



The Bar Council

Meeting of the Bar Council

Tuesday 15 April 2025 at 17:00

The Bar Council, 289-293 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7HZ

Present:

Barbara Mills KC	Chair of the Bar	BMKC
Kirsty Brimelow KC	Vice Chair of the Bar	KBKC
Lucinda Orr	Treasurer	LO
Jacob Hallam KC	Co-Chair, Education and Training Committee	JHKC

Members in attendance (in alphabetical order):

Abigail Bright, Adam Baradon KC, Aimee Stokes, Alex Gunning KC, Alexandra Sutton, Alice Hands, Amanda Jepson, Amrit Dhanoa, Amy Mannion, Anna Soubry, Anneli Howard, Anton van Dellen, Anushka Kangesu, Aoife Kennedy, Asad Maqsood, Barbara Connolly KC, Bella Dennis, Brittany Buckell, Cait McDonagh, Caroline Rees KC, Cathrine Grubb, Charlie Woodhouse KC, Christina Michalos KC, David Bunting, David Christopher Taylor, Deshpal Panesar KC, Dilpreet Dhanoa, Emily Formby KC, Emma Hughes, Emma Southern, Emma Torr, Emma Walker, Fenner Moeran KC, Gaynor Wood, Guy Williamson, Harpreet Sandhu KC, Harry O'Sullivan, Harry Stratton, Heidi Stonecliffe KC, Henry King KC, Hollie Gilbery, Hugh Mercer KC, Ian Clarke KC, Ivor Collett, Jaime Hamilton KC, James Kane, James Lewis KC, James Roberts KC, James Robinson, Jasmine Chen, Jason Pitter KC, Jo Martin KC, John-Paul Swoboda, Kama Melly KC, Kate Lumsdon KC, Katrina Mather, Lachlan Stewart, Leanne Targett-Parker, Lee Marklew, Linda Turnbull, Lorinda Long, Lucy Reed KC, Luke Wygas, Maddy Charlesworth, Martyn McLeish, Mary Prior KC, Matthew Keliris-Thomas, Melissa Coutino, Michael Polak, Mike Jones KC, Natasha Shotunde, Nicholas Johnson KC, Owen Thomas KC, Paul Powlesland, Peter Grieves-Smith, Philip Moser KC, Philip Stott, Rory Brown, Ruth Kirby KC, Saira Kabir Sheikh KC, Sara Ibrahim, Sarah Gaunt, Sarah Gerrard, Sarah Williams, Sean Jones KC, Sean Summerfield, Shazia Akhtar, Shobana Iyer, Shoshana Mitchell, Simon Atkinson, Simon Regis, Stephanie Hall, Stephen Kenny KC, Tahmina Rahman, Tomas McGarvey, Tony Singla KC, Winston Hunter KC, Yaa Dankwa Ampadu-Sackey.

THE BAR COUNCIL

www.barcouncil.org.uk

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In attendance:

Anna Pinch	Director of Services	AP
Celina Colquhoun	Vice Chair, Law Reform Committee	CC
Justina Naik	Governance (minutes)	JN
Kathryn Stone	Chair, BSB	KS
Malcolm Cree	Chief Executive Officer	MC
Mark Neale	Director General, BSB	MN
Phil Robertson	Director of Policy	PR
Philip Vollans	Circuit Junior, Midlands Circuit	PV
Sally Burnell	Director of Communications	SB
Sharif Shivji KC	Chair, Advocate	SSKC

Apologies were received from:

Andrew Howe, Claire Davies KC, Cleon Catsambis, Daniel Sheridan, Elaine Banton, Eleena Misra KC, Faisal Sadiq, James Paterson, James Pickering KC, Minka Braun, Dr Mirza Ahmad, Rachel Crasnow KC, Riel Karmy-Jones KC.

1. Conflicts of interest and announcements

None noted.

2. Minutes of the last meetings and matters arising

The minutes from the meeting held on 8 February 2025 were APPROVED as an accurate record.

3. Statement by the Chair of the Bar Council

The Chair highlighted the following points from the report:

Officer Elections 2026

The Chair asked members to note the timetable for the elections of Officers (Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer) for 2026. A notification had been circulated to members on 25 March 2025.

External Appointments

The Chair announced Bar Council nominees appointed to the Attorney General's London Panel Selection Board:

- Zane Malik KC
- Carine Patry KC
- Julia Smyth.

Bar Council Public Affairs

The Chair updated members in relation to the Independent Sentencing Review, led by Rt Hon David Gauke and the Independent Review of the Criminal Courts, chaired by Sir Brian Leveson. Engagement on each of these matters continued.

Meetings

The Chair had met with the Lord Chancellor, Attorney General and Lucy Rigby KC MP, Solicitor General, Rt Hon Lord Hermer KC, Rt Hon Nick Thomas-Symonds MP, Baroness Lawrence, Sarah Sackman KC MP, Helen Grant MP, Dr Kieran Mullan MP, Andy Slaughter MP, Ben Maguire MP, Kim Johnson MP, Nesil Caliskan MP and Oliver Ryan MP.

