



The Bar Council

Bar Council

annual report 2024/25





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About the Bar Council of England and Wales



The Bar Council is the voice of the barrister profession in England and Wales. Our nearly 18,000 members – self-employed and employed barristers – make up a united Bar that is strong, inclusive, independent and influential.

We lead, represent and support the Bar in the public interest, championing the rule of law and access to justice by:

- Providing advice, guidance, services, training and events for our members
- Inspiring and supporting the next generation of barristers
- Drawing on our members' expertise to influence policy and legislation that relates to the justice system and the rule of law
- Promoting the Bar of England and Wales to develop career and business opportunities for barristers at home and abroad

As the General Council of the Bar, we're the approved regulator for all practising barristers in England and Wales. We delegate our regulatory functions to the operationally independent Bar Standards Board (BSB).

The Bar Council's representative work is largely undertaken by committees comprising barristers and chambers professionals, who work in conjunction with the organisation's small but dedicated staff team. This work is overseen by the General Management Committee and the Bar Council. The Bar Council officers (Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer) are elected by Bar Council members in May and serve for one calendar year (January to December).

This report covers the year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Foreword from the Chief Executive



This is the first annual report under our new strategic plan ‘Standing for justice’ which sets out our aims and objectives for 2024 to 2029. The core of our work – representing and supporting the profession – remains the same, but we’ve refreshed our plans for delivering against our vision of being the leading representative body for a united Bar which is strong, inclusive, independent and influential.

2024/25 has seen the Bar at the centre of political debate as justice became a key theme of the 2024 General Election. Our ‘manifesto for justice’ set out a bold plan for a strong, effective and properly funded justice system underpinned by access to justice and the rule of law. It helped to shape the debate around the future of the justice system with political parties and in the media.

Our links with politicians from across the political spectrum and our connections in the Ministry of Justice and other government departments – built up over

many years – put us in a strong position when the new government came to office. The Lord Chancellor and law officers have welcomed engagement from the Bar as they seek to tackle the problems in the publicly funded justice system and seize the opportunities afforded by our world-renowned legal services sector. Over the past year, we’ve also strengthened the links between Westminster and the regional Bars by forging new connections between the circuit leaders and parliamentarians.

In this ‘year of the review’ we welcomed the government’s focus on understanding the root causes of the problems facing our sector. We’ve put a huge amount of work into engaging with the Leveson review of the criminal courts, and the Gauke review of sentencing. Our member-led working groups made detailed submissions to both reviews and their insights have been well received. We also submitted evidence to the spending review setting out the case for spending on justice to save across Whitehall.

Foreword from the Chief Executive (continued)

Turning to the Bar itself, Baroness Harriet Harman KC has been undertaking her independent review of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment at the Bar – commissioned by the Bar Council in 2024. These are extraordinarily sensitive issues, and the answers will not be easy, but we've heard time and again – through Barristers' Working Lives surveys and Talk to Spot – of the significant impact that bullying and inappropriate behaviour have on our members. It is time to take decisive action.

I am grateful to all those who made submissions to the review or who met with Baroness Harman on her visits around the circuits. I hope everyone working at and around the Bar will welcome the report when it's launched in September 2025 and will consider what they can do to help change the culture at the Bar.

As you will see from the following pages, it's been an incredibly busy time for the Bar Council, and I cannot do justice to the enormous breadth of work in this foreword.

I pay tribute to last year's Chair, Sam Townend KC, and this year's Chair, Barbara Mills KC, for their tireless work advocating for the justice system and promoting the Bar of England and Wales at home and overseas. As leaders of the Bar, they have provided a steady hand and strong voice in changing times.

I also thank our fantastic staff team, our 450+ volunteers – barristers and chambers professionals who give their time pro bono through our Council, committees, panels and working groups – and the Inns, specialist Bar associations and circuits, without whom this work is not possible.

This has been a notable year in the Bar Council's own history as we welcomed the first all-women officer team with Barbara Mills KC in the Chair, Kirsty Brimelow KC as Vice Chair and Lucinda Orr as Treasurer. We remain deeply committed to equality, diversity and inclusion at the Bar and to breaking down barriers to those from under-represented backgrounds.

Over the last year we published the follow up to our landmark race report and a new race action toolkit, resources for those who want to move or return to the Bar, and more detailed analysis on earnings by sex and practice. And we published a suite of policy templates to support chambers with employment-related matters. These are just some of the ways the Bar Council supports a more inclusive Bar, and I hope you will make use of the many resources we offer that are informed by our research and evidence.

Looking ahead, in the autumn of 2025 we'll consider the latest findings of the Barristers' Working Lives survey to shape and focus our work on behalf of the Bar. Thank you to everyone who takes the time to share views, ideas and experiences to make sure we can continue to lead, represent and support the Bar in the public interest.

