

Subject: President's Weekly Law Society Update 18 March 2019

Dear colleague,

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:

The [Guardian](#) reported on 100 years of women in the law to mark international women's day. I'm quoted saying: "The profession has made great strides over the past hundred years but there is still a long journey to gender equality, particularly senior levels in certain regions of England and Wales."

I also marked international women's day with an opinion piece for the [Gazette](#). And there was further coverage in the [Gazette's](#) new women in the law page, [The Journal of the Law Society of Scotland](#), [Today's Conveyancer](#) and [Legal Cheek](#).

Ian Bond, chair of the wills and equity committee appeared on BBC Radio 4 Money Box to discuss the recent increase in the cost of death certificates, which have almost tripled from £4 to £11. You can listen to the interview [here](#) from 11:50.

[Legal Week](#) (£) reports five UK firms in Seoul – Clifford Chance, Herbert Smith Freehills, Linklaters, Stephenson Harwood, and Allen & Overy – operate their foreign legal consultant offices under a free trade agreement between Korea and the European Union, but once the UK is no longer in the EU, they will not legally be able to operate in Seoul. Mickael Laurens, our head of international, is quoted: "Leaving Seoul, with its consequential loss of local jobs and investment, may be the only option left."

The [Gazette](#) reports on the incentives for law firms and solicitors of operating northern legal hubs. These ventures are welcomed, says Jo McLeod, the Law Society's head of relationship management for the north, as an affirmation of the cities' already thriving legal markets.

The [Gazette](#) and [Telegraph](#) both report how charitable organisations have urged the government to reconsider controversial proposals to increase some probate fees so that estates including bequests to charities are not adversely affected. Law Society vice president Simon Davis is quoted by both saying "The government can call it [the probate fee increase] a service charge or a graduated fee, but asking those who have larger estates to pay more is in effect a tax hike through the back door."

[Commercial Dispute Resolution](#) noted our warning of the consequences of a no-deal Brexit for criminal law practitioners ahead of MPs voting on leaving the EU without an agreement.

[Public Law Today](#) examines the legal and other issues raised by the use by local authorities of predictive analysis, 'Big Data' and machine learning, and covers the Law Society's technology and the Law Commission's work in this area.

City AM reports on the government's anti-money laundering 'Flag It Up' campaign. The Law Society and the ACCA partnered with Flag It Up and ran a poll with 200 professionals to discover how they feel about AML. 97% said they were concerned about becoming a target for criminals looking to exploit their skills for AML purposes.

The [New Law Journal](#) reports on our recent finding that how well women do in their legal careers may well depend on where they live. You can read our press release [here](#).

[Lawyer Monthly](#) examines solicitors' roles in property surveys. Both the Law Society and UK Finance urge solicitors to recommend a property survey.

A [Guardian](#) article on the experience of junior lawyers includes comments from council member and JLD member Kayleigh Leonie. The article echoes a [Gazette](#) piece from January.

The [New Law Journal](#) (£) reports on our [lawtech adoption research report](#) in a piece on overcoming fear of technology. [New Law Journal](#) (£) also looks at the impact of austerity on the justice system quoting our contribution to the LASPO review.

The [Gazette](#) reports on the Law Society's views on commonhold as a form of property ownership. It comes as the Law Commission tries to reinvigorate interest in the idea.

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:

Legal and Regulatory Policy

Access to Justice

Court reforms

HMCTS has announced a one-year extension of its court reform programme. The extension takes into account our concerns about the risk that the fast pace of the ambitious reform programme wouldn't allow sufficient time for proper testing, evaluation and evidence that technology works. HMCTS is now anticipating a finish date of 2023.

Criminal justice

We met with two MPs to promote our criminal justice campaign.

Other

Head of justice Richard Miller attended a workshop run by the MoJ and Motor Insurers Bureau to discuss implementation of the Civil Liability Act. We held a meeting of the Grenfell Lawyers Forum last week.

Solicitor Advocates

I received support from solicitor advocates for this meeting with the Solicitors Association of Higher Court Advocates to discuss the support the Society can provide to solicitor advocates.

Speeches

The chief executive spoke at the Leeds Law Society on Thursday and the vice president spoke at the Yorkshire Law Society on Friday.

The chair of the board spoke at the Law Society's annual risk and compliance conference on Friday.

