

**Subject:** President's Weekly Local Law Societies Update 17.02.2020

## President's Update



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.

## Council

Following our Council meeting last week, the usual council report is being circulated to local law societies and the Gazette. Council considered a paper with specific proposals about a maximum term length for Council membership. This was not approved. Almost half of Council members have served 4 years or fewer, 23 members have served 12 or more years. Consideration of various aspects of Law Society governance will continue to be reviewed by the Council Membership Committee and Council.

## The Law Society's media profile this week

The [Evening Standard](#), Southern Daily Echo and the Western Mail all quoted my response to the appointment of Suella Braverman as attorney general and the reappointment of Robert Buckland as justice secretary in the reshuffle. I said: "We look forward to working with them to ensure that the rule of law is upheld in this country, that justice is available to all and that our strengths as a jurisdiction are maintained: an independent judiciary, a talented legal profession and laws which uphold business and human rights."

Meanwhile [iNews](#) reported suggestions by the attorney general that supreme court judges could be interviewed by politicians. I said: "Justices of the Supreme Court are rightly subjected to a rigorous appointments process and are successful because of their merit, probity and outstanding knowledge of the law. We expect them to interpret and apply the law without fear or favour and this can only be achieved if they are free from political interference."

[The Guardian](#) and [The Gazette](#) provided insight into the importance of judicial review, following a Court of Appeal ruling stopping the government from deporting some individuals to Jamaica. I said: "Judicial Review is a vital part of the checks and balances necessary to protect people from powerful institutions. It underpins the rule of law."

The Terrorist Offenders (Restriction of Early Release) Bill went through the House of Commons yesterday, meaning prisoners who would have been automatically been released half-way through a sentence will now have to spend two-thirds in prison before they are referred to the Parole Board.

Richard Atkinson, co-chair of our criminal law committee, warned of the dangers of applying legislation retrospectively on [BBC Radio 4 PM](#) (13:38) and [BBC Wales](#) (1:16:30).

Meanwhile, I told the [Gazette](#) earlier this week: "Applying this bill retrospectively will change the rules for many prisoners mid-sentence, meaning that time on licence will actually be spent in prisons. More prisoners will choose to appeal their sentences, placing an additional burden on our already overstretched justice system."

Business desires 'bolder' legislation on human rights and environment according to a survey released by the British Institute of International and Comparative Law – covered by the [Times](#). (£). Sue Willman, chair of our human rights committee, described the proposals as a "strengthening of tort law to change the burden of proof so companies would have to show they had taken steps to prevent human rights harms".

Dr Marina Brilman, of our international team, spoke to Polish news programme [Fakty TVN](#) about changes to the judiciary which could undermine its independence.

Jonathan Radcliffe, a partner at Reed Smith, was on [talkRadio](#) (in the 12:30 to 1:00pm slot from 07:02) discussing recent inventions and how to register your intellectual property.

The [Gazette](#), [Today's Wills and Probate](#), the [Justice Gap](#), [Today's Conveyancer](#), and [Family Law Week](#) all cover Law Society calls for the government to follow through on their promises in the LASPO review made a year ago.

I said: “One year on from the LASPO review, the government must follow through on their commitment to reassess the availability of legal aid and give the public the access to justice they so clearly support. Our legal needs survey with the Legal Services Board shows a huge 92% of adults support legal aid. The Ministry of Justice’s recognition of these problems in their post-implementation review of LASPO was welcome”.

Law Society head of justice Richard Miller was interviewed by the [International Bar Association](#) on the crisis in our justice system. He said: “Since LASPO, nothing is covered by legal aid unless it’s specifically listed in the Act. The system is now very constrained, the service that’s left is very fragmented and it can’t really work towards a holistic solution for the individual.”

Gary Rycroft, a member of our digital assets working group, spoke to [BBC Radio 5 Live](#) (1:10:16) about compulsory purchase orders for the HS2 route.

*Legal Business* cited our *UK-EU future partnership – legal services sector report*, which found that Britain could take a £3.5bn hit from a no-deal Brexit.

[Legal Futures](#) reported on our [legal aid deserts](#) campaign, where our analysis found that 79% of local authorities in England and Wales do not have a single community care legal aid provider. View our [heat map](#).

Our [updated TA6 conveyancing forms](#) on Japanese Knotweed were covered in [House Ladder](#), [Property Industry Eye](#), [Today’s Conveyancer](#), [The Negotiator](#), [Mortgage Introducer](#), [Mortgage Solutions](#), [Inside Conveyancing](#) and [Estate Agent Today](#). I said: “We have updated the form following a recommendation that we review this question by the House of Commons Select Committee on Japanese knotweed. The changes reflect the increased scientific knowledge about this species. Other sections, including flood risk, have also been updated.”

