

Subject: President's Weekly Law Society Update 20 May 2019

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:

International Bar Association research into sexual harassment and bullying in the legal sector received widespread media coverage. I released a statement on behalf of our members reiterating that the legal profession must tackle bullying and harassment in the sector head on.

You can read my statement in full [here](#). The [Times](#) (£), [Bloomberg](#), [City AM](#), [Gazette](#) and [MSN Money](#), amongst others, report on the story.

Jenny Beck, a member of our access to justice committee, was on the BBC's Victoria Derbyshire to discuss family courts and child arrangement orders. You can watch the programme [here](#). Jenny is on from 52:39.

Coverage of our [housing legal aid deserts campaign](#) continues in local media. Our head of justice Richard Miller appeared on [BBC Tees](#); you can listen to the interview [here](#) (2:12:00). [London news](#), [Wigan Today](#), [Derbyshire Times](#), [Gainsborough Standard](#) and others also ran with the story.

For mental health awareness week, the [Gazette](#) and [Legal Futures](#) report on the Law Society, the Solicitors Regulation Authority, LawCare, SBA the Solicitors' Charity, and the Solicitors' Assistance Scheme joint campaign, [#SupportingSolicitors](#), which promotes the help available to solicitors dealing with personal challenges.

The [Times](#) (£), [Global Legal Post](#) and [Law Careers](#) reported the Junior Lawyers Division (JLD) demand for action to prevent a mental health crisis in the profession, following their latest resilience and well-being survey.

[Legal Week \(£\)](#) explores how universities are seeking to equip the next generation of legal professionals with the skills to leverage lawtech. Alan East, Chair of our education and training committee, says that lawtech is finally beginning to take hold in UK law schools.

[Legal Cheek](#) reports on the SRA's response to a call from junior lawyers to reintroduce a mandatory minimum salary and concerns that the new work experience element of the Solicitors' Qualifying Exam (SQE) puts would-be solicitors at risk of exploitation.

The [Daily Mail](#) reports that home owners need revisions to the current guidance on Japanese knotweed. We said we would consult to see "whether changes need to be made".

The [Times](#) (£) reports that the government is to push more court users towards the online court system despite concerns from the profession. I am quoted saying: "We have long suspected that an outcome of the court modernisation programme would be to drive litigants away from physical courts to online procedures."

The [Daily Mail](#) reported that delays to applications for grants of probate are causing chaos. I am quoted saying "It is extremely disappointing to hear of these delays – particularly when the impact falls on the bereaved."

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

Regulation

Members of our Regulatory Affairs team led two roundtable discussions on Ethics Hot Topics in Preston and Lancaster on 8 May. Both sessions were well attended and we received positive feedback from delegates.

Access to Justice

Solicitor judges and advocacy

The Law Society's Solicitor Judges Division hosted a Spring drinks evening with solicitor advocates and solicitor judges in Chancery Lane on 14 May. Vice-President Simon Davis and Alexandra Marks CBE spoke at this networking evening, aimed at solicitors working in the courts, solicitor judges and those aspiring to join the judiciary. This offered opportunities for building peer-to-peer contacts and discussing approaches to cases.

We presented the latest version of the [Solicitor Judges Division's Judicial pathway](#), a toolkit for solicitors at any career stage seeking to obtain a deep and practical understanding of what is needed to become a judge in England and Wales.

Richard Miller, head of the justice, attended the quarterly Judicial Diversity Forum meeting.

Criminal Law

As part of our criminal justice campaign, we 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](#).

We are also hosting a series of free roadshows as part of our criminal justice campaign, exploring issues such as the growing shortage of duty solicitors, court closures and barriers to accessing legal aid. The first of the roadshows took place on 16 May in London.

Book your free place [here](#) to learn more about the issues from Law Society experts, get involved in our criminal justice campaign and give us your views on the Ministry of Justice's crime fees review and HMCTS' reform programme.

Role of the Profession

Simplifying the Immigration Rules

We responded to the Law Commission's Home Office-sponsored consultation on Immigration Rules, which will feed into its review to make the Rules simpler and more accessible to users.

Our [response](#) supports the proposed simplification of the Immigration Rules, making legislation more accessible and fit for purpose. However, we also highlight the complexity of this task and provide specific examples of how the confusing intricacy of the Rules causes a wide range of problems.

Court and Tribunals (Online Procedures) Bill

Our justice and public affairs teams collaborated to produce a [briefing](#) for the Second Reading of the Courts and Tribunals (Online Procedures) Bill, which will establish the Online Procedure Rules Committee as part of the HMCTS reform programme.

Commercial

Tax Law

We responded to HMRC and HM Treasury's consultation on Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT). The consultation sought views on the design of a 1% surcharge on non-UK residents purchasing residential property in England and Northern Ireland. Our full response is available [here](#).

We express concern about the insufficiency of the evidence base to show that the surcharge would meet the policy objective and suggest amendments to seek to avoid potential unfairness and anomalies that would arise from the current proposals. We also voice serious concerns about the introduction of significant further complexity into the home-buying process.

The Law Society's guidance on buying a home is available [here](#), and the Government's key guidance on buying and selling, which the Society recently endorsed, is available here: [How to Buy a Home](#) [How to Sell a home](#).

Rule of Law and Environment Event

As part of our influencing work for the Environment Bill we are developing a breakfast panel event to coincide with Environment Day. Details will soon become available on our [Events](#) page.

Code for completion guidance

We released our new [Code for Completion by Post](#) in response to the Court of Appeal decision in the *Dreamvar* case last year. We amended the [TA13 Completion Information and Undertakings form](#) to reflect the changes made to the Code.