Parliamentary

The Law Society was mentioned during justice oral questions in the Commons on Tuesday. Tom Brake MP (Lib Dem) raised the Law Society's concerns regarding the legal aid means test, access to justice and the criminal justice system. In response to his question, Justice Minister Lucy Frazer QC MP noted the Ministry of Justice is undertaking a review of the legal aid means test,

The chancellor delivered his Spring Statement to parliament on Wednesday. The chancellor used the statement to signal a warning of the impact on the economy of a no deal Brexit, and to respond to Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) figures on the strength of the UK economy. There were no major policy announcements or commitments in the statement affecting the legal sector. The chancellor did make a number of announcements in other areas including £100m extra funding for English police authorities to tackle knife crime, additional investment in technology, research and development, and on affordable housing. The chancellor also confirmed the Treasury will launch a full three-year spending review before the summer recess, to be concluded alongside the autumn Budget.

On Monday, Philip Freedman from the Law Society's conveyancing and land law committee gave oral evidence to the joint committee on the draft Registration of the Overseas Entities Bill. Philip expressed the Law Society's support for the objectives of the bill, but highlighted concerns around how the bill would impact on unrepresented parties who are unlikely to be aware of their obligations under the proposed legislation.

Our influencing work internationally:

From 11-15 March myself, Lizzette Robleto de Howarth, and Stephanie Brown, attended the 63rd UN Commission on the Status of Women taking place in New York. This is the first Law Society delegation ever attending the CSW since obtaining its UN-ECOSOC status. I spoke at three events on domestic abuse, independence of judges and lawyers in supporting the rights of women and girls and on the work of the Law Society on Women in Leadership in the Law. We also facilitated two well attended women's roundtables and held a number of important side meetings with NGOs and other representative bodies.

On 13th March, The Brussels office held a legal issues task force meeting for the Brussels-based UK organisations (BBUKOO). Around 30 people attended the meeting to discuss legal implications of Brexit and Belgian no deal preparation.

Solicitor brand campaign

We're looking for business or consumer clients who would like to be photographed as part of our campaign to promote the value of solicitors. More details can be found [here](#).

Supporting members at every stage of their career

Supporting practice excellence

Some of our upcoming events are:

Data protection in transition: GDPR and DPA compliance for law firms - Tuesday 2nd April 2019

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

A year on from the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), the emerging data protection regime is established but not yet mature. This conference is designed to help law firms identify the right data protection strategies to navigate this difficult transitional period.

Advocacy and the Vulnerable Training, London Afternoon session - Wednesday 3rd April 2019

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

The Advocacy and the Vulnerable Training was developed in conjunction with the Bar to help solicitor advocates and barristers strike the balance between advancing their client's case effectively in court whilst ensuring vulnerable witnesses are not subjected to undue stress.

Doing Legal Business in the Philippines- Wednesday 3rd April 2019

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

The Law Society of England and Wales is launching its Doing Legal Business in the Philippines. The Philippines is the third largest English-speaking country in the world and one of the fastest growing economies in Southeast Asia.

Compliance support forum for in-house lawyers, London - Thursday 4th April 2019

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

This forum provides an update on the in-house lawyer's current compliance position with discussions about common conduct and practising conundrums and suggestions for an appropriate and proportionate response. It also includes a review of changes of significance which have been proposed in the SRA's 'Looking to the future' consultation.

Recharger workshop: Resilience and Wellbeing -Thursday 4th April 2019

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

Developing resilience enables us to remain positive, energetic and committed to our goal, even in the face of challenges or setbacks. In this workshop, we will explore strategies for building resilience so that you can feel and come across at your best.

The Junior Lawyers Division (JLD) 2019 annual conference and ball - Saturday 6th April 2019

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

The JLD will be hosting their twelfth annual conference and ball. The programme offers a mix of panel-led discussions and workshops for personal and professional development within the legal sector. Early bird rates from £60 + VAT. www.lawsociety.org.uk/jld-conference-and-ball-2019

Competition Section seminar: Review of the Digital Competition Expert Panel report, London – Tuesday 9th April 2019

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

In August 2018, the government announced the appointment of an expert panel to consider the potential opportunities and challenges the emerging digital economy may pose for competition and competition policy. It asked the panel to make recommendations on any changes that may be needed.

Civil Litigation Section Spring Conference 2019 – Wednesday 1st May 2019

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

The Civil Litigation Section will be hosting a half day conference Wednesday 1st May at the Law Society, London. The programme is split up into two sessions covering: what the Civil Litigator needs to know about Brexit, and current costs issues, including arbitration, mediation and tribunals will be covered in this session. This conference is inclusive for Civil Litigation Section members / £190 + VAT for non-members. www.lawsociety.org.uk/Civil-Litigation-Section-Spring-conference-2019

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](#).

Christina Blacklaws

President twitter: @lawsocpresident

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

www.lawsociety.org.uk