - Career planning tips for trainees approaching qualification, London - Thursday 9th May 2019

Location: The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1PL

This event will provide an opportunity for trainee solicitors, mulling their post-training contract options, to gain insight into the newly qualified (NQ) jobs markets from Husnara Begum, a career coach who specialises in offering guidance to final seat trainees who miss out on internal jobs.

Judicial appointments: interview training for solicitors Manchester - Monday 13th May 2019

Location: Townhouse Hotel, 101 Portland St, Manchester M1 6DF

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.

Advocacy and Solicitor Judges' Division Spring Drinks, London - Tuesday 14th May 2019

Location: The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1PL

Join us for The Law Society's Advocacy and Solicitor Judges' Division Spring Drinks; an excellent opportunity to meet solicitor advocates and solicitor judges.

Male Champions for Change Report Launch- Monday 20th May 2019

Location: The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1PL

Join us on Monday 20 May for the launch of our male champions for change report following a series of roundtables. Led by Law Society vice president, Simon Davis, our panel of expert speakers will discuss the outcomes of the research so far conducted as part of the Women in Leadership in Law project.

Mental health week – Panel event: Diversity and intersectionality London -Tuesday 14th May 2019

Location: The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1PL

To mark mental health week, we are hosting a breakfast panel session. The theme of the event will be exploring well-being with lawyers from different diversity backgrounds. The event will also feature the impact of intersectionality and MH. Join us on Tuesday 14 May for insight on this important topic.

The Annual President's and Secretaries' Conference 2019 - Friday & Saturday 14th & 15th June 2019

Location: The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1PL

This free, must-attend [event](#) for local law societies will incorporate a varied mix of plenary and breakout sessions. Delegates will have the opportunity to discuss common challenges, share experiences and hear practical tips from both their local law society peers and expert speakers.

Supporting practice excellence

Some of our upcoming events are:

Nominations are open for the Excellence Awards

Don't miss the opportunity to celebrate your success, nominations for the [Excellence Awards](#) have been extended to Friday 17 May. For your chance to be recognised as a leader in your field [submit your nomination now](#). We encourage teams, firms and individual solicitors across England and Wales to [take the opportunity to promote their success](#). There are 22 categories to choose from, including Practice Manager of the Year, Excellence in International Legal Services and Excellence in Access to Justice.

MLRO and MLCO peer to peer learning, Manchester -Tuesday 7th May 2019

Location: Shoosmiths, The XYZ Building, 2 Hardman Boulevard, Spinningfields, Manchester, M3 3AZ

This event, aimed at MLRO's, is designed to provide you with the platform to discuss best practice and upcoming developments in economic crime, while also acting as a peer to peer learning opportunity.

MLRO and MLCO peer to peer learning, Bristol - Wednesday 8th May 2019

Location: Bristol Law Society, 12 Colston Avenue, BS1 4ST

The event is for MLROs, MLCOs and solicitors with an interest in anti-money laundering compliance. It will give you a platform to learn about best practice and upcoming developments in AML.

Competition Section annual conference 2019 London - Thursday 9th May 2019

Location: The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1PL

The annual Competition Section conference is an established fixture in the competition law calendar. This event draws on speakers from the UK and overseas and includes leading practitioners, regulators and economic experts.

Compliance support forum for in-house lawyers, London - Thursday 9th May 2019

Location: The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1PL

This popular forum has been updated with new materials to prepare you for the SRA Standards and Regulations which come into force in November 2019. Some of the key themes of this replacement to the SRA Handbook are very relevant to in house practitioners and we discuss the meaning of effective supervision and management, personal accountability, and the flexibility which comes with new practising styles.

Private Client Section: Practical inheritance tax update, Manchester - Thursday 9th May 2019

Location: The University of Law, 2 New York Street, Manchester, M1 4HJ

This seminar will provide a practical focus on recent changes affecting inheritance tax. This one-hour seminar will provide an update on: residence nil-rate bands and downsizing, business property relief, criminal facilitation of tax avoidance, and the future of inheritance tax and trust taxation.

CQS Roadshow Birmingham- Monday 13th May 2019

Location: Shoosmiths LLP, 2 Colmore Square, 38 Queensway, Birmingham B4 6BJ

These seminars are designed to provide CQS members with an update on the improvements being made to the accreditation in 2019 and provide the support needed to ensure compliance with the new scheme requirements. There will be an opportunity for Q&A and for networking with speakers and members of other accredited practices.

Property Section: half-day conveyancing convention 2019 Birmingham-Tuesday 14th May 2019

Location: BPP University, 32-34 Colmore Circus Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6BN

The Law Society's Property Section, is hosting a bespoke, half-day event for property practitioners. This new-format event focuses on the most important issues affecting modern property practice.

Criminal justice roadshow London- Thursday 16th May 2019

Location: The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1PL

Our criminal justice system is at breaking point. Due to years of underinvestment it is facing an avalanche of problems, such as growing shortages of duty solicitors, court closures and barriers to accessing legal aid. The Law Society has been making the case to government for increased spending on criminal justice to help fix the broken system, but we need your help. Attend this event to ensure your voice is heard.

Keeping members up to date

We have a number of newsletters for members. Below is a list, along with links for signing up to them.

Newsletter	Sign-up method
Advocacy Update	Update My Law Society preferences
Anti-money Laundering Update	Law Society newsletter page
City Update	Contact the City relationship management team
Diversity & Inclusion Update	Update My Law Society preferences
In-house Forum	Update My Law Society preferences
International Update	Law Society newsletter page
Junior Lawyers Update	Law Society newsletter page
	JLD sign-up page
Legal Aid Update	Law Society newsletter page
Professional Update	Law Society newsletter page
Regional Update	Contact your regional relationship management team
Risk & Compliance Update	Join the Risk and Compliance Service
Small Firms Focus	Contact the Small Firms Division
Solicitor Judges Update	Join the Solicitor Judges Division

You can also register for the Gazette daily update [here](#).

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

Kind regards,

Christina

Christina Blacklaws
President

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