

Your weekly national Law Society update from Chancery Lane

3 April 2018

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 last week.

Influencing on behalf of the profession and promoting the profession

The Law Society's media profile this week:

BBC Radio Surrey and BBC Radio Hereford and Worcester both reported on preparing a will covering digital products. This followed comments by wills and equity committee chair Ian Bond in [The Times](#) (subscription required). The story was also covered by [The Times Money Section](#) (subscription required), the [Daily Mail](#) and [Daily Star](#).

"While most digital assets are not of monetary or financial value they can be of sentimental value and a comfort to your next of kin after your death," says Ian Bond who has been drawing up guidance for solicitors on how they should deal with digital legacies.

Meanwhile former wills and equity committee chair Gary Rycroft spoke to the Jeremy Vine show. You can listen [here](#). The item begins at 1:36:50. Gary also appeared on nine local BBC radio stations on Tuesday to answer questions about how to make a will and the most common issues people find. One interview can be found on [BBC Somerset](#) and begins at 1:23:15.

Head of justice Richard Miller was on BBC Radio 4's [You and Yours](#) talking about lawyers working from hospitals to meet client needs. Richard is on from 4:40.

Meanwhile employment law committee chair Max Winthrop was on the [Victoria Derbyshire](#) show talking about non-disclosure agreements. You can listen to Max from 1:36:00.

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:

On Wednesday the chair of the employment committee gave evidence to the women and equalities select committee on the issue of sexual harassment with a focus on NDA's.

The regulatory affairs unit visited the Legal Ombudsman to discuss upcoming regulatory developments, raise points on behalf of the profession, and identify areas for cooperation.

High level meetings this week:

On Thursday myself and the other office holders and chief executive hosted a Carey Street dinner for the lord chancellor to discuss key issues for the profession including Brexit, early advice and technology.

Our influencing work internationally:

26 March, vice-president Christina Blacklaws, Alexandra Cardenas and Lizzette Robleto de Howarth met Baroness Anelay to discuss her recent participation at the 62nd UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). They discussed trends relating to the situation of women and the prominent role of women lawyers could potentially play at next year's CSW.

27 March, we hosted the Colombian human rights lawyer Rommel Duran Castellanos, who has been the victim of threats and intimidation because of his professional duties. Mr Castellanos met me, the international programmes manager and the international human rights policy adviser. A set of follow-up actions have been agreed, including a potential intervention letter on his case.

29 March, we submitted a written contribution to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of China, focusing on cases of arrest and (arbitrary and/or prolonged) detention of lawyers and human rights defenders since 2013 (date of the last UPR of China).

Supporting members at every stage of their career

We published an article on our website on the SRA thematic review and risk assessment. Read the full article [here](#).

Minimum Trainee Salary

We published our recommendation on minimum salaries for trainee solicitors, which is £21,561 in London and £19,122 outside London. The new rate comes into effect on 1 May 2018. Based on previous guidance, employers are encouraged to implement the increase as soon as they can, on or after this date, and at least within six months. The article is available [here](#).

Supporting practice excellence

Anti-money laundering (AML)

Our AML guidance, which takes into account the changes introduced by the Money Laundering Regulations 2017, has received approval from HM Treasury and is available on our [website](#).

Ethics

We spoke at a Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development event on our interactive scenarios in our professional standards and ethics programme of work.

Wales

The new Land Transaction Tax replaces stamp duty land tax in Wales on **Sunday 1 April**. All transactions after this date will be subject to the new tax and tax payments will be collected by the Welsh Revenue Authority.

You must be registered to file a transaction and the new tax authority is advising conveyancers to register now as the process takes around 10 working days to complete. The rates and bands for land transaction tax are different from current rates for stamp duty land tax and there is no relief for first time buyers. Read all about it on the [Law Society website](#)

You can sign up for our weekly Professional Update and other newsletters [here](#).

Some of our upcoming events to support practice excellence are:

AI and ethics – plotting a path to the unanswered questions 27 April 8.30 - 13.00

At Hogan Lovells, 50 Holborn Viaduct.

The growth in AI in society and in law gives rise to a range of fundamentally important questions. This conference will explore these questions, bringing together global experts from the tech community, private practice, in house and academia.

This free event will feature a keynote address from Professor Richard Susskind OBE and speakers from Microsoft, the Alan Turing Institute and the Law Society.

To book your free place, please e-mail aiandethics2018@lawsociety.org.uk

Competition Section seminar: achieving professional ambitions in Competition law – 10 April

In this seminar, speakers from different backgrounds and areas of expertise will share their best practical advice for achieving professional ambitions in Competition law.

Law Society joint seminar with the French National Bar – 11 April

Seminar in association with the French National Bar.

Advocacy and the Vulnerable Training, 13 April 2018, Bradford - Morning session

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.

As always, please feel free to share this update with your members unless otherwise specified.

Kind regards,

Joe

Joe Egan

President

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

twitter: @lawsocpresident

www.lawsociety.org.uk