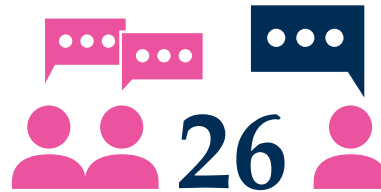
Malcolm Cree CBE
Chief Executive

Our year in numbers



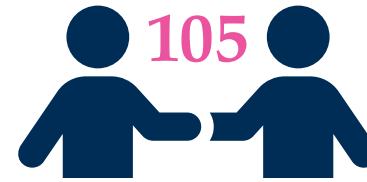
3,948

ethical enquiries answered



26

responses to consultations



105

aspiring barristers hosted on the Bar Placement Scheme and 10k Black Interns programme



94

entries to the law reform essay competition



24

mentions in Parliament



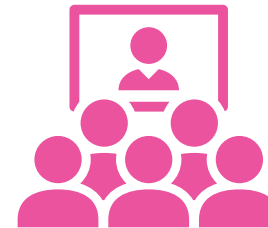
6

pieces of legislation reviewed



100

training courses delivered



5,050

event attendees



26,890

Pupillage Gateway applications



9,633

active barrister ID cards



44.8%

of barristers paid the Bar Representation Fee



678

pupillage vacancies advertised



875

media hits



114,210

engagements on social media



651,870

website views



46

blogs published



458

volunteers on our Council, committees and panels



6,156

new followers on social media



524

barrister profiles on the Direct Access Portal

Meeting our strategic aims in 2024/25

- Leading, representing and upholding the independence of the united Bar
- Championing, protecting and promoting the rule of law
- Supporting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient profession
- Maintaining a sustainable, inclusive and resilient organisation



Leading, representing and upholding the independence of the united Bar

As the voice of the profession, the strength and breadth of our resources, connections and know-how uniquely positions us to lead the Bar. We guide and promote the profession under the principles of independence and justice.

This year we:

- Published our 'Manifesto for justice' to push for 8 key policies in the run up to the UK General Election, inform our discussions with all political parties, and guide our interactions with the new government.
- Hosted a 'justice at the polls' panel debate at Bar Conference, chaired by Lord Macdonald, to analyse the manifestos of the main political parties and discuss what the General Election could mean for the future of the justice system.
- Successfully established and developed strong relationships with the new government, ministers and parliamentarians.
- Facilitated meetings with ministers, the law officers and the Chair of the Justice Select Committee for the circuit leaders, bringing our work in Parliament and Whitehall closer to the regional Bars.
- Contributed to the National Audit Office (NAO) report on 'Reducing the backlog in the Crown Court', highlighting the current working conditions and remuneration levels for criminal barristers, as well as how the increase in criminal legal aid funding likely prevented more barristers from leaving criminal practice.
- Called for a whole system review of the criminal justice system to resolve the present structural issues in the criminal courts which is having an impact on the elimination of the Crown Court backlog.

Leading, representing and upholding the independence of the united Bar

- Welcomed the government's Independent Review of the Criminal Courts chaired by Sir Brian Leveson. We convened a working group to respond to the Leveson review, recommending that the government look at alternative measures that could address the long-term issues facing the criminal justice system. Our submission to the review was featured in an exclusive article in the Guardian.
- Advocated for uncapped sitting days in the Crown Court to help clear the backlog and welcomed the subsequent increase in sitting days for the next financial year.
- Set up a working group to respond to the Independent Sentencing Review chaired by David Gauke. Our response recommended that sentencing should focus on rehabilitation, not just punishment, in order to root out the cause of offending behaviour. Our views were featured in an exclusive article in the Observer and Michelle Heeley KC, who led our working group, was interviewed on Times Radio.
- Engaged with the Independent Review of Disclosure and Fraud Offences by forming a working group to provide direct input to the review.
- Worked with the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) on the drafting of the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer to ensure it reflected the cab rank principle. The Convention is an international instrument dedicated to protecting the freedom and independence of the global legal profession.
- Marked International Day of the Endangered Lawyer in January 2025 by issuing a statement to raise awareness of attacks and harassment of lawyers internationally and at home. We also issued a strong statement condemning the racist attacks on immigration lawyers during the summer riots and set up a support page on our website with safety advice for barristers.
- Invited a panel of experts to deliver the annual law reform lecture at Inner Temple on the topic of 'Reimagining law for the Earth'. Panellists included Dr Helen Dancer, Zoë Leventhal KC, Kyle Lischak, Dr Bonnie Holligan and Dr Helena Howe.
- Ran the annual law reform essay competition which attracted 94 applications (an increase on previous years) with 6 prizes awarded. The winning essay by Hal McNulty was titled 'A fiction of defendant participation: single justice procedure offences should be moved to the civil jurisdiction'.
- Submitted a strong response on behalf of the Bar to the Bar Standards Board (BSB) consultation opposing their proposals to amend Core Duty 8 and change equality and diversity regulations.
- Opposed BSB plans to amend the definition of legal training and remove the requirement for a minimum 2:2 degree.