[Workplace Insight](#), [Legal Futures](#) and [Tech Register](#) continued coverage of the Technology and Law Public Policy Commission’s [report into algorithmic systems](#) in the criminal justice system.

[Inside Conveyancing](#) and [Roofing Today](#) report on the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) has launched a new professional statement – *Code for Leasing Business Premises* – which will be mandatory for all UK RICS members to follow.

*Property Week* also cited RICS’ plans to launch a review of valuation practices to ensure surveyors remain ‘relevant and trusted’.

[The Gazette](#) covered our response to the Solicitors Regulation Authority’s three-year strategy, where it has proposed becoming involved in raising public awareness of legal services, looking in more detail at unmet legal need and investigating consumer concerns.

The Law Society said: “The SRA should therefore focus on its core regulatory function of ensuring high, professional standards of competence rather than diverting too high a proportion of its resource to other strands of work.”

[Legal Cheek](#) reported that research by legal recruiter Douglas Scott has found 30% of trainees across England and Wales are paid below the Law Society’s recommended minimum salary.

Ahead of [Justice Week 2020](#), [Educator UK](#) and [Legal Action Group](#) outline some of the events.

The [Times](#) (£) reported that recorders may be facing disqualification for not spending enough in court. Ian Kelcey, the co-chair of our criminal law committee, said there was a “massive underuse” at certain courts.

The [FT](#) (£) looked at the proposed increase to intestacy rates for spouses whose partners die without a will. “This increase is very welcome but many people are unaware that under intestacy laws, unmarried partners and close friends cannot inherit,” I said.

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

## Justice

We held the first Means Test Focus Group for practitioners to talk to Ministry of Justice officials about their and their clients’ experiences with the means test in Newcastle on Wednesday 05 February.

On Thursday we attended a Quality of Youth Court Advocacy Working Group meeting. These meetings are hosted at the Ministry of Justice but are profession-led and chaired by Kate Aubrey-Johnson, until recently of Just For Kids Law.

### Justice Week 2020

Championed by the Law Society, the Bar Council and CILEx, Justice Week aims to boost the profile of justice and the rule of law, placing them at the centre stage of public and political debate. Taking place from Monday 24 to Friday 28 February, Justice Week 2020 will focus on young people's experiences and understanding of the justice system in England and Wales. To see the full list of Justice Week activities, please visit [Justice Week 2020](#)

As part of Justice Week, the Law Society is assembling a 'Hacking Justice' team to help fix our crippled justice system. If you are a solicitor, barrister, programmer, student, professor or passionate about increasing access to justice, we need you! Prior to the start date you will be sent a brief, including the defined user group, user characteristics and problem statements. [Sign Up Here](#)

### Family

The Divorce Dissolution and Separation Bill had its second reading in the House of Lords this week. The full transcript of the second reading in the Lords can be read on Hansard [here](#). The Law Society received 10 positive mentions and there was expressions of support from the Lords for some of our suggested improvements to the Bill. Our briefing was quoted by Baroness Burt of Solihull (Lib Dem), and referenced by Lord Marks of Henley, Lib Dem Lords spokesperson on justice, and shadow attorney general Baroness Chakrabarti.

### **Speaking engagements**

The deputy vice president spoke at a careers event for the Law Society's In-House Division on Tuesday 11 February, and at the OECD's Friends of Gender Equality meeting on Friday 14 February.

I spoke at a British Italian Conservatives event on Brexit and the Law, alongside Alberto Costa MP, the architect of various citizens' rights measures in early 2019. Council Member Maria Memoli also spoke, and together myself and Maria outlined the importance of legal services to the UK economy and to the proper functioning of the rule of law, as well as key civil judicial co-operation measures that will be necessary in the future relationship.

### **Carey Street**

I hosted a dinner discussion on ethics in the profession, guests included representatives from Clifford Chance, DAC Beachcroft, Hogan Lovells, and Kingsley Napley.

### **Join our LGBT+ Lawyers Division Committee**

We're looking for enthusiastic, passionate members of the legal profession with an interest in LGBT+ issues, or who are a part of the LGBT+ community, to join the committee.

Submit your application by Friday 28 February.

[Apply here](#)

### Our international work:

Updates from our Brussels office as follows:

On Monday 10 February Marcus Corry, EU policy advisor attended the UK Mission New Year reception with the British Ambassador Sir Tim Barrow.

On Tuesday 11 February Helena Raulus, head of the Brussels office, attended a meeting with Alan Beattie, FT reporter.

