

Subject: President's Weekly Local Law Societies Update 4.11.2019

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.

Influencing on behalf of the profession and promoting the profession

The Law Society's media profile this week

The [Guardian](#), the [Times](#) (£) and the [Gazette](#) covered the Justice Select Committee's concerns about the court modernisation programme. I said: "If the rule of law is to be upheld, any reforms must ensure that everyone is able to access justice – regardless of their digital capabilities."

[The Times](#) (£) and the [Gazette](#) cited research that suggests a high proportion of in-house lawyers are asked to advise on moves they consider to be ethically dubious. I said: "In-house counsel have exactly the same professional and ethical obligations as every other solicitor, with the extra challenge that they are having to advise the business on the spot."

[Lawyer Monthly](#), the [Plymouth Herald](#), [Farmer's Weekly](#) and [Tech A Peek](#) all reported on the government's u-turn over the probate fee hike. I said: "A hike in probate fees would have been a tax on grief."

The [Gazette](#) reported that HMCTS says the probate system should be back to normal within weeks – although many solicitors still have grants outstanding. I said: "We are relieved to hear these delays are starting to ease and will continue to work with HMCTS to reduce the backlogs and create a probate service fit for the 21st century."

[Legal Futures](#), the [Gazette](#) and the [Times](#) (£) all covered the government's response to the Women and Equalities Select Committee's report on the use of non-disclosure agreements in discrimination cases. The response noted that the Law Society has "taken action on this issue, including publishing guidance to the public to detail their rights and dispel popular misconceptions."

I wrote a column for the [Western Daily Press](#) explaining the use of NDAs to the public. I said: "[They] cannot stop you from reporting a crime to the police. Nor can [they] be used to prevent whistleblowing in the public interest."

I co-wrote a letter to the [Gazette](#) with the Resolution national chair Margaret Heathcote supporting the inclusion of the Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill in the Queen's Speech. We said: "Introducing a 'no fault' divorce would allow couples to separate as painlessly as possible, citing irretrievable breakdown as the sole reason for ending their marriage."

Meanwhile, Deputy Vice President I. Stephanie Boyce spoke to the [Kent Messenger](#) about reports that cuts to criminal justice are causing long delays to cases. She said: "If you want justice you have to invest. Decades of cuts to this fundamental part of our country's infrastructure mean the whole system is crumbling."

The [BBC](#) heard from Gary Rycroft, for the Law Society, about the legal rights of a mother and son who have chosen to live on a bench in Tooting for many years.

Zeena Luchowa, a member of our Immigration Law Committee, spoke to [BBC London News](#) about challenges with the UK's settled status scheme for EU citizens.

Scott Bowen, a member of our Criminal Law Committee, spoke to [BBC Radio Tees](#) (1:19:00) about Mischief Night and what to do if you're the victim of a crime on Mischief Night.

Gary Rycroft, chair of our digital assets working group, and Ian Bond, chair of our wills and equity committee, advised [Mail Online](#) readers what to do if a will contains overseas property.

Coverage of winners of the Law Society's Excellence Awards continued in local media including [Midlands Business News](#), [Public Law Today](#), Capital FM Leicestershire, Heart Northampton.

[Today's Wills and Probate](#) trailed [Pro Bono Week 2019](#), which is supported by the Law Society and will run from 4-8 November 2019.

[Legal Futures](#) reported the headline findings of the joint Law Society and Legal Services Board (LSB) Legal Needs Survey, revealed at a meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Public Legal Education and Pro Bono.

[Legal Futures](#) covered a research grant from the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), which will fund research on the social networks of key individuals in the legaltech world, and their "career trajectories and typical skillsets", led by Oxford University, in partnership with the Law Society and others.

[Artificial Lawyer](#) noted our algorithms in the justice system report released earlier this year, which called for an open register of algorithms.

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

Access to Justice

Public legal education

On 29 October our new Operational Director of Policy, Paola Uccellari, spoke at an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) event on public legal education (PLE). The event explored limited preliminary findings from the legal needs survey carried out jointly by the Law Society and LSB, focusing on PLE.

Our Operational Director's message included that it is important to ensure that the public are aware of how to respond to legal issues and highlighted the work of solicitors and the Law Society in helping people to recognise when they have a legal problem, and resolve it with professional advice.

Public Law

Family

The Domestic Abuse and Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bills will fall when Parliament is prorogued ahead of the general election. We will monitor for any future legislation on these issues after the new government is established.

Criminal

On 24 October we hosted a human trafficking seminar featuring defence solicitor, Philippa Southwell, the CPS policy lead on trafficking, Pam Bowen, and retired Detective Superintendent Phil Brewer. They discussed how to work with criminal law clients charged with offences who may have a defence based on being a victim of human trafficking and/or slavery and being coerced into committing the offence. Approximately 80 people attended, and the session ended with a lively question and answer session.

Regulation

We held a meeting with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) on 24 October to discuss the review which the CMA is now undertaking as a follow up to its market study into the Legal Services sector published in 2016. The CMA's intention is to make use of existing studies and publications to assess developments since the publication of its 2016 study. The CMA intends to publish its report towards the end of 2020.

It was agreed that the Law Society may be able to assist with information-gathering, for example by speaking with members about the price and service transparency rules, or by participating in discussions with stakeholders. Dialogue between the Law Society and CMA will continue as the CMA develops its plans.

