

The Rt Hon Baroness Harriet Harman KC

Chair of The Independent Review of Bullying
and Harassment at the Bar

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25th September 2024

To whom it may concern,

As you may be aware, the Bar Council has commissioned an Independent Review into Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment at the Bar. The Review has been launched in response to evidence which indicates that there is a persistent problem with these behaviours at the Bar. I am honoured to have been appointed to chair this Review.

The Review will seek to identify the reasons for the unacceptable levels of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment at the Bar; the barriers to improvement; the impact of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment at the Bar; the efficacy of the current reporting mechanisms, support services, and the sanctions regime; and potential solutions for tackling bullying, harassment and sexual harassment at the Bar, including effective preventative strategies.

The context for the Bar Council's decision to commence the Review includes evidence that it has gathered of "*Patronising, belittling, overbearing and demeaning behaviour, including by judges*".

The Terms of Reference include:

- "*The purpose of the Review is to examine the whole ecosystem at the Bar: [including, inter alia] interactions to and from [sic] the judiciary*";
- "*The Review is not to comment on individual cases but to propose reforms or changes to the whole ecosystem to improve the position going forward*" (original emphasis);
- "*The Report will identify: The reasons for the unacceptable levels of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment at the Bar [...]; Possible solutions [...]; Preventative steps [...]; and Steps to bring about cultural change [...]*"; and
- My report will initially be sent to the Bar Council and Review Reference Group which will then review whether it "*discharges the Terms of Reference and stated purpose of the Review*".

The Terms of Reference for the Review also require an examination of how bullying, harassment and sexual harassment has been dealt with by other comparable sectors. I am, therefore, keen to examine the mechanisms adopted by the judiciary with regard to prevention, reporting, complaints handling and investigations. I would be very grateful if you would meet with me to discuss how the JCIO handles complaints regarding judicial misconduct. Please do let me know your availability for October.

Barcouncil.org.uk

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Thank you in advance for engaging with the Review. I look forward to meeting you to discuss these important issues.

Best wishes,

Harriet