On Thursday 13 February Anna Drozd, EU policy advisor attended together with Pavel Klimov, Chair of Technology Working Group, a European Data Protection Supervisor workshop on Artificial Intelligence.

On Friday 14 February, Helena Raulus chaired the Diversity Awareness Committee hosted by the British Chamber of Commerce.

Stephen Denyer and Ben Stevenson were in Austin, Texas for the ABA and NABE midyear conferences, engaging with a wide range of ABA bodies and state bar associations. Key topics of discussion included developments in legal regulation, UK-US trade in legal services, non-lawyer ownership and access to justice. They developed plans for joint events for members with some of our US partners in London and New York later this year.

## Supporting members at every stage of their career

### [Fighting for Your Rights Hackathon -Tuesday 25 February 2020](#)

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

On the 25 February 2020, The Law Society is assembling a Hacking Justice Team to help fix our crippled justice system in partnership with Access to Justice Foundation.

### [Solicitor Judges and Advocacy Networking Drinks 2020 - Thursday 27 February 2020](#)

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

Join us for The Law Society's annual Solicitor Judges and Advocacy Networking Drinks 2020; an excellent opportunity to meet solicitor advocates and solicitor judges

### [Unpausing the conversation on menopause - Tuesday 24 March, 2020](#)

Join us on Tuesday 24 March to challenge taboos and erase the stigma around the menopause.

We will be joined by a line of fantastic speakers who will be discussing the menopause from a medical perspective and how the legal landscape is changing in regards to discrimination.

[Book your place](#)

## Supporting Practice excellence

[New Accounts Rules – How is it for you so far?-](#) Webinar 20 February 2020 20% discount to risk and compliance

### [Capital markets in the 21st century 2020 - Friday 28 February 2020](#)

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

We are delighted to announce that the sixth Law Society and American Bar Association capital markets conference will take place on 28 February 2020.

### [Law Management Section People in Practice Conference 2020 - Wednesday 04 March 2020](#)

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

We are delighted to announce that registration is now open for the 2019 Law Management Section People in Practice Conference on Wednesday 4 March 2020 at the Law Society in London.

### [Money Matters and Misconceptions for Women in Law - Birmingham - Wednesday 04 March 2020](#)

**Location:** Wesleyan Assurance Society, Colmore Circus, Birmingham B4 6AR

In collaboration with the Law Society, our strategic partner and specialist provider of financial planning advice, Wesleyan Financial Services, are hosting a series of free to attend seminars. Hear key speakers from within the legal profession talk about the importance of making your money work as hard as you are.

[Section 106s and planning conditions \(Planning law update 2020\)](#) - Webinar 04 March 2020 inclusive to Property

[Sexual misconduct in law firms](#) - Webinar 04 March 2020 20% discount to risk and compliance

### [Money Matters and Misconceptions for Women in Law - Manchester – Thursday 05 March 2020](#)

**Location:** DLA Piper, 1 St Peter's Square, Manchester M2 3DE

In collaboration with the Law Society, our strategic partner and specialist provider of financial planning advice, Wesleyan Financial Services, are hosting a series of free to attend seminars. Hear key speakers from within the legal profession talk about the importance of making your money work as hard as you are.

### [Private Client Section: cross border conference 2020 - The new international landscape - Friday 06 March 2020](#)

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

The 2020 Cross border conference will help you to keep on top of the increasingly complex and changing environment of international private client work.

## [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**

Advocacy Update

Anti-money Laundering Update

City Update

Diversity & Inclusion Update

### **Sign-up method**

[Update My Law Society preferences](#)

[Law Society newsletter page](#)

[Contact the City relationship management team](#)

[Update My Law Society preferences](#)

In-house Forum	<a href="#">Update My Law Society preferences</a>
International Update	<a href="#">Law Society newsletter page</a>
Junior Lawyers Update	<a href="#">Law Society newsletter page</a>
	<a href="#">JLD sign-up page</a>
Legal Aid Update	<a href="#">Law Society newsletter page</a>
Professional Update	<a href="#">Law Society newsletter page</a>
Risk & Compliance Update	<a href="#">Join the Risk and Compliance Service</a>
Small Firms Focus	<a href="#">Contact the Small Firms Division</a>
Solicitor Judges Update	<a href="#">Join the Solicitor Judges Division</a>
Campaigns Update	<a href="#">Sign up to the Campaigns Update newsletter</a>
Parliamentary report	<a href="#">Sign up to the Parliamentary report newsletter</a>

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

**Simon Davis**  
**President**

The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane,  
London WC2A 1PL  
[www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk)