Leading, representing and upholding the independence of the united Bar

- Supported the Bar's pro bono charities Advocate and the Free Representation Unit (FRU) and contributed to Pro Bono Week 2024. We promoted the new pro bono recognition list and published pro bono guidance for pupils and supervisors.
- Hosted 60 young lawyers from across Europe for the European Young Bar Association international weekend in September.
- Launched three new information videos to promote and explain the Direct Access Portal to members of the public and organisations seeking to instruct a barrister. The videos establish the portal as the go-to database for finding a direct access barrister. Since the launch, the videos have been viewed more than 4,000 times.
- Published the Barristers' Working Lives (BWL) 2023 report covering a wide range of topics of relevance to the Bar including working hours, earnings, working conditions and views on the justice system. We also launched the BWL 2025 survey, which attracted a very healthy 26.6% response, and we expect to publish the findings in autumn 2025.
- Proactively engaged with the media to position the Bar Council as a leading voice on the rule of law, access to justice and policy issues of importance to the Bar. The Bar Council was mentioned 875 times in national, regional, online and trade news and our spokespeople were interviewed by national broadcasters and podcasts on issues including the Gauke and Leveson reviews, legal aid fees, BSB equality rules, and bullying and harassment. Some highlights include:
 - Chair of the Bar 2024 Sam Townend KC had comment pieces published in the Times (on fixing the criminal justice system) and PoliticsHome (on attacks on lawyers) and he was interviewed on Times Radio about the Leveson review of criminal courts
 - Chair of the Bar 2025 Barbara Mills KC was interviewed by Channel 4 News on her priorities for the year, including family law and tackling violence against women and girls. Features on Barbara Mills KC appeared in New Law Journal, Women Who Inspire, and the Cilex and Magistrates' Association journals
- Kirsty Brimelow KC, Vice Chair for 2025, was interviewed on BBC Radio 4 Today about children in the criminal justice system
- A front-page story in the i newspaper on Nightingale courts and our call for greater resources for the justice system
- Amplified a range of voices from across the Bar through the media, social media, and our website. We published 46 blogs. Some of our most popular content included looking back at the Birmingham Six case, top tips for completing pupillage applications, a personal memoir of 5 decades at the Bar, and changes to the law on the prevention of sexual harassment.



Championing, protecting and promoting the rule of law

No one is above the law, and everyone should be equal under the law. In uncertain times, it's vital to educate the public, media and policymakers about the critical importance of the rule of law in a healthy society.

To achieve this aim in 2024/25 we:

- Analysed public spending on justice in our report 'Justice short changed', which found that public funding for justice in England and Wales declined by 22.4% in real per person terms from 2009/10 to 2022/23. We used this data analysis to make a strong case for investment in justice in our manifesto and our submission to the spending review.
- Published the first evaluation of remote hearings in England and Wales from the perspective of legal professionals. Our report 'A lens on justice' found that barristers did not want to see progress on remote hearings rolled back and a large minority would like to see the use of remote hearings increased.
- Jointly sponsored research with the Access to Justice Foundation on 'The value of justice for all' – a large-scale economic analysis which found that for every £1 the Treasury spent on legal advice, it saved the public purse £2.71 – a nearly threefold saving on investment. We used this data in our spending review submission.
- Responded to 26 consultations and calls for evidence from government departments, the Law Commission, the Civil Justice Council and regulators on a wide range of issues of interest to the Bar: from contempt of court and employment rights, to planning reform and litigation funding.
- Submitted written evidence to parliamentary inquiries on reducing the backlogs in the criminal courts, the UK-EU reset and legal services as a soft power. We gave written and oral evidence to the Lords Public Services Committee on interpretation and translation services in the courts.

Championing, protecting and promoting the rule of law

- Welcomed the government consultation on reform of private prosecutions and the single justice procedure – issues we'd raised awareness of in the media.
- Briefed parliamentarians on key pieces of legislation including the Property (Digital Assets etc) Bill, the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill, the Data (Use and Access) Bill, the Public Authorities (Fraud, Error and Recovery) Bill, the Crime and Policing Bill, and the Litigation Funding Agreements (Enforceability) Bill.
- Welcomed the new Arbitration Act which enacts the recommendations of the Law Commission to ensure the legal framework continues to promote the UK as a leading destination for commercial arbitration. We also welcomed the ratification of the Hague Convention 2019 which will enhance international confidence that judgments will be adhered to.
- Issued a series of statements and letters on rule of law-related issues internationally, including a series of representations to the Pakistan Bar Association on Ahmadi lawyers who had been asked to denounce their faith in order to practise and a statement supporting the International Bar Association (IBA) in denouncing the United States sanctions against the International Criminal Court.
- Held the annual International Rule of Law Lecture 2024 delivered by Her Excellency Dr Fatou Bensouda, High Commissioner of The Gambia to the UK and former Prosecutor at the ICC on the topic of 'Defending the rule of law: global challenges and the role of the International Criminal Court (ICC)'.
- Organised two meetings of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Legal and Constitutional Affairs to discuss the future of justice and Labour's manifesto for justice.
- Hosted successful fringe meetings at all three main party conferences with panel discussions focused on the Bar's contribution and the key asks in our manifesto for justice.
- Organised a roundtable discussion with Kim Johnson MP (Liverpool Riverside) and family and criminal barristers on the Northern Circuit on the subject of tackling violence against women and girls and the role of the courts.



Supporting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient profession

Our vision for the Bar is only possible if the profession is sustainable, adequately funded and open to all.

To support this aim in 2024/25 we:

- Engaged with the Criminal Legal Aid Advisory Board (CLAAB) and Ministry of Justice (MoJ), together with the Criminal Bar Association (CBA), to present evidence of the low fees for Crown Court defence legal aid, to assist the MoJ in their presentation of evidence to the Treasury as part of the spending review.
- Took part in a series of meetings with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), together with the CBA, to set out the need to improve the fees and structure of the CPS fee scheme.
- Lobbied the government to match fund criminal pupillages to support the sustainability of the publicly funded criminal Bar. We presented a costed proposal to all political parties ahead of the General Election.
- Continued to engage with MoJ statisticians as part of the Review of Civil Legal Aid (RoCLA). We undertook data analysis to match the Legal Aid Agency's data with our data on barristers to analyse the civil and family legal aid fee schemes and the effect on the incomes of barristers in different categories. In November 2024 our 27-page data submission was published and in January 2025 we saw the first outcome of the process: a proposal from the MoJ to increase housing and immigration legal aid fees.
- Responded to the MoJ consultation on immigration and housing civil legal aid fees as part of RoCLA. We argued that the MoJ's proposal to uplift immigration and housing legal aid to a minimum hourly rate of £65.35/£69.30 (non-London/London), while welcome, was not in line with inflation nor sufficient to ensure the sustainability of the profession.