Equality Rules

The Chair advised of an upcoming meeting with the BSB to discuss next steps on the Equality rules options and objectives.

Bullying and Harassment Review

There was continued support to the Rt Hon. the Baroness Harman KC's Independent Review of Bullying and Harassment, which was due to report in June 2025.

Bar Placement Scheme

The Chair advised that recruitment was underway of chambers to provide places for the 2025 scheme.

General Management Committee Meeting Discussions

The Chair provided a summary of the discussions held at the GMC meetings that took place over the previous quarter.

International Activities

The Chair's international activities, meetings and attendances, were outlined including visits to Brussels, the Annual European Bar Presidents Conference in Vienna and the Commonwealth Lawyers Conference in Malta.

4. Bar Standards Board Report

Kathryn Stone, Chair – BSB, presented the Bar Standards Board report taken as read. The following was highlighted:

BSB Chair leaving

- Kathryn Stone OBE would be leaving the BSB in the summer following an appointment as HM Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Legal Services Board Regulatory Performance Assessment

- The Legal Services Board had published their annual regulatory performance assessment. Members were advised that there was more to do with a shared view with the LSB that change needed to happen at pace. Work would continue with the LSB to provide the assurance sought.

2025-26 Business Plan

- The BSB had published its annual Business Plan which detailed the activities and commitments for 2025-26.

Disbarment

- Members were advised that Barrister Navjot (Jo) Sidhu KC was ordered to be disbarred by an independent tribunal which concluded on 19 March 2025, following

three charges of professional misconduct brought by the Bar Standards Board being found proved at a previous hearing.

5. Statement by the Chief Executive

Malcom Cree, CEO of the Bar Council highlighted the following points:

- The Authorisation to Practise process was near completion.
- A meeting was held with City UK Legal Services Group, with discussions held on legal services regulation.
- The Officer elections process was underway, and members were reminded that the period to receive proposals of those standing for election was now open.

6. Treasurer's Report

Lucinda Orr, Treasurer, shared an overview of the February 2025 Management Accounts.

- The latest year end forecast showed a surplus of £171k, which was an improvement of £145k.
- There had been some large increases in staff costs at the BSB, associated with the reform programme.
- The increase in costs had been mitigated by additional income and savings within the Bar Council.

7. Sir Brian Leveson Independent Review of the Criminal Courts

Kirsty Brimelow KC provided an update on the Sir Brian Leveson Independent Review of the Criminal Courts and highlighted the following:

- There was consideration of a model of intermediate courts, which would remove a right to trial by jury for a number of cases and would have sitting arrangements of a recorder and two Justices.
- Additional discussions included classification of offences, diversion of cases away from the Crown Court and use of conditional cautions.

8. Bar Council Conference 2025

Philip Vollans, Circuit Junior, Midlands Circuit, provided an update on the Bar Council Conference 2025 and highlighted the following points:

- The Bar Conference 2025 was taking place on 7 June 2025 and was the first to be hosted by a Circuit.
- A summary of the itinerary was outlined, and information was available on the Midlands Circuit website.

9. Law Reform Committee

Celina Colquhoun, Vice Chair of the Law Reform Committee presented a report to the Bar Council, and highlighted the following points:

- The Law Reform Committee had responded to a number of consultations and calls for evidence, which were available to view on the Bar Council website.
- The 2024 Law Reform Essay competition was outlined. There were over 90 essays submitted, with six winning essays awarded.
- The Committee was on track to meet all the targets set out in its business plan.

10. Equality, Diversity & Social Mobility Committee

Members received and noted the Pro Bono and Social Responsibility Committee's report to the Bar Council.

Members were asked to note the welcome of the newly appointed Committee Vice Chair Nadia Motraghi KC and Elaine Banton was thanked for her contributions as the previous Committee Chair.

11. Education and Training Committee

Jacob Hallam KC, Co-Chair of the Education and Training Committee presented a report to the Bar Council, and highlighted the following points:

- The finals of the Bar Mock Trial had taken place on 22 March 2025. There were 3,000 students who had participated in the programme overall.
- Planning for the Bar Placement Week 2025 had commenced. There were currently 28 chambers offering 61 placements.

12. Advocate

Sharif Shivji KC, Chair of Advocate presented a report to the Bar Council, and highlighted the following points:

- There was a 24% increase in requests for pro bono assistance over the previous 12-month period and a key priority had been to expand services to enhance nationwide pro bono access.
- The Pro Bono Recognition List of England and Wales was outlined, with 4,844 people recognised on the List.
- The Pupil Pledge initiative ran for its second successful year in 2024, with 99 pupils having taken part.

13. Any other business

Items raised by members

Members raised and discussed matters relating to *the Leveson Report*. Members were asked to note that any additional input for consideration as part of Sir Brian Leveson's Independent Review of the Criminal Courts was welcomed for inclusion with ongoing communication.

14. Date of next meeting:

Tuesday, 24 June 2025, 17:00