

**Subject:** President's Weekly Law Society Update 5 April 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 [Gazette](#) covers the MoJ consultation on fixed recoverable costs, which launched last week. I'm quoted: "We will be working with the Ministry of Justice to ensure rates and thresholds are underpinned by strong empirical evidence and research to protect people's ability to uphold their rights, whatever their status or wealth."

The [Gazette](#) also reports on the Law Society Management Section Financial Benchmarking Survey which found that small and medium-sized firms' income is up for the seventh year. "Having good management helps firms financially, which will be important for them to remain sustainable as the market changes," I'm quoted as saying. More [Gazette](#) coverage here.

The [Gazette](#) also reports on how immigration laws will change post-Brexit. The Law Society has EU nationals as employees. "We are aware that the uncertainty they currently face is stressful," a spokesperson says, "and we will be providing support and assistance as the Home Office's 2021 deadline approaches."

[Legal Futures](#) reports on a Law Society podcast on NDAs and how they may be perceived in the future and "whether you are ethically comfortable with that".

[Litigation Futures](#) covers comments I made on Ministry of Justice plans around fixed recoverable costs pointing out that limiting costs could have both "positive and negative impacts on access to justice" and need to be carefully calibrated to be "fair to everyone engaged in a claim". "Crucially, justice must be attainable for all... Fixed recoverable costs should usually only apply to 'low value' and non-complex claims – exemptions should be available for complex or unusual cases."

[The Lawyer](#) carries a blog from the Junior Lawyers Division on approaches to encouraging greater diversity in the legal profession. Law Society council member Kayleigh Leonie, argues "despite many employers providing equal opportunities training, unconscious bias still plays a big part in the recruitment process". She calls for radical change in discrimination legislation to enable more diverse workplaces.

[ABA Journal](#) considers how UK law firms, US based firms in the UK and UK based firms operating in Europe are responding to the uncertainty caused Brexit. Mickaël Laurans, our head of international, says firms are considering how they will operate in Europe after Brexit. He claims "this is particularly interesting for American firms in London because many used London as a foothold into the EU".

Council member Denise Lester continues as presenter's friend on TalkRadio explaining legal issues related to stories in the news to listeners. [Listen from 06:10](#).

The Law Society's work to promote greater gender equality in the legal profession is covered by [Solicitors Journal](#).

[Solicitors Journal](#) also reports on the Ministry of Justice consultation on extending fixed recoverable costs (FRC) in civil cases worth up to £100,000.

The [Daily Telegraph](#) from me warning the Mental Capacity (Amendments) Bill - now in its final stages before becoming law – fatally weakens current safeguards for some of the most vulnerable people. Anna Bradshaw, member of the Law Society EU committee, appeared on [Channel 5 News](#) to discuss double jeopardy rules.

South Wales Echo cites the Law Society's position on modernisation of the courts estate including increased use of technology in an article on how a Cardiff court will focus exclusively on domestic abuse cases.

Gary Rycroft, chair of our digital assets working group, was interviewed on [BBC Radio Nottingham](#) about how to include your pet in your will for national pet month. His interview starts from 1:14:00.

[BBC Radio Tees](#) also spoke to Alison Hall, a local Newcastle solicitor and immediate past president of the Newcastle Law Society, also about including pets in wills. Her interview starts from 1:50:06.

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:**

### **Speeches**

The chief executive spoke to the Manchester Law Society council on the work of the Law Society, our member focus and key policy priorities on Monday.

On Tuesday I spoke at Thomson Reuters 2<sup>nd</sup> Women in Law conference and also opened the Law Society's data protection conference.

The vice president spoke at the launch event of our 'Doing Legal Business in the Philippines' event on Wednesday, whilst the deputy vice president spoke at a lunch with managing partners from Kent law firms.

The vice president also spoke at the Devon and Somerset Law Society Awards on Friday.

### **Our influencing work internationally:**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> April, Helena Raulus, head of the Brussels office attended an EPC breakfast Policy Briefing on: Deal or no deal? The State of play on Brexit with the presence of Michel Barnier, chief negotiator, Task Force 50, European Commission

On 2<sup>nd</sup> April, The Brussels Office and STEP (the global professional association for practitioners who specialise in family inheritance and succession planning) organised a seminar on: What will Brexit bring for international private clients? The event was hosted by Loyens & Loeff. Helena Raulus was one of the panellists speaking with representatives from the UK Permanent Representation. Around 70 people registered in the event.