Supporting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient profession

- Worked with the Family Law Bar Association (FLBA) to engage with the MoJ regarding the low fees paid to court-appointed qualified legal representatives (QLRs). The MoJ increased the fees by 10% on 31 May 2024.
- Successfully advocated for an increase in fixed recoverable costs for civil cases. Following our representations, in April 2024 the government announced a 23.5% increase.
- Provided input to the Civil Justice Council (CJC) working group and consultation on litigation funding. Nick Bacon KC also participated in the CJC Costs Review which is considering guideline hourly rates for barristers. We undertook research through the 2025 Barristers' Working Lives survey on the standard hourly rates that barristers charge in order to provide evidence for the review.
- Successfully advocated for Part B of the General Licence to permit brief fees and refresher fees to be paid to counsel in the event these are fixed fees and not subject to hourly rates. These fees may now be included in the overall cap of £500,000 for professional legal fees, including counsel's fees. This is a change from previous Legal Services General Licences where in Part B counsel fees were subject to a maximum hourly rate of £1,500.
- Supported the Constitutional and Administrative Law Bar Association (ALBA) in its engagement with the Government Legal Department regarding the rates paid by the Attorney General to barristers, which had not increased since 1997.
- Published an assistance document, drafted by our Taxation Panel, for self-employed barristers to understand the tax changes introduced by the Basis Period Reform.
- Published guidance on neutral evaluation, drafted by our Alternative Dispute Resolution Panel, setting out how it can be used by barristers in civil practice as well as family.
- Improved our method of analysis for the annual publication of self-employed barrister earnings by sex and practice area, which found that women were earning less than men at the self-employed Bar. Junior women earned on average 77% of what junior men earned, and women silks earned on average 67% of their male colleagues' median gross earnings.
- Published research analysing new practitioner earnings to consider why the earnings gap between men and women at the Bar opens up in the 0-3 years post-qualification experience group. We promoted our practice review guidance and training to support barristers in managing their practice.
- Published new guidance on sanctions, updated the practice note on *R (World Uyghur Congress) v NCA* to reflect the views of the Anti-Money Laundering Working Group, and reviewed 34 pieces of ethics guidance on our Ethics and Practice Hub, making amendments where necessary.

Supporting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient profession

- Responded to 3,948 ethics calls and 550 written ethics queries.
- Delivered a 'handling ethical dilemmas at the family and civil Bar' seminar to 169 attendees. A panel of 4 expert practitioners from the Ethics Committee discussed how to deal with challenging ethical scenarios faced by barristers and signposted to our ethical support and resources.
- Delivered an ethics-focused session at Bar Conference 2024, chaired by Ethics Committee co-chair Fenner Moeran KC. The session focused on SLAPPs, NDAs, barristers' use of social media, and ethical challenges of in-house practice.
- Shaped the regulations that impact barristers by making representations to regulators – the Legal Ombudsman (LeO), Legal Services Board (LSB), Treasury and Bar Standards Board (BSB) – about their business plans, budgets and proposals for change. We engaged with them in roundtable sessions, meetings and through responding to consultations, including:
 - The LSB consultation on its 2025/26 business plan
 - The BSB 5-year strategy call for evidence
 - The Treasury consultation on improving the effectiveness of the Money Laundering Regulations
 - The LSB's review of the internal governance rules
- Successfully argued for the LSB to prevent the LeO from publishing, in redacted form, every one of its decisions and limiting the increase to LeO's budget.
- Commissioned Baroness Harriet Harman KC to undertake an independent review of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment at the Bar following ongoing reports – through Barristers' Working Lives and Talk to Spot – of incidents. The report is due to be published in September 2025.
- Ran our 'Stop it' anti-harassment campaign over the Christmas season in 2024 with downloadable posters and social media signposting barristers to Talk to Spot and sources of support.
- Researched and published 'Race at the Bar: three years on' – a follow up to our landmark 2021 report, tracking progress on access, retention, progression and culture for barristers from minority ethnic backgrounds. We found that while overall diversity is improving, there is still much to do, particularly in relation to improving the experience of Black barristers and Black aspiring barristers, students and pupils. We published our 'Race equality toolkit' to support ongoing Bar-wide action.
- Delivered a webinar on neurodiversity to guide barristers, chambers professionals and pupil supervisors on supporting neurodivergent pupils and colleagues in practice.
- Grew our network of equality and diversity officers to 550 and held 6 network meetings covering topics including sexual harassment and bullying, regulation, race equality and reflective practice.

