



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.

Website

Our [new website](#) and the new My LS are now live. Please register to see content tailored to your practice, and interests. Thanks to all members who have fed back during development. Feedback is still welcome. Registering with My LS will also help you understand the benefit to your constituents.

#Solicitorspirit

We have promoted our new campaign to highlight the great work the profession has been doing for clients and the community during the pandemic. You can read more [here](#). The latest twitter messages, including member comments and video are [here](#).

Please encourage your constituents to share their stories.

Parliamentary

On Monday 13 July the Law Society submitted written responses to the Women and Equalities committee sub inquiry on the unequal impact of coronavirus on BAME people, and the sub inquiry into gendered economic impact. These responses formed part of the committee's wider inquiry into the unequal impact of coronavirus on people with protected characteristics which we also submitted a written response to.

On 14 July, the lord chancellor and his ministerial team answered oral questions in the House of Commons. The session covered a range of topics including supporting domestic abuse victims, legal aid, access to justice, court backlog, and the Lammy Review. The Law Society briefed MPs ahead of the session. The Law Society was mentioned by name in a question by Labour MP and Shadow Justice Secretary David Lammy and the question from Liberal Democrat MP Wera Hobhouse was taken from our briefing.

On 15 July, Lord Ramsbotham asked a question in the House of Lords regarding the Royal Commission on criminal justice; this was a follow up to a question he asked in June. The Law Society briefed peers ahead of the session and Lord Ramsbotham mentioned our work in highlighting the criminal justice system not working as it should.

We have been in the media this week to promote the role and value of the profession in difficult times

[New Law Journal](#) looked at controversial proposals regarding jury trials as a response to the court backlog. I, along with Bar Council chair Amanda Pinto QC, pointed out the problems are not new with the backlog already approaching 40,000 cases before the pandemic as the "government did not fund the judicial time needed".

The [Gazette](#) covered the government's plan for post-coronavirus economic recovery and the stamp duty land tax holiday. I said: "A temporary reduction in residential property transaction costs to support such people and to bring forward demand makes sense. It will also be welcome news for solicitors whose volume of work has fallen."

Meanwhile the [Gazette](#), [Today's Wills and Probate](#) and [Legal News Wales](#) reported on the Welsh government's land transaction tax holiday announcement. Mark Evans, chair of our Wales committee said: "This is a time of upheaval in the lives of many who need to move home for various economic, social and personal reasons."

[Today's Wills and Probate](#) reported on the government's commitment to jobs following the pandemic. I said: "While the additional support for apprenticeships unveiled by the chancellor will benefit the legal services sector we feel he could go further."

[Management Consultancies Association News](#) mentioned that thousands of expert professional and business services advisers have signed up to offer free online advice to help small businesses bounce back from coronavirus (COVID-19). The Law Society and the Management Consultancies Association (MCA) are among the professional bodies to have signed up for the scheme.

Max Winthrop, chair of our Employment Law Committee took part in an hour-long phone-in on the Shelagh Fogarty Show on [LBC](#) (from 02.59) He spoke about the unemployment figures, the furlough scheme, redundancy and changes to people's working conditions.

Max also spoke with [BBC Radio Nottingham](#) (from 1:37:30) about what your rights are in employment law and how you should be treated by your employer if they are cutting jobs in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The [Sunday Express](#) reported on video wills and cites our warning that, under the Wills Act, witnesses must be physically present.

[Legal Futures](#) reported on evidence given by the Law Society and Bar Council on how Covid-19 has impacted the legal sector. I commented on legal aid firms and said: "You had solicitors there that were shockingly underpaid... Those in the criminal world do not make money in the magistrates' courts. They make the money, if they can, in jury trials. No jury trials, no money."

In an opinion piece for the [FT](#) (£), David Lammy – the shadow secretary for justice – writes on British justice and the importance of the British justice system. He cites our research that the legal sector contributes almost £60bn in gross value added each year.

The [Gazette](#) reports on the Legal Services Board's proposals to assess solicitor's continued competence by adapting methods used in other industries. I said: "The model of assuring ongoing competence should be specific to the profession it is assuring, and should come from knowledge of that profession, the business models and the types of work undertaken."

The [Justice Gap](#) covered the LALY Awards, which recognise the work of legal aid practitioners. I said: "There are so many unsung heroes doing vital work in an incredibly tough environment and they deserved their contributions to be recognised."

Amandeep Khasriya, from our Women Lawyers Division, urged more law firms to sign the Women in Law Pledge in a [Legal Futures](#) blog.

"While Covid-19 has presented a stark challenge to many businesses, including law firms, equality should never drop down the agenda," said the associate solicitor at Moore Blatch.

The [Solicitors Journal](#) reported the Law Society has launched a series of virtual roundtable discussions to explore why black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) solicitors are not sufficiently represented at senior levels in the profession.

Update from our Brussels office

On 16 July, Helena Raulus, head of office, chaired the BBUKOO legal issues meeting. Mathias Hendrickx, attorney-at-law from Loyens and Loeff joined the meeting and the group discussed the Belgian company in the light of Brexit.

On 16 July, Helena Raulus, Rita Giannini and Marcus Corry attended the private international law working group meeting with Law Society members. The meeting focused on the EU position paper on readiness at the end of the transition period and the choice of court agreements as well as MoJ consultation on retaining EU case law.

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

Kind regards,

Simon

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