

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.

Congratulations again to Edwin Coe senior partner David Greene who won the presidential election. David takes office as deputy vice president in July - becoming vice president in 2019 and president in 2020. He specialises in commercial litigation and heads up his firm's litigation and dispute resolution group.

Here are some highlights from our work this week.

Influencing on behalf of the profession and promoting the profession

The Law Society's media profile this week:

The [Financial Times](#) (subscription required), [The Times Brief](#) (subscription required), [The Guardian](#) and [Law Society Gazette](#) all covered our concerns about legal aid funding in the context of the Windrush scandal.

I pointed out that legal advice is crucial for navigating the "labyrinthine system", especially in light of the quarterly figures from the Ministry of Justice showing that 50% of Home Office immigration decisions were overturned when reviewed by a judge.

There was coverage in the [Law Society Gazette](#) & [The Times Brief](#) (subscription required) of my appearance before the Commons justice select committee as part of its inquiry into the disclosure of evidence in criminal cases.

Group action pioneer David Greene has won a Law Society presidential election that sets him on course to become president at Chancery Lane in 2020. Story in the [Law Society Gazette](#), [New Law Journal](#), & [The Times Brief](#) (subscription required)

Deputy vice president Simon Davis spoke to Kazakh TV during his trip to Astana to promote English and Welsh law and legal services. You can watch the clip [here](#).

The Law Society of England and Wales has called on the government to end the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and create a new mechanism to replace it after the UK leaves the EU. The story was covered in the Brief's Blue Bag, [New Law Journal](#) and also [City AM](#).

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:

Options for the future UK-EU dispute settlement mechanism

The [paper](#) outlines our views on the building blocks needed to construct a fair, transparent and accessible mechanism for the resolution of disputes between the UK and the EU after the UK leaves the EU (see media section above).

Family Justice Council: Guidance on Financial Needs on Divorce - edition 2, April 2018

The Family Justice Council has recently [published](#) the second edition of its useful guide on the making of orders to meet financial needs following divorce and the dissolution of civil partnerships.

Professional Indemnity Insurance

We [published](#) a briefing for members on the SRA's PII consultation, which closes on 15 June. The SRA is proposing substantial reductions to the minimum levels of PII cover that firms and clients must hold. We are concerned that this may reduce protections without seeing any significant reductions to premiums.

AI and Ethics Event

In partnership with Hogan Lovells, we held an AI and Ethics summit on 27th April. The opening address was given by Lord Timothy Clement Jones (Chair of the APPG on AI) and the key note speaker was Professor Richard Susskind. Panelists included vice president Christina Blacklaws, Peter Watts, Professor Sofia Olhede, Rob McCargow, Dana Denis-Smith, Laura Robinson, Patricia Christias, Raja Chatila, Ben Gardner, director of legal & regulatory policy Sophia Adams Bhatti, Kay Firth-Butterfield, Sylvie Delacroix, Dr Adrian

Weller, Dr Nora Ni Loideain. The objective being to bring together a multi-disciplinary conference, showcase the profession and bolster our credibility by partnering with a leading city firm. The event was well attended by 124 delegates from across the profession and attracted a lot of positive attention on social media. One post alone on linked in was viewed nearly 2500 times and the event hashtag #LawSociAI was tweeted 461 times.

Parliamentary

On Tuesday I gave evidence to the Justice Select Committee as part of their inquiry on disclosures of evidence in criminal cases. We also submitted written evidence to the Committee, which can [be read here](#).

- During the session I argued the disclosures regime has not kept pace with modern technology and highlighted concerns that government cuts to the criminal justice system are affecting access to justice.
- I noted that we are challenging the reforms to the Litigator's Graduated Fee Scheme through a judicial review.
- Our criminal duty solicitor [heat map](#) was also highlighted during the session.

Also on the panel were:

- Angela Rafferty QC, chair, Criminal Bar Association
- Barrister Joanna Hardy, Red Lion Chambers
- Daniel Bonich, vice chair, Criminal Law Solicitors' Association

We were mentioned five times in the [Lords EU Justice Sub Committee](#) report on dispute resolution. Our report on [Options for the UK-EU future dispute resolution mechanism](#) and has been shared with government and parliamentary stakeholders.

Speeches and meetings

On Wednesday deputy vice president, Simon Davis, chaired a panel discussion hosted by the Law Society with P.R.I.M.E Finance on the future of international financial disputes. Also on the panel were The Hon Mr Justice Robin Knowles CBE. Jeffrey Golden, Chairman, P.R.I.M.E. Finance Foundation and Octavia Knox Cartwright, Head of Litigation for the EME region, Barclays.