Supporting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient profession

- Welcomed the launch of Lawyers Who Care – the UK’s first legal mentorship organisation for care-experienced aspiring lawyers – and invited them to exhibit at our annual Pupillage Fair.
- Delivered three courses for the pre-application judicial education (PAJE) programme supporting lawyers from under-represented groups to prepare for judicial applications.
- Created an advice pack for movers and returners to support the sustainability of the Bar. We created a new section of our website to provide links to useful content, support and resources for barristers who plan to move practice areas or return to the Bar after a career break.
- Supported the 75 years of women silks celebration event in the Royal Courts of Justice with over 350 women KCs.
- Processed 26,890 applications from 3,408 candidates through the Pupillage Gateway, in response to 313 advertisements from authorised education and training organisations (AETOs) for 678 pupillage vacancies.
- Held our 9th Pupillage Fair delivering a range of advice sessions including insights into different specialisms, unconventional routes to the Bar, disability, practising on circuit, and making applications through the Pupillage Gateway. We also supported the introduction of the Pupillage Fair North organised by the Northern Circuit and North Eastern Circuit.
- Piloted contextual recruitment within the Pupillage Gateway to help chambers better evaluate candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds and widen access to the Bar. The tool enables AETOs to assess a candidate’s achievements in the context of their academic and socio-economic background and personal circumstances.
- Published the Pupillage Gateway 2024 report which sets out data useful to aspiring barristers and those engaged with barrister training, such as the number of applicants and vacancies listed on the Pupillage Gateway, who obtained a pupillage, and what contributed to their success.
- Undertook the pupil survey 2025, which found 90% of respondents reported a positive experience at the Bar and 8 in 10 felt well supported by their chambers/employer.
- Developed a new ‘Becoming a barrister’ careers hub on our website with clear signposting for those at different stages of their career progression. We simplified the content and added links to relevant resources, work experience opportunities and inspiring stories. Visits to the careers sections of our website increased significantly after launch.
- Placed 79 students from under-represented backgrounds in 39 chambers across England and Wales, offering three days in chambers and a day of advocacy training through the Bar Placement Scheme. With the support of the Bar, we also provided 26 fully funded 6-week internships through the 10,000 Black Interns programme.
- Sponsored and supported Young Citizens to deliver the 2024/25 Bar Mock Trials programme. The competition attracted over 3,000 students from 214 schools.

Supporting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient profession

- Provided 9,633 barristers with ID cards through the HMCTS Professional Users Access Scheme – the highest number of users since the scheme launched in 2019.
- Successfully lobbied for an extension of the ID card scheme to court buildings that were previously excluded from the list, through the introduction of the adapted search process.
- Launched DoctorLine, a new healthcare service for Bar Representation Fee (BRF) subscribers that enables policyholders and their families to speak to a doctor or clinical pharmacist at any time. Adding this benefit to our services portfolio will help us to offer affordable and accessible healthcare services to our members and generate additional revenue for through the BRF.
- Launched a suite of new model employment policy templates, developed by the Chambers Management Panel, including model disciplinary and grievance policies for employees and pupil barristers and model social media, appraisal, and capability policies for employees. We also ran an online event series for chambers on managing people and behaviours at the Bar.
- Reviewed and improved signposting to the Ethics and Practice Hub and chambers management resources.
- Updated our joint cyber security questionnaire with the Law Society in response to feedback from users. The questionnaire is designed to assist law firms to better assess the cyber security arrangements of the chambers and barristers that they instruct.
- Delivered a comprehensive programme of 57 open training courses attended by 580 barristers and chambers professionals, 43 bespoke training courses for chambers attended by 503 barristers and chambers professionals, and 18 events bringing together 5,050 attendees.
- Ran an online seminar on ethical dilemmas at the criminal Bar and civil Bar with advice on how to apply the provisions of the BSB Handbook, and a similar break-out session during Bar Conference in June 2024.
- Introduced a new on-demand pupil supervisor course meeting the BSB's requirements for pupil supervisors and providing the knowledge and resources needed to be effective in the role.
- Delivered the 2024 Employed Bar Awards celebrating the rich and varied work at the employed Bar. Winners selected from over 43 outstanding applications included barristers working at the BBC, the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office and the Royal Navy.
- Exhibited at the annual Government Legal Department conference to build relationships with employed barristers across the second largest employer of barristers in England and Wales.

Supporting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient profession

- Organised three business development visits to help barristers develop their international practice including:
 - A visit to the UAE coinciding with Dubai International Arbitration Week 2025 to promote barristers with an arbitration practice and to assist family practitioners in taking advantage of the liberalisation of rules around family proceedings in the jurisdiction
 - A visit to Kenya, following on from the East Africa Law Society Conference in Uganda, to deepen relationships we had established during our previous visits. We held a symposium, with the Law Society of Kenya, looking at developments on a range of topics including climate litigation and anti-money laundering, and organised a bespoke programme of visits to law firms
 - A day of workshops for senior lawyers in Mexico in collaboration with three Mexican Bar associations – Barra Mexicana, Asociación Nacional de Abogados de Empresa and the Ilustre y Nacional Colegio de Abogados – ahead of the annual IBA conference. The workshops covered ethics, AI/technology, and practical sessions on the examination of witnesses
- Led a delegation of 16 barristers and solicitors to Rotterdam, the Hague and Amsterdam for the 58th Anglo-Dutch Exchange.
- Grew the Bar Sustainability Network, providing support to more than 50 sets of chambers, and sponsored a carbon reduction pilot project for 6 chambers.



Maintaining a sustainable, inclusive and resilient organisation

To support the Bar, we need to be sustainable and resilient for the long term. As a small organisation, we need to recruit and retain the brightest talent from diverse backgrounds and foster an environment where employees can thrive.