On 5<sup>th</sup> April, Helena Raulus and Eoin Lavelle, EU policy adviser spoke at a Loyens & Loeff Brexit event billed as an interactive conversation on the impact of Brexit on the legal profession, respective practice groups and clients' business.

Also on 5<sup>th</sup> April I attended the International Lawyers Forum in Berlin, where I was speaking on the issue of confidentiality and legal professional privilege.

### **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](#).

### **Demonstrating our value to members**

We have now published our 2018 Business Review. It looks back on what we delivered under each part of our member offer last year and summarises our business plan for this year. We have also created a simple 2 page summary of our achievements last year. The full review and summary are attached. I hope you will find them useful tools in explaining our great work to your constituents. Alongside "[the value of your membership](#)" which is sent in hard copy to all new members and our "[what we do for you](#)" leaflet these are designed to answer the age old question " what does the Law Society do for me?"

## **Supporting members at every stage of their career**

### **Supporting practice excellence**

#### **Some of our upcoming events are:**

I encourage local law societies to spread the word about the [Law Society Excellence Awards](#) and celebrate the achievements of their members. For law societies who run their own awards there is the option to 'passport' winners into the Excellence Awards by submitting the winning entry on their behalf. Simply start the nomination with 'Passported winner from XXXX Law Society'.

#### **Nominations are open for the Excellence Awards**

Firms, teams and solicitors across the legal profession have until Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May to enter the [Law Society Excellence Awards](#). With 22 categories to enter, including Human Rights Solicitor of the Year and Excellence in Client Service. The awards celebrate hard work and outstanding achievements from the past year.

### **The Junior Lawyers Division (JLD) 2019 annual conference and ball - Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> 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. Tickets are still available from £75.00 + VAT. [www.lawsociety.org.uk/jld-conference-and-ball-2019](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/jld-conference-and-ball-2019)

### **Competition Section seminar: Review of the Digital Competition Expert Panel report, London – Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **MLRO and MLCO peer to peer learning, Southampton – Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

**Location:** Paris Smith LLP, 1 London Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO15 2AE

The event is for MLROs, MLCOs and solicitors with an interest in anti-money laundering compliance. It will give you a platform to learn about best practice and upcoming developments in AML.

### **Private Client Section: Practical inheritance tax update, London – Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

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

This seminar will provide a practical focus on recent changes affecting inheritance tax. This one-hour seminar will provide an update on: residence nil-rate bands and downsizing, business property relief, criminal facilitation of tax avoidance, and the future of inheritance tax and trust taxation.

### **Private Client Section: Practical inheritance tax update, Birmingham- Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

**Location:** Birmingham - venue TBC

This seminar will provide a practical focus on recent changes affecting inheritance tax. This one-hour seminar will provide an update on: residence nil-rate bands and downsizing, business property relief, criminal facilitation of tax avoidance, and the future of inheritance tax and trust taxation.

### **Civil Litigation Section Spring Conference 2019 – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019**

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

The Civil Litigation Section will be hosting a half day conference Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> 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](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/Civil-Litigation-Section-Spring-conference-2019)

### **Law Management Section annual conference 2019: success in an ever-changing world - Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019**

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

Registration is open to book your place at this year's Law Management Section annual conference!

### **MLRO and MLCO peer to peer learning, Manchester – Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

**Location:** Shoosmiths, The XYZ Building, 2 Hardman Boulevard, Spinningfields, Manchester, M3 3AZ

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.

### **MLRO and MLCO peer to peer learning, Bristol – Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

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

The event is for MLROs, MLCOs and solicitors with an interest in anti-money laundering compliance. It will give you a platform to learn about best practice and upcoming developments in AML.

### **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.

<b>Newsletter</b>	<b>Sign-up method</b>
Advocacy Update	<a href="#">Update My Law Society preferences</a>
Anti-money Laundering Update	<a href="#">Law Society newsletter page</a>
City Update	<a href="#">Contact the City relationship management team</a>
Diversity & Inclusion Update	<a href="#">Update My Law Society preferences</a>
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>
Regional Update	<a href="#">Contact your regional relationship management team</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>

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](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk)