



The Bar Council

King's Counsel Working Group:

Final report action plan

September 2026

Recommendation	Actions required	By whom	By when	Notes/Status
1. The Bar Council (in consultation with the Specialist Bar Associations (SBAs) and employers) should regularly brief the KCA on practice specific developments relevant to demonstrating excellence in advocacy Bar associations and employers should provide information and guidance on what ‘excellence’ might look like in particular specialisms and what barriers those in different specialisms might face	- The SBAs should be contacted to provide information that would help the Selection Panel in understanding their particular specialisms, taking account of the possibility that each specialism may need to be split into smaller sub specialisms - SBAs to respond providing requested information. Bar Council to provide the KCA with support in working with the SBAs	Bar Council / KCA SBAs / Bar Council	End October 2026 End December 2027	Note: Date enables KCA to update some of their external guidance as required
2. The Bar Council should ensure there is accurate and relevant	Bar Council to update website pages relating to career progression -	Bar Council	End October 2026	

guidance and support on progression for barristers i. The Bar Council should revisit its career development support to improve information and links to high-quality resources – including via the Bar Council’s website and other platforms (including social media). Revised website content should link to KCA guidance on how to prepare applications, as well as signposting to skills development opportunities run by external organisations ii. The Bar Council should work with Specialist Bar Associations, employers and the KCA to promote existing and new guidance and ensure there is relevant support for different specialist areas. The Bar Council	prioritising KC related content and including links to KCA resources and other third-party silk related articles and information, including how to manage employer-employee conflicts in relation to pro bono work, and how to secure pro bono work to support a KC application • Bar Council and KCA to work together to identify gaps in current support offering and build a plan to support the delivery of additional material • Bar Council and KCA to agree a list, in priority order, of further practice			
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should highlight existing guidance which signposts how to manage employer-employee conflicts, and how to frame pro bono experience effectively within the current KC application process iii. Bar Council should continue to work with the KCA to evaluate outcomes at different stages in the application process to better understand the challenges faced by practitioners from different practice areas and from the employed Bar	areas or groups of applicants to focus on for the delivery of additional material.			
3. KCA should better highlight what wider experience can be brought into a KC application within the current guidance i. The KCA needs to ensure that barristers understand what experience can be brought into a	• KCA to update the 'Guidance to Applicants' to ensure this information is included in the main body of the guidance • KCA to use existing applicant profiles to	KCA KCA	Ahead of the 2027 Silk Competition 2027	Note: it takes some time to identify the right applicants and then draft and clear the profiles – both internally and with the successful applicant – so giving a

KC application by making its description of “other forums” more prominent. Without diluting its statement that “applicants must satisfy the Selection Panel that they would be excellent in advocacy in the higher courts (including tribunals) of England and Wales”, the KCA should ensure that its current definition “...oral advocacy includes advocacy in a court or tribunal, mediation, arbitration or negotiation” is more accessible within the current guidance ii. The KCA should better highlight where candidates have used evidence of advocacy outside the higher courts successfully in a KC application. This should cover different contexts and practice areas to ensure that prospective applicants from across the Bar	highlight more successful applicants who have used evidence of oral advocacy outside the higher courts			specific date in 2027 is difficult, although KCA will prioritise these applicants where they have them
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including the employed Bar understand where their experience could form part of a successful application. This may assist in tackling misconceptions about the difficulty of demonstrating excellence in oral advocacy in some practice areas or outside the traditional structures of the higher courts				
4. A non-exhaustive list of example eligible judicial assessor roles should be created i. A non-exhaustive list of examples of the roles that meet the criteria of a judicial assessor should be created as there continues to be confusion over what type of work qualifies (we note information about those who may qualify is provided in KCA applicant guidance and FAQs, but some may	• KCA to work with the professional bodies to agree non exhaustive list of examples of roles that meet the criteria of a judicial assessor • KCA to update the Guidance for Applicants to reflect this list and the balance of evidence required for a successful application	KCA/ Bar Council/ Law Society KCA	October 2026 Ahead of the 2027 Silk Competition	

find it difficult to find). The KCA might also need to highlight more prominently in guidance / outside their guidance that not all cases need a judicial assessor (as the perception remains that this is the case)	KCA to update the Guidance for Applicants to explain the numbers of assessors applicants must list more clearly	KCA	Ahead of the 2027 Silk Competition	
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