In 2024/25 we:

- Delivered a refreshed campaign for the Bar Representation Fee (BRF) under the strapline 'the Bar Representation Fee gives you more' to highlight the range of benefits BRF subscribers receive and boost subscriptions. Added DoctorLine to the benefits package to support the Bar and boost income for the Bar Council.
- Began a project to upgrade our finance systems to ensure robust financial management.
- Relaunched Bar Conference with a fresh look and feel and distinct programme based on recommendations from our member-led working group.
- Published a new 'people strategy' and action plan, with the aim of positioning the Bar Council as an employer of choice to attract and retain diverse and talented people who help us make a difference in our work to support the Bar.
- Took action under the people strategy, including:
 - Reviewing our induction process to make sure new colleagues have everything they need to perform well in their roles
 - Carrying out a salary benchmarking exercise and reviewing our benefits offering to ensure we can attract and retain good people
 - Organising a programme of leadership and management training to build a community of leaders and managers
- Increased the provision of mental health first aiders to support the organisation and promote a culture of wellbeing.

Maintaining a sustainable, inclusive and resilient organisation

- Identified opportunities to improve our IT services and systems to reduce operational expenditure, improve resilience and speed up system development.
- Continued to improve and strengthen our cyber security through conditional access policies and updated policies and practices.
- Reviewed all facilities outsourced contracts, including print, digital mail and maintenance, to ensure value for money.
- Added 6,156 new followers and achieved 114,210 engagements across our social media channels: X (Twitter), LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and our new channel, Bluesky. Our top post, with 3,760 engagements, was our congratulations to the new silks on LinkedIn.
- Reviewed our 'tone of voice' and produced new guidelines for writing for the Bar Council in line with our organisational values and aims. The guidelines help us to communicate consistently and ensure we're accessible to all audiences.
- Strengthened our governance with a new whistleblowing and public interest disclosure policy and published our revised risk management framework.
- Continued our journey to achieving ISO accreditation for environmental management – working with a sustainable green energy supplier, sourcing sustainable stationery and setting up an internal environmental working group – and reduced our organisational carbon footprint by 3% from 2024.

Our financial performance

The Bar Council is firmly committed to the principle of transparency and publishes financial and other transparency metrics as part of the annual report.

We pay close attention to how we spend barristers' money:

- Our budgets are set annually, and our budget envelopes are informed by our business plans
- The budget is divided into departmental budgets managed by our directors
- Each month we examine detailed management accounts for areas with significant spending across the organisation, with ad-hoc reviews taking place for areas where smaller spending occurs. This enables us to keep a close eye on our business expenditure
- Each month we think about what we might need to spend in the future and produce forecasts
- We tightly monitor our largest area of spend which is our staffing costs
- We make sure our resources are directed at our key priorities, and
- Our financial performance is scrutinised by the Finance and Audit Committees and reported to the Bar Council

Income

Practising certificate fees (PCF)

Barristers are only legally entitled to undertake reserved legal activities if they are authorised to do so. To be authorised they must hold a current practising certificate renewed annually via a process known as ‘authorisation to practise’, which includes payment of a practising certificate fee (PCF).

The PCF funds the expenditure that falls within the ‘permitted purposes’ as defined by the Legal Services Act 2007. The PCF is shared between the operationally independent Bar Standards Board (BSB), which carries out the regulatory functions, the representative body, the Bar Council, which carries out non-regulatory ‘permitted’ activities, and levies for the Legal Services Board (LSB) and the Legal Ombudsman (LeO).

	£ thousands	£ thousands
Financial year	2023/24	2024/25
Total PCF revenue	£18,838	£22,080

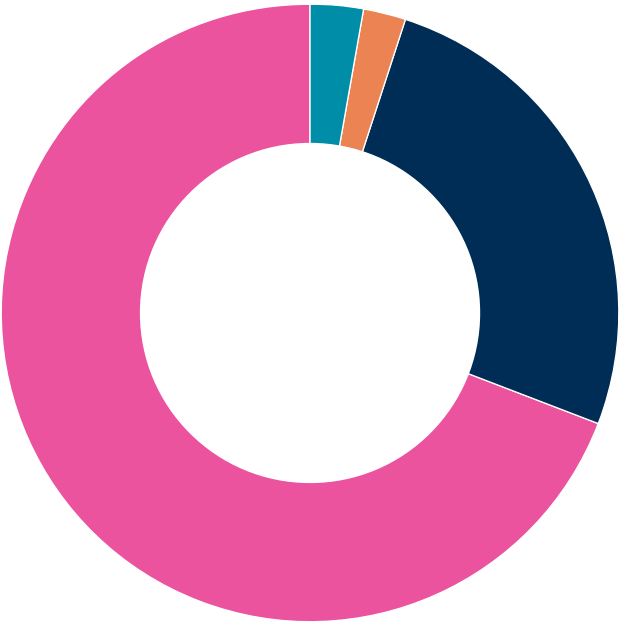
In 2024/25 practising certificate fees were set as follows:

Band	Income band	2023/24 fees
1	£0 – £35,000	£110
2	£35,001 – £60,000	£291
3	£60,001 – £90,000	£585
4	£90,001 – £150,000	£1,064
5	£150,001 – £240,000	£1,616
6	£240,001 – £500,000	£2,191
7	£350,001 – £500,000	£2,341
8	£500,001 – £750,000	£2,961
9	£750,001 – £1,000,000	£3,133
10	£1,000,001 v £1,500,000	£3,553
11	£1,500,001 and above	£3,760

Income

Allocation of PCF between the LSB, LeO, the Bar Council and the BSB

- Legal Services Board, £623k (3%)
- Legal Ombudsman levy, £456k (2%)
- Bar Council, £5,646k (26%)
- BSB, £15,355k (69%)



	2023/24	2024/25
Portion of PCF funding ‘non-regulatory permitted purposes’	32%	41%
Total permitted purposes reserves	£4,824k	£5,347k
Total general reserves	£12,302k	£13,017k

Apart from the PCF, some of our income comes from charges we make for specific services we provide to individuals and organisations and funding we receive to deliver specific pieces of

work. These direct income streams include the Bar Representation Fee (BRF), Inns’ subvention, training and events, commissions and services income, and administrative income.