Parliamentary

The Justice Select Committee has published a report on transforming courts and tribunals, making a series of conclusions and recommendations on the court modernisation programme. The Law Society gave written and oral evidence to the inquiry, and we were mentioned five times in the final report.

The Vice President met with Diane Abbott MP (Labour, Shadow Home Secretary) to discuss our concerns regarding the criminal justice system and release under investigation. We also met with Ian Lucas MP (Labour) to discuss the same.

Speeches

On Wednesday 30 October, Deputy Vice President Stephanie Boyce spoke on 'Achieving Diversity' at an event celebrating Black History Month, held by the Solicitor's Regulation Authority.

Our work internationally

On 31 October, Helena Raulus, Head of our Brussels Office met with Bjoern Warren, Assistant to Danuta Hubner MEP, member of Constitutional Affairs Committee in the European Parliament, to discuss UK and EU citizens' rights in the possible after-Brexit scenarios.

Supporting members at every stage of their career

[In-house Division seminar: How to implement a D&I strategy in your legal team, Leeds - Thursday 7 November 2019](#)

Location: Gateley, 29 East Parade, Leeds LS1 5PS

Recent press coverage around how the in-house community can drive change has put a spotlight on this topic and we are keen to explore how the Law Society can help.

[Making the right choices at retirement, November 2019, London - Wednesday 20 November 2019](#)

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

In collaboration with Mazars, leaders in the area of financial planning provision, the Law Society is offering a complementary workshop aimed particularly at people who are within two years of retirement.

[What becoming partner means for your finances - Thursday 7 November 2019](#)

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

Mazars' experts will offer insights and support on the personal tax and financial planning considerations of achieving partner status.

[Judicial appointments: interview training for solicitors - Friday 29 November 2019 - London](#)

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

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.

[Judicial appointments: interview training for solicitors - Saturday 30 November 2019 - London](#)

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

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.

Supporting practice excellence

[Pro Bono Week launch event: pro bono and human rights - Monday 4 November 2019](#)

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

This event will launch Pro Bono Week.

[Compliance support forum for in-house lawyers, London - Tuesday 5 November 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.

[Law Management Section finance and business forum 2019 - Wednesday 6 November 2019](#)

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

Registration is open to book your place at the Law Management Section finance and business forum 2019.

[Annual Competition Section dinner and awards 2019 - Thursday 21 November 2019](#)

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

The Law Society's Competition Section is pleased to announce that its formal annual dinner and Horsfall-Turner Essay Prize Awards will take place this year on Thursday 21 November at the Law Society's Hall. This event provides an excellent opportunity to network with solicitors and other professionals working in the competition field, as well as to entertain clients and valued contacts.

[Anti-money Laundering and Financial Crime Conference 2019 – Tuesday 26 November 2019](#)

Location: Etc Venues 155 Bishopsgate, Liverpool Street, London, EC2M 3YD

The conference will bring together policy makers, law enforcement, regulators, academics and industry experts to look at the latest policy and regulatory developments, the changes ahead and other hot topics in anti-money laundering and financial crime.

[Compliance support forum for in-house lawyers, London - Monday 2 December 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.

[Competition Section Seminar: Abuse of dominance – recent developments in the UK and Europe – Tuesday 3 December 2019](#)

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

There has been an explosion of activity in respect of abuse of dominance. Major 'platform' cases such as Google Shopping, Android, AdSense, Facebook, Apple/Spotify have been in the spotlight in Europe and elsewhere, and raise wider questions about the interaction with regulation. There has been a resurgence of excessive pricing cases (Aspen, Phenytoin etc), with many more cases still before the CMA. The CAT has also heard a major recent appeal (Royal Mail), and considered abuse in a fast-track case (Achilles), and the EU Court judgment in Intel on effects continues to bed down into practice.

[Lawyers with Disabilities Celebration reception – Thursday 5 December 2019](#)

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

This Disability History Month, the Law Society will be hosting a celebratory reception to mark the 30th year anniversary of the Lawyers with Disabilities Division and International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Webinars

[Creating mentally healthy legal workplaces](#) - 19 November 2019 inclusive to Law Management Section members

[CQS Protocol and the Code for Completion by Post](#) – 27 November 2019 - Inclusive to Property Section members

[Thriving at work and at home in a 24/7 connected world](#) - 2 December 2019 - free for Junior Lawyers, with a 20% discount to all other section members (postponed from October)

[Mediation - 2020 vision / The future for litigators](#) - 4 December 2019 - inclusive to Civil Litigation members

[The unrealised risk and the fallout from Data Subject Access Requests](#) - 5 December 2019 - 20% discount to Law Management Section members

[Risk management for small to medium law firms](#) - 17 December 2019 - 20% discount to Risk and Compliance and Law Management Section members

[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

In-house Forum

International Update

Junior Lawyers Update

Legal Aid Update

Professional Update

Sign-up method

[Update My Law Society preferences](#)

[Law Society newsletter page](#)

[Contact the City relationship management team](#)

[Update My Law Society preferences](#)

[Update My Law Society preferences](#)

[Law Society newsletter page](#)

[Law Society newsletter page](#)

[JLD sign-up page](#)

[Law Society newsletter page](#)

[Law Society newsletter page](#)

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
Campaigns Update	Sign up to the Campaigns Update newsletter
Parliamentary report	Sign up to the Parliamentary report newsletter

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

Simon Davis

President

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