Our influencing work internationally:

On 3rd May, Anna Drozd, EU policy adviser and Sophia Adams Bhatti, director of legal & regulatory policy, met DG JUST on international data transfers at the European Commission. They also met Lucilla Sioli, Head of Unit - Knowledge Base European Commission DG CONNECT, to discuss EU policy on Artificial Intelligence.

Keeping members up to date

The first edition of the new look Gazette will be published on Monday 14 May. Details are below.

Law Society Gazette Evolving with our members

What's happened?

We're launching the revised and refreshed hard copy Law Society Gazette magazine on 14 May 2018.

Why?

We conducted research with 1,000 members between February and June 2017. Through a mixture of focus groups, in-depth interviews and telephone interviews, we gathered views from a representative sample of our membership. Their feedback informed the changes we've made to the printed Gazette.

What's changed?

In direct response to the member research, the Gazette:

- Is clearer with less text and with a refreshed look and feel
- Includes more opinion and discussion pieces
- Offers more stories about real-life solicitors, reflecting the realities of a legal life
- Provides regular updates on Law Society views and activities

Who's reading it?

The Gazette is now the only leading legal weekly magazine, with an unrivalled print circulation – proven through independent ABC auditing.

89% of the profession
read the Gazette



What did our members say?

There was a mixture of positive and constructive feedback, helping us to keep the best of the Gazette and evolve it to meet members' needs and expectations.



Supporting members at every stage of their career

On the last weekend in April we held the JLD annual conference, where keynote speaker Baroness Hale said the judiciary should be 'diverse on all fronts', not just through gender and ethnicity but also in the social and professional background of future appointees. Another key discussion from the annual conference was the JLD's efforts to tackle stress in the profession and improve wellbeing.

The JLD's [resilience and wellbeing survey](#), handed to delegates, reported that 39% of trainees had reported suffering from mental health problems, up from 19% last year. Among JLD members as a whole, 38% of respondents said they had experienced mental health problems in the past year, up from 26% in 2017. This year's survey was completed by 959 people, compared with 214 last year, the first year of the exercise.

Supporting practice excellence

Proposed changes to our National Conveyancing Protocol

We are [seeking](#) views on proposed revisions made to our National Conveyancing Protocol. The suggested amendments arise from:

- changes in the law or regulations
- issues that we know can create difficulties in practice
- matters that may be the subject of change in the future.

Government recently published their [response](#) to the call for evidence on improving the home buying and selling process. You will see from our [summary](#) of the [proposals](#) the government's intentions are wide ranging. One aspect includes the provision of time limits on some parts of the transaction including searches and leasehold information, so we are suggesting including some time limits in the protocol. If you use the protocol, or have an interest in its use, we welcome your thoughts and suggestions. The primary consultees are members of the Conveyancing Quality Scheme (CQS) who agree to use the Protocol as a term of membership. The consultation closes at 23:45 on 14 May 2018.

Preparing for the GDPR: A guide for law firms

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will come into effect on 25 May, with a [corresponding](#) Data Protection Bill currently working its way through parliament. The GDPR has been described as an evolution rather than a revolution, but it does contain important changes to how firms process and retain data.

All of our GDPR support and guidance is [here](#).

Some of our upcoming events to support practice excellence are:

[Inclusive recruitment: diversifying your talent - social mobility](#)

Designed to provide constructive challenge and help you to start that process of change, this session will look at how coming from a more privileged background offers advantages to someone long after they leave school. At the same time, social mobility is a difficult concept to pin down and almost as hard for organisations to measure and improve.

[What is an 'effective and efficient' legal team? In association with LexisNexis In-house KM Forum](#)

This interactive panel discussion explores the strategic focus for General Counsel and senior legal officers in creating an efficient and effective legal team.

[Law Society joint seminar with the Spanish National Bar](#)

Joint event of the Law Society of England and Wales and the Consejo General de la Abogacía Española.

[Competition Section annual conference 2018: debating key competition law developments](#)

The annual Competition Section conference is an established fixture in the competition law calendar. This event draws on speakers from the UK and overseas and includes leading practitioners, regulators and economic experts. Uniquely, this is the only competition law conference designed by competition law specialists, offering all those with an interest in this highly visible area of law an opportunity to network with experienced practitioners, clients, government officials, regulators and representatives from the judiciary in a relaxing atmosphere at the Law Society.

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

Kind regards,

Joe

Joe Egan
President

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