

**Subject:** President's Weekly Law Society Update 7 June 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.

#### Survey for practising certificate fee

The Law Society and the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) are working hard to manage the cost of delivering our work to the profession. Our plan for 2019-2020 is that the individual practising fee will be £278, staying at the same level as last year. Every year we consult our members about the practising certificate fee (PC fee) and how it is split between regulation, public interest and representation.

We're asking members to complete our short survey and share their views on the work the fee supports.

Read the consultation document: <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/news/stories/practising-certificate-fees-2019-20/> . [Complete the short survey](#) by midnight on 28 June 2019.

### Influencing on behalf of the profession and promoting the profession

#### The Law Society's media profile this week

BBC Radio 4's [Today programme](#) (from 00:51:58), the [Financial Times](#) (£) and the [Gazette](#) ran exclusive coverage of the launch of the Law Society's report on algorithms in criminal justice in England and Wales. I spoke to Today's Nick Robinson about growing concern over the ad hoc use of complex algorithms by police to make important decisions, such as where to send police on patrol, or who is at risk of being a victim or perpetrator of domestic or gang violence. I also outlined our recommendations for a legal framework, greater transparency with a national register to protect our human rights. There were then further reports in the [Times](#) (£), [Telegraph](#), [BBC World Service](#) (starts from 05:49), [Artificial Lawyer](#), [Legal IT Insider](#), [Global Legal Post](#) and [Legal Futures](#).

See what is happening in your area on our [interactive map](#) and [read our report](#).

In a comment for the [Gazette](#), our vice-president David Greene discussed NDAs and our practice note. He says: "We remain committed to our public interest responsibility – not just here, but in all other prominent and contentious areas of law." Further coverage in the [Gazette](#).

The [Gazette](#), [Legal Futures](#), [New Law Journal](#) and the [Barrister Magazine](#) covered the government's announcement of £2 million funding for lawtech. I said: "As chair of the Lawtech Delivery Panel, I am delighted to welcome the lord chancellor's announcement of new funding for technology in the legal sector."

[Public Finance](#) reports on the trade union for civil service and public service professionals' (FDA) Manifesto for Justice, which is supported by the Law Society, and urges the government to invest in our crumbling criminal justice system.

[Today's Wills and Probate](#) reports the government's proposed increases to probate fees have been shelved for parliament's summer recess.

The Law Society will fix the practising certificate (PC) fee for 2019 – 2020 at the same rate as the previous two years reported in the [Times](#) (£), [Gazette](#), and the [Solicitors Journal](#). I said: "By making efficiency savings across the Society, along with an increase in the number of solicitors on the roll, we are able to freeze fees while delivering greater value to members." See the full press release [here](#).

The Law Society has responded to new rules governing professional indemnity insurance (PII) for solicitors. We are cited in the [Times](#) (£), the [Gazette](#), [Legal Futures](#) and [Law360](#) (£). I said: "We are hugely disappointed that the LSB has approved this rule change based on draft SRA guidance that is not in the public domain, and which has not been finalised."

The [Rugby Advertiser](#) and the [Daventry Express](#) reported on the most recent set of quarterly criminal court statistics – the numbers prosecuted or given an out-of-court disposal are at the lowest since 1970 in England and Wales. I said the statistics came as no surprise as "our criminal justice system is crumbling, and it simply does not have the capacity to function effectively".

Professor Stephen Mayson has commented on the risks of moving away from title-based regulation. Remarking on his review of the regulation of legal services at the [Legal Futures](#) conference, he said a key problem with activity-based regulation was how to define activities. The Law Society is cited after it defended title-based regulation in its Mayson review response in March.

Our response to new rules governing professional indemnity insurance (PII) for solicitors continues to garner coverage this time in [Legal Futures](#).

[New Law Journal](#) carries a report on the impact of legal aid cuts. It quotes Glyn Maddocks of the Law Society human rights committee who says the cuts have been calamitous. 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

As part of our ongoing 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 around the country as part of our criminal justice campaign, exploring issues such as the growing shortages of duty solicitors, court closures and barriers to accessing legal aid.

