

Subject: President's Weekly Law Society Update 5 July 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.

Welcome to my first update as 175th president of the Law Society of England and Wales.

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

I spoke to the [Times](#) (£) ahead of my inauguration on 4 July as president. I talked about the future role of the society and its continuing relevance to the profession: "The work that we do in relation to legal aid, in the context of Brexit, making sure that people still want to use English law — all that work is in the public interest."

The [Gazette](#) also reports my inauguration.

[New Law Journal](#) continues its series on justice in the time of austerity citing the Law Society's campaign on Legal Aid deserts.

The [Times](#) (£) has a feature on the safety of LGBT+ lawyers abroad ahead of London Pride march this Saturday. Law firms are well represented in Stonewall's top 100 employers – but there are fears for the safety of staff on assignment to jurisdictions such as Russia or the Middle East. Katrina Robinson, chair of the Law Society LGBT committee, says she would avoid any country in which she could not be open about her sexuality: "For a short time it might be all right, but it is so easy to slip up by revealing something about yourself or by suggesting a relationship, however slightly."

Melinda Giles, Law Society council member and member of our wills and equity committee, was on [Talk Radio](#) (starts from 05:00 in the 11:30 – 12:00 time slot) talking about how to include social media and digital assets in wills.

The [Gazette](#) reported on the Law Society's international symposium on gender equality in the law and the launch of a 'Women in Law Pledge', supported by the Law Society, Bar Council and CILEx. Attendees heard from several high-profile speakers. Further coverage in the [Gazette](#). You can sign up [here](#).

In a comment for the [Gazette](#), Law Society policy adviser Simon Thomson wrote on the Solicitor's Regulation Authority's proposed professional indemnity insurance reforms.

The [Times](#) (£) reports junior lawyers have called for better wellbeing at work. A survey by our junior lawyers division found 94% of respondents had felt stressed at work in the last month.

[Law Careers](#) reports the Equalities and Human Rights Commission has warned cuts to legal aid funding have ensured that employers can get away with discrimination toward their employees. The lord mayor of London has called on the legal sector to 'move into the 21st century', [Artificial Lawyer](#) reports. In an address to the annual judges' dinner, Peter Estlin said: "The Law Society has found that adoption of technology amongst UK legal firms remains limited, meaning that the capabilities and benefits of these technologies are yet to be fully harnessed."

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

Access to Justice

Criminal Justice

We organised a meeting between criminal practitioner groups and MoJ officials to discuss the MoJ's Criminal Legal Aid Review.

Legal Aid

This week we met with solicitors involved in the London Bridge terrorist attack inquest to discuss the refusal of legal aid.

Parliamentary

Law Society Family Law Committee member David Hodson gave evidence to the Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill committee on Tuesday on a panel alongside Aidan Jones OBE, chief executive at Relate and Nigel Shepherd former chair of Resolution. David set out the Law Society's position on the Bill in particular the need for a litigation free period of reflection at the beginning of divorce proceedings and clarity over when the notice period commences. His evidence was well received by the committee.

Immigration Law Committee

Representatives from our Immigration Law Committee met with the Home Office on 2 July, the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA), to discuss the concerns we have been raising for some time in relation to in-country visa applications and the external contractor Sopra Steria. The Home Office acknowledged the severity of the problems and provided significant updates including the termination of the contract between Sopra Steria and its subcontractors.

Events

As mentioned above in the *Media* section I was inaugurated as the 175th president of the Law Society on Thursday. David Greene became vice president and I. Stephanie Boyce deputy vice president. To mark the occasion, I gave a speech at a reception with key stakeholders including senior members of the profession and parliamentarians. During the event, I was also interviewed by Clive Coleman, BBC legal correspondent. Following the reception I held a dinner discussion on my presidential year themes with key senior stakeholders.

The justice team, along with public affairs, completed its series of roadshows on criminal justice with events in Liverpool and Newcastle.

Courts Bill

The society's policy and public affairs work on the Lords report stage of the Courts and Tribunals (Online Procedure) Bill resulted in 16 amendments we supported either being accepted by the government or passed by the House of Lords.

Our influencing work internationally

We took our first trade mission to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, this week. Nine delegates from our member firms travelled to Malaysia as part of the two-day programme jointly arranged with the Malaysian Bar Council to learn more about the business opportunities in the country.