Conveyancing

We attended the All-Party Parliamentary Group on leasehold and commonhold, where we engaged with a large number of MPs.

Technology

The Technology and Law Policy Commission will be launching its report at our AI in Legal Services Summit on 4 June 2019. Over the past year the Commission has examined the ethical implications of AI in law and the growth and adoption of emerging technologies in the criminal justice system. The international summit will bring together our findings, along with insights on the latest legal innovations. Council members wishing to find out more or attend can register on the [event website](#).

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

Parliamentary

On Tuesday the House of Lords held its Second Reading of the Courts and Tribunals (Online Procedure) Bill. The Law Society [briefed](#) ahead of the debate and were mentioned four times.

On Thursday, Ministers from the Department for Exiting the European Union were questioned by MPs in the House of Commons. The Law Society briefed beforehand and was mentioned twice in the session.

Our influencing work internationally:

This week, I was in Moscow and St Petersburg with our international policy adviser for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Chika Muorah. In Moscow, we met with members to gather their views on proposed regulatory reform and the likely impact on their practice. The issues raised by our members were discussed at our bilateral meeting with the Russian Federal Chamber of Lawyers. We also hosted our first international women in law roundtable in Russia in partnership with our Russian counterparts and the British Embassy in Moscow.

We attended the International Legal Forum in St Petersburg to show our support for the Russian bar association and I participated in two sessions. The first was a panel discussion on women in law and the second was a session hosted by the Russian bar on lawyers' fees.

On 14 May, our Brussels Office co-hosted a legal breakfast event with FLINN Law on Court of Justice of the European Union's opinion on CETA's Investment Court System and its implications for the future EU trade policy. Panellists were Helena Raulus, Head of Brussels Office; Leonard Hawkes, Flinn; Colin Brown, DG Trade, European Commission; Nicolas Angelet, Doughty Street Chambers, London; a representative of the Canadian Mission to the EU (TBC) and Emily Hay, Senior Associate at Hanotiau & Van Den Berg.

Head of our Brussels office Helena Raulus chaired a British Chamber of Commerce event, Priorities of the Finnish Presidency with Ambassador Rislakki, on 14 May.

Our Brussels office hosted an event on European in-house organisations, LPP Task Force, on 15 May. Stephen Denyer and Sophia Adams Bhatti were in attendance.

Supporting members at every stage of their career

Please remember [The power of gender equality to transform the business of law](#), our international symposium is next month. This two-day conference is designed to bring together professionals from across the legal profession and other sectors to identify steps needed to achieve gender equality in the workplace, crucial to boost growth, innovation and productivity

Male Champions for Change report launch - Monday 20 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 conducted as part of the Women in Leadership in Law project.

How to implement a diversity and inclusion (D&I) strategy in your legal team

Join our regional panel sessions on 'How to implement a diversity and inclusion (D&I) strategy in your legal team'. The Law Society's In-house Division and D&I team are bringing together in-house lawyers to discuss common concerns and examples of how issues can be overcome. Discussion points will feed into a Law Society guidance. Book your place to hear from our panel and input your views.

[Manchester](#) - 25 June (17.30-20.30)

[London](#) - 27 June (8.00-10.30)

Advocacy and the Vulnerable Training - Wednesday 22 May 2019, Bradford - Afternoon session

Location: Bradford – Jury's Inn Bradford

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.

Career options and support available - Wednesday 22 May 2019

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

This free event that will help you explore career options and support available to those wishing to return to or change their career in the legal profession. The event will feature a panel of speakers showcasing different examples of the careers options available to you. Delegates can find out more about the support offered by the following organisations: LawCare, Women Returners Network, Practice Advice Service, SBA, SAS, SRA.

Supporting practice excellence

Some of our upcoming events are:

MLRO and MLCO peer to peer learning, Cambridge - Wednesday 5 June 2019

Location: Mills & Reeve, Botanic House, 98-100 Hills Rd, Cambridge CB2 1PH

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.

Criminal justice roadshow, Exeter - 21 May 2019

Location: Veitch Penny Solicitors, 1 Manor Court, Dix's Field, Exeter, EX1 1UP

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.

CQS Roadshow, 23 May, Cardiff - Thursday 23 May 2019

Location: The Law Society, 5th Floor, Capital Tower, Greyfriars Road, Cardiff CF10 3AG

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.

AML City of London update - Thursday 23 May 2019

Location: Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner, Adelaide House, London Bridge, London, EC4R 9HA

This event is for MLROs, MLCOs and other AML compliance professionals working for London City firms. It will give you a platform to learn about the regulator's perspective on AML as well as upcoming changes to the UK's Suspicious Activity Reporting regime. Speakers will include representatives from the SRA, the UK Financial Intelligence Unit, BDO and the Law Society.

CQS Roadshow, 29 May, London - Wednesday 29 May 2019

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

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.

Criminal justice roadshow, Bristol - Monday 3 June 2019

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

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Law Management Section People in Practice seminar, in association with Leeds Law Society- Tuesday 4 June 2019

Location: Leeds Law Society, 62 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 2EE

Looking after the people in your practice is paramount to running a successful firm. This seminar covers key topics in legal human resources including culture and behaviour in the workplace, agile and flexible working and employment case law update.

Criminal justice roadshow, Birmingham - Tuesday 4 June 2019

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

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.

Resilience and Wellbeing face-to-face workshop -Thursday 6 June 2019

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

This face-to-face one day workshop puts the focus firmly on your personal coping mechanisms. We

demonstrate how to self-assess, manage emotional responses and deal with everyday stressors, so you can better deal with the pressures of your job. We will tackle anxiety and its causes, encourage positive thinking and you will leave with valuable skills for life.

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

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](#).

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www.lawsociety.org.uk