Income

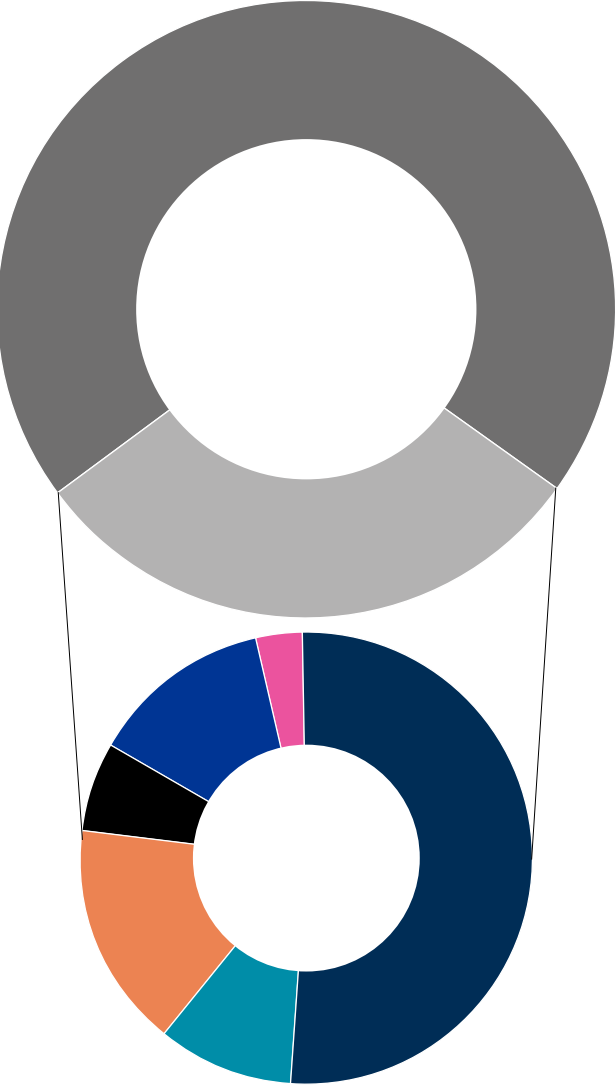
As with previous years, income from the BRF remained the most significant proportion of Bar Council-controlled income during 2024/25. The forecast income for the BRF was set at £1,357k based upon expectations modelled on the 2023/24 authorisation to practise income adjusted for changes in key assumptions.

However, we generated £8k less income than expected. The number of BRF subscribers reduced slightly against previous year, resulting in a reduction in BRF revenue. This was offset by an increase in other Bar Council income including new business partners, new training and events revenue streams, and reinstating the Bar Conference. Overall, the Bar Council exceeded its non-PCF income target by £150k (6%).

Income area	£ thousands 2023/24	£ thousands 2024/25
Bar Representation Fee	£1,377	£1,349
Inns' subvention	£198	£165
Training and events	£383	£463
Commissions	£135	£161
Services income	£258	£346
Administrative income	£54	£71
Total Bar Council-generated income	£2,405	£2,555

Income

Bar Council income



Total income for the Bar Council	£ thousands 2023/24	£ thousands 2024/25
PCF contributions	£4,918	£5,646
Share of income from GCB Resources Group	£181	£199
Planned contributions from reserves	£0	£0
Total income not directly controlled by the Bar Council	£5,099	£5,845
Total Bar Council-generated income	£2,405	£2,555
Total non-regulatory income	£7,504	£8,400

- Other, £2,555k (30%)
- Income not directly controlled by the Bar Council, £5,845k (70%)
 - Bar Representation Fee, £1,349k (16%)
 - Inn’s subvention, £165k (2%)
 - Training and events, £453k (5%)
 - Commission, £161k (2%)
 - Sevices income, £346k (4%)
 - Administrative income, £71k (1%)