On Monday 1 July, our delegates met with the president and senior officeholders of the Malaysian Bar and received an update on the legal services sector and economy. They then met with boutique law firm Izral Partnership, before joining a tour of the Asian International Arbitration Centre (AIAC). Four of our delegates spoke during two panel discussions on 'Safeguarding intellectual property: case studies from Asia and the UK/Europe' and 'Foreign direct investment: issues and opportunities in Malaysia and the UK' alongside representatives from Foong Cheng Leong and the Malaysian Investment Development Authority in our joint seminar with the Malaysian Bar Council later that evening. More than 30 Malaysian lawyers attended the event.

On Tuesday 2 July, our delegation met with one of the largest full-service law firm in Malaysia, Shearn Delamore & Co, where we received an update on developments in the courts and legal services in Kuala Lumpur. We then met with the founder and employees of GM Tan & Co before receiving a briefing from the British High Commission in Malaysia and the partner of one of the two law firms in Malaysia that hold a Qualified Law Firm Licence.

Also on 2 July, Helena Raulus, head of the Brussels office, attended a lunch and a roundtable discussion with Alastair Hamilton, CEO of Invest Northern Ireland. Given the current focus on Northern Ireland, the aim was to demonstrate and share ideas on how partners and organisations across the UK will continue to build partnerships, grow trade and FDI, operate in Brussels and influence the EU.

Supporting members at every stage of their career

[Freelance solicitors – what's the deal?: Small Firms Division annual regulation update and summer networking event, London - Wednesday 17 July 2019](#)

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

In June 2019, the green light was given to a new type of freelance solicitors. Formally titled 'self-employed solicitors', the SRA's reform will come into force in November.

[Our new package of learning and development for people early in their careers is now live.](#)

The Law Society is marching in more Prides than ever before – as #LegalPride, together with the Bar Council and CILEx to show a united legal profession in support of its LGBT+ members and LGBT+ rights. The vice president and deputy vice president elect marched in Birmingham, and will be doing the same in Leeds and Manchester (respectively). I will be marching again along with the deputy vice president in London. Sign up for Bristol, Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester and Cardiff here <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/news/stories/lawyers-unite-for-legal-pride-2019/> All spaces for London – 6 July - have gone, but if you would like to join our group gathering at one point along the route to cheer on all the lawyers, please email LGBT@lawsociety.org.uk.

[LDD Seminar - Starting a disability staff network and best practice workshop London -Thursday 18 July 2019](#)

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

[Supporting practice excellence](#)

Some of our upcoming events are:

[Registered European Lawyers summer reception - Monday 8 July 2019](#)

Location: The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1PL
Join us for our Registered European Lawyers Summer Reception on 8 July 2019.

[In-house Division seminar: Communicating law to non-lawyers, Leeds - Tuesday 9 July 2019](#)

Location: Weightmans, Westgate Point, Westgate, Leeds LS1, 2AX
The way in which you communicate with colleagues and internal clients is so important. Even more so for in-house lawyers because the majority of their colleagues, line manager and internal clients may not be lawyers.

[Civil Litigation Section junior lawyers event, Birmingham - Thursday 11 July 2019](#)

Location: Irwin Mitchell LLP, Imperial House, 31 Temple Street, Birmingham, B2 5DB
The Law Society's Civil Litigation Section Committee are holding an event for junior lawyers working in civil dispute resolution. The event, being hosted by Irwin Mitchell, will provide you with useful tips on how to develop your profile as a resolution expert and will also give you tips on managing your mental health and well-being in the early stages of your career. The event will close with a networking drinks reception, providing you with plenty of opportunities to network with the expert speakers and your peers. Places are allocated on a first come first served basis so please book your place to ensure that you do not miss out!

[Advanced Criminal Advocacy - Thursday 18 July 2019](#)

Location: City Law School, 2-10 Princeton Street, London, WC1R 4BH
The City Law School, in partnership with the Law Society, is running the Advanced Criminal Advocacy course. This is a full day course for senior practitioners who have experience of advocacy in the higher courts.

[Advocacy and the Vulnerable Training, London - Morning session -Thursday 1 August 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.

[Compliance forum for COLPs/COFAs: SRA Standards and Regulations, London - Monday 12 August 2019](#)

Location: The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1PL
The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) will be issuing new Standards and Regulations later this year which will replace the SRA Handbook. It will have a new reduced set of principles, two separate Codes of Conduct - an individual solicitor code and a firm code - and simplified Account Rules. This forum, aimed at COLPs and COFAs, will provide insight into the changes that you need to make.

[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

Campaigns newsletter	https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/policy-campaigns/campaigns/
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
Parliamentary report	https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/policy-campaigns/public-affairs/
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](#).

Simon Davis

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www.lawsociety.org.uk