The roadshows cover three issues:

- They inform members of our criminal justice campaign and how they can participate.
- They provide an opportunity for discussion of the MoJ's review of criminal legal aid and the approach the Law Society should take to discussions.
- They enable us to update members on what is happening in the HMCTS reform programme that impacts on criminal lawyers.

To learn more about the issues from Law Society experts, get involved in our criminal justice campaign and give us your views, book your free place [here](#).

## **Parliamentary**

### Justice oral questions

In Tuesday's justice oral questions in the Commons chamber, Labour MP Daniel Zeichner asked about support for litigants in family courts. Courts Minister Paul Maynard MP replied saying the government is committed to working with the Law Society to improve delivery of family legal aid, whether in court or through mediation.

## **Speeches**

I gave a keynote speech at the AI in Legal Services Summit on Tuesday to launch the Law Society's Technology and the Law Policy Commission report on algorithms in the criminal justice system (see media).

The deputy vice president gave a talk at the On Risk Conference on Tuesday and took part in a Q&A with Huw Edwards.

On Wednesday I spoke on a panel organised by Lexis Nexis and the Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession on '*gender diversity for a new generation*'. I also spoke at Farrer & Co on diversity and inclusion in the legal profession as part of their Farrer Academy series

I spoke at the Property Section Half-Day Convention and addressed Hertfordshire Law Society on Thursday.

On Thursday the vice president spoke at a Hampshire Law Society dinner. He also took part in a panel session on ethics in the profession at the Legal Futures Conference on Thursday.

## **Technology**

The lord chancellor announced £2 million of funding to be invested on legal technology, following influencing from the Law Society and the work of the LawTech Delivery Panel.

The Technology and Law Policy Commission launched its report 'Use of Algorithms in the Justice System' at the AI in Legal Services Summit on 4 June 2019. The report has been well received and gathered significant press coverage (see above).

Over the past year the commission has examined the ethical impacts of AI in law and the growth and adoption of emerging technologies. Speakers at the international summit included me, David Gauke, Prof. Richard Susskind, Andrea Coomber (Justice), Silkie Carlo (Big Brother Watch), Sue Daley (techUK), Dan Katz, Sir William Blair, Lord Tim Clement-Jones, Nick West (Mischoon de Reya), Noel Hurley (Arm), Julia Salasky (CrowdJustice), Stephanie Hamon and many more. The report is available to read [here](#).

We are holding a series of TechTalk events on introduction to LawTech aimed at small and medium size firms and practitioners.

This seminar will be an introduction to LawTech to provide clarity to practising lawyers and support staff in this emerging crowded space. The session will cover drivers and barriers to adoption, product types available, and opportunities for your organisation. It will be followed by a panel discussion with experts and networking.

The objectives are:

- Delegates will develop their knowledge of what LawTech is and what it can do for them and their businesses
- Delegates will increase their confidence in engaging with LawTech and be better placed to make business investments and decisions
- The seminars will demystify the uses and applications of LawTech for delegates

Book your free place [here](#).

### **Our influencing work internationally**

On 5 June the Law Society hosted Invest Africa's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Debate and gala dinner. The Annual Debate brings together over 200 investors and businesses operating in Africa, including a number of UK law firms, for a series of expert presentations and panels. It provides an opportunity for our members to network and develop their business in Africa.

On 7 June, The UK Law Societies' Office, Redscope and NautaDutilh organised a seminar on leadership, women & law in the 21<sup>st</sup> century this was held at NautaDutilh offices. I spoke along with Claudia de Castro Caldeirinha from Redscope and Dirk van Gerven from NautaDutilh. About 25 people registered.

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

[The power of gender equality to transform the business of law; an international Symposium – 20-21 June 2019](#)

**Location:** The Hilton Bankside, 2-8 Great Suffolk St, London, SE1 0UG

Join us at our two-day conference as we bring together professionals from across the legal profession and other sectors from both the UK and internationally, to identify the steps needed, and share practical tools, to achieve gender balance in the workplace. It will also mark the centenary of women being admitted to practice law in the UK and celebrate the successes of women in law globally

Bookings open.

### **Legally disabled research project**

We are supporting an important project as part of our commitment to diversity and inclusion within our profession and need your help to spread the word.