Expenditure

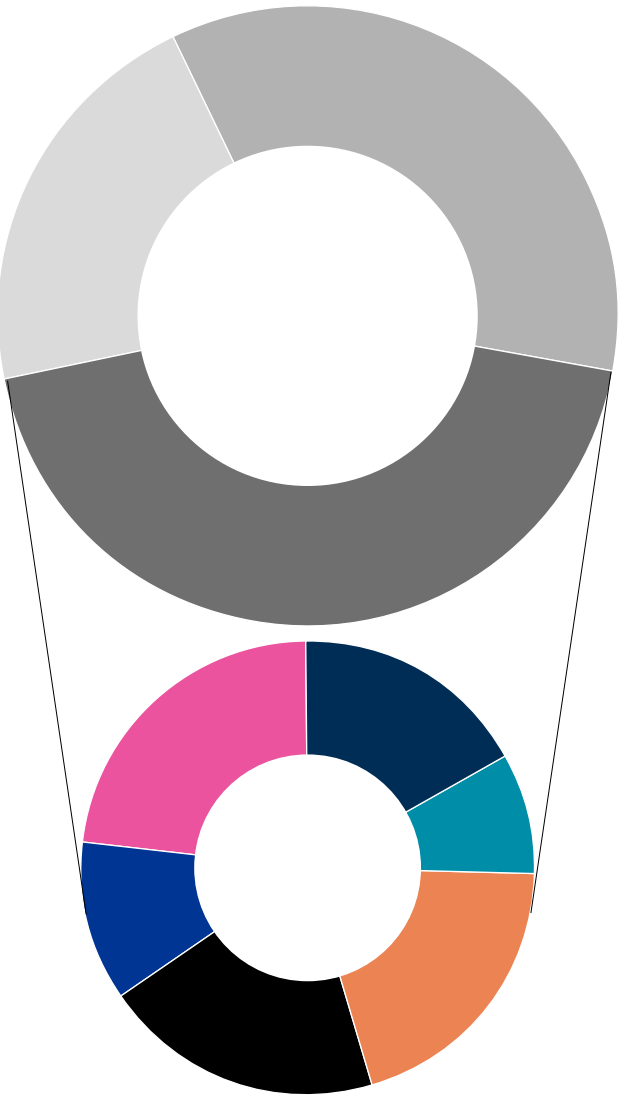
Bar Council directly controlled expenditure was £5,646k against a budget of £5,781k (2% underspend). The reasons for this underspend were due to vacancies during the year and increased work carried out in-house.

The full cost of the Bar Council includes an allocation of shared costs (IT, finance, HR and premises costs) from the General Council of the Bar (GCB) Resources Group, which provides shared services to both the BSB and the Bar Council. The Resources Group expenditure budget is apportioned to each side of the GCB consistent with the allocation of PCF income.

Bar Council department	£ thousands 2023/24	£ thousands 2024/25
Executive and communications	£2,073	£2,323
Policy	£1,740	£1,834
This is made up of:		
Regulation, law reform and ethics	£275	£344
Legal practice and remuneration	£247	£224
Diversity and inclusion	£371	£441
International	£299	£336
Brussels	£153	£135
Policy directorate	£395	£354
Services (A)	£886	£1,075
Total direct Bar Council expenditure	£4,699	£5,232
Resources Group and other adjustments allocated to Representation and Policy	£1,649	£1,748
Resources Group allocated to Services (B)	£488	£544
Total Bar Council expenditure (C)	£6,836	£7,524
Total non-commercial Bar Council expenditure: (C) - (B) - (A)	£5,462	£5,905

Expenditure

Direct Bar Council expenditure in 2024/25



Cost to each authorised individual	£ 2023/24	£ 2024/25
Average cost of the Bar Council for each authorised individual ¹	£272	£317

¹ The average cost of the Bar Council for each authorised individual is calculated by dividing total Bar Council PCF income (£5,646k in 2024 / 25) by the number of practising barristers at 31 March 2025 (17,834).

- Executive and communications, £2,323k (44%)
- Services, £1,075k (21%)
- Other, £1,834k (35%)
 - International, £336k (6%)
 - Brussels, £135k (3%)
 - Policy directorate, £354k (7%)
 - Regulation, law reform and ethics, £344k (7%)
 - Legal practice and remuneration, £224k (4%)
 - Diversity and inclusion, £441k (8%)

Staff resources

There are 4 Officers of the Bar, elected annually.

- The Chair of the Bar was paid £210,456 (2023/24: £199,760).
- The Vice Chair of the Bar was paid £134,635 pro rata (2023/24: £99,980).
- The Treasurer of the Bar is a voluntary position and unpaid.
- The Chair of the Young Barristers' Committee was paid £22,088 (2023/24: £20,000).

No other member of the Bar Council received remuneration in the year, and all gave their time freely. The same applies for members of our committees, panels and working groups. In total this comes to some 460 barristers and chambers professionals working pro bono to support the Bar Council's work.

The median staff remuneration at the Bar Council in 2024/25 was £60,816. The Bar Council has 4 senior managers paid in a remuneration band which in 2024/25 was between £81k and £144k.

Remuneration of the Officers of the Bar and executive

Consultation per LSB submission	2023/24	2024/25
Headcount (excludes Resources Group)	47	47

Total remuneration includes salaries, allowances and employer pension contributions.

The Bar Council considers 'key management personnel' as officers, CEO, directors, and the adviser to the Chair of the Bar. Key management personnel are those people having

authority and responsibility for planning, directing, and controlling the activities of an entity, either directly or indirectly.

The pay of all staff, officers and key management personnel is reviewed annually, with regard to changes in inflation, pay benchmarking, and affordability.

Remuneration of key management personnel

Total remuneration level	2023/24	2024/25
£160,000 or greater	2	2
£140,000–£159,999	1	-
£120,000–£139,999	-	2
£100,000–£119,999	2	3
£80,000–£99,999	3	-
Less than £80,000	-	-

Further information

Find out more about what the Bar Council does and stay in touch:

- Visit our website: www.barcouncil.org.uk
- Follow us on social media: @thebarcouncil on Bluesky, X (Twitter), LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram
- Subscribe to BarTalk: our fortnightly email newsletter providing news, information and updates on areas of interest to the Bar

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The Bar Council