*Do you know a disabled person, or someone with a long-term medical condition working in, aspiring to work in (e.g. in training), or retired from the legal profession? If so, this research is for them.*

The "Legally Disabled?" research project will produce the first large scale evidence based on the career experiences of disabled people across the legal profession in England and Wales. Funded by the National Lottery, this is an independent research project headed by Professor Debbie Foster of Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University and has been produced in partnership with Dr Natasha Hirst (independent researcher) and disabled people from the Lawyers with Disabilities Division of The Law Society.

We are pleased to launch the next stage of the research with a questionnaire for disabled people training for or working as solicitors and paralegals. This also includes those who have since left these roles in the profession.

This questionnaire will build on and quantify evidence obtained from one to one interviews over the last few months. Your involvement will help to strengthen the evidence and findings of our research by capturing the experiences of a wide range of disabled people in the legal profession.

<https://cardiff.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/legally-disabled-questionnaire-for-disabled-legal-prof>

We anticipate it will take approximately 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. If you have any queries or require the questionnaire in a word document or other accessible format please get in touch with Dr Natasha Hirst on [HirstN2@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:HirstN2@cardiff.ac.uk)

Please note that both researchers are part-time on the project and will respond as soon as possible to any queries. For more information about the project please visit [www.legallydisabled.com](http://www.legallydisabled.com)

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

#### [Resilience and Wellbeing face-to-face workshop Birmingham – Tuesday 11 June 2019](#)

**Location:** De Vere Colmore Gate, Birmingham, B3 2QD

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.

#### [One-to-one career advice, London/Virtual Morning session – Tuesday 11 June 2019](#)

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

Are you in the early years of your career in law? How confident are you that you are marketing yourself effectively for new opportunities? Aimed at members up to 3 years post qualification, career experts can offer you guidance on what makes a great CV or application and give you a chance to practise your job interview techniques. Appointments are also available to discuss how to make a career/professional development plan and prepare for a career & professional development conversation with your manager.

#### [Resilience and Wellbeing face-to-face workshop Manchester – Wednesday 12 June 2019](#)

**Location:** Townhouse Hotel, 101 Portland St, Manchester M1 6DF

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.

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#### [In house Diversity and Inclusion](#)

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

Manchester - 25 June (17.30-20.30) <https://bit.ly/2WYwdJO>

London - 27 June (8.00-10.30) <https://bit.ly/2G4HHoy>

#### [Advocacy and the Vulnerable Training, London afternoon session – Monday 10 June 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.

#### [Youth Justice Advocacy Training – Thursday 13 June 2019](#)

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

This training has been developed by the Youth Justice Legal Centre (YJLC) in partnership with the Law Society and is an essential course for all solicitors who will be appearing in the youth court, providing an overview of youth-specific criminal law from the police station to the youth court. The training will cover key topics such as out of court disposals, bail and remand, jurisdiction, adaptations to the trial process and youth sentencing. The course will introduce participants to the underlying principles of youth justice and international children's rights law

These two sessions - one face-to-face half day session and a 1.5 hour virtual participation online session - introduce the concept of managed career development. We will equip you with the tools you need to recognize your strengths and clarify your aspirations, the key to finding your individual focus and mapping a clear career path. You will end the sessions with a renewed vision for your future.

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.

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### **Supporting practice excellence**

**Some of our upcoming events are:**

#### **– Wednesday 12 June 2019**

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.

#### **– Thursday 20 June 2019**

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.

#### **The rule of law and the environment, London – Tuesday 11 June 2019**

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

Our panellists will be exploring the future of environmental law in light of World Environment Day and the upcoming Environment Bill.

#### **Seminar: Competition Section president Professor Richard Whish – Key trends in Competition law 2018-2019 – Tuesday 11 June 2019**

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

Join us in London on Tuesday 11 June at 18:00 for a Competition Section seminar presentation from the president of the Competition Section, Professor Richard Whish.

#### **Criminal justice roadshow, Sheffield – Thursday 13 June 2019**

**Location:** Sheffield - Venue TBC

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.

#### **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.

#### **In-house Division annual conference 2019: advancing the role of the in-house lawyer - Day one – Tuesday 18 June 2019**

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

The In-house Division annual conference is the flagship event for the In-house Division representing over 27,000 members in England and Wales across the public, corporate, not-for-profit and charity sectors.

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## 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)