



The Bar Council

Meeting of the Bar Council

Saturday 15 November 2025 at 11:00

The Bar Council, 289-293 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7HZ,
held via Video Conference

Present:

Barbara Mills KC	Chair of the Bar	BMKC
Kirsty Brimelow KC	Vice-Chair of the Bar	KBKC
Lucinda Orr	Treasurer	LO
Prof. Christopher Bones	Chair, BSB	CB
Philip Stott	Co-Chair, Legal Services Committee	PS
Marion Smith KC	Chair, International Committee	MSKC
Michael Ivers	Chair, Bar Human Rights Committee	MI
William Dean	Co-Chair, Bar Representation Committee	WD

Members in attendance (in alphabetical order):

Abigail Bright, Adam Baradon KC, Alex Gunning KC, Alexandra Sutton, Alice Hands, Amanda Jepson, Amrit Dhanoa, Amy Mannion, Anna Soubry, Anton van Dellen, Anushka Kangesu, Aoife Kennedy, Asad Maqsood, Barbara Connolly KC, Bella Dennis, Cait McDonagh, Caroline Rees KC, Cathrine Grubb, Charlie Woodhouse KC, Christina Michalos KC, Claire Davies KC, Cleon Catsambis, David Christopher Taylor, David Bunting, David Grant KC, Deshpal Panesar KC, Dilpreet Dhanoa, Eleena Misra KC, Emily Formby KC, Emma Hughes, Emma Southern, Emma Torr, Faisel Sadiq, Fenner Moeran KC, Gaynor Wood, Guy Williamson, Harpreet Sandhu KC, Harry O'Sullivan, Harry Stratton, Heidi Stonecliffe KC, Henry King KC, Hollie Gilbery, Ian Clarke KC, Ivor Collett, Jaime Hamilton KC, James Hines KC, James Lewis KC, James Paterson, James Pickering KC, James Roberts KC, James Robinson, 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, Martyn McLeish, Mary Prior KC, Matthew Keliris-Thomas, Melissa Coutino, Michael Polak, Mike Jones KC, Minka Braun, Dr Mirza Ahmad, Nicholas Johnson KC, Owen Thomas KC, Paul Powlesland, Philip Moser KC, Philip Stott, Riel Karmy-Jones KC, Rory Brown, Ruth Kirby KC, Saira Kabir

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www.barcouncil.org.uk

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Sheikh KC, Samantha Singer, Sara Ibrahim, Sarah Gaunt, Sarah Gerrard, Sarah Williams, Sean Jones KC, Sean Summerfield, Shazia Akhtar, Shobana Iyer, Simon Atkinson, Simon Regis, Stephanie Hall, Stephen Kenny KC, Tahmina Rahman, Tomas McGarvey, Tony Singla KC, Winston Hunter KC.

In attendance:

Justina Naik	Governance (minutes)	JN
Malcolm Cree	Chief Executive Officer	MC
Mark Neale	Director General, BSB	MN
Phil Robertson	Director of Policy	PR
Sally Burnell	Director of Communications	SB

Apologies were received from:

Aimee Stokes, Andrew Howe, Brittany Buckell, Elaine Banton, Emma Walker, Daniel Sheridan, Peter Grieves-Smith, Jasmine Chan, James Kane, Jeffrey Jupp KC, Maddy Charlesworth, Natasha Shotunde, Rachel Crasnow KC, Shoshana Mitchell, Yaa Dankwa Ampadu-Sackey.

1. Conflicts of interest and announcements

None noted.

2. Minutes of the last meetings and matters arising

The minutes from the meeting held on 13 September 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:

Bar Council Leaver

The Chair thanked Bar Council member James Roberts KC, who was outgoing Chair and Honorary Life Vice-President of the Family Law Bar Association, and would be stepping down from the Bar Council.

Legal Aid Agency Cyber-attack

The Chair highlighted the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) Cyber Attack as a significant matter for resolve throughout the year. Members were advised that the LAA were aiming for restoring access to civil/family billing.

Progress on Priority Areas

The Chair highlighted progress on three priority areas throughout the year, Family Law, Equality & Diversity and Wellbeing:

- Family Law – Engagement with Ministers included a Parliamentary roundtable on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), and an invitation was received to sit on a Family Justice Board
- Equality & Diversity – The Harman Review was welcomed with a Commissioner for Conduct role under recruitment
- Wellbeing – Wellbeing scores had improved in the most recent Barrister survey and pilots were being explored for trauma informed training.

Commonwealth Law Conference, 2029

The Chair updated members that the locations under consideration for the Commonwealth Law Conference 2029, included London, Uganda, Sri Lanka, and Halifax.

4. Bar Standards Board Report

Professor Christopher Bones, BSB Chair, presented the Bar Standards Board report taken as read. The following points were highlighted:

Wellbeing

The GCB Chair was thanked for her contribution to the promotion of wellbeing and improvements for the profession.

Harman Review

The positive response from the Bar Council in relation to the Rt Hon. the Baroness Harman KC's Independent Review of Bullying and Harassment was welcomed. Members were asked to note that a joint Bar Council and BSB Board Level Steering Group had been established to ensure alignment of outcomes. Discussions had commenced with the Bar Tribunal and Adjudication Service who would review sexual harassment cases, sanctions and training.

Operational Performance

There had been a significant increase of reports into the regulator and resources had been redeployed in order to support the enforcement team. These were noted as supplemental measures to the Reform Programme.

Further to a performance matter raised at a previous Bar Council meeting, members discussed and thanked Mark Neale for his welcome address of concerns and open dialogue.

5. Statement by the Chief Executive

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

Practising Certificate Fee (PCF) Consultation

The PCF consultation was due to go live within the following week.

Success Highlights

Members were advised of the following areas of successful outcomes throughout the year:

- Communications – significant positive media coverage of the work of the Chair
- Training and Events – a substantial increase in income from events
- Pupillage Fair – a successful event held, and many thanks expressed to those who had supported and contributed to the event
- Recruitment – this was underway for the Commissioner for Conduct and new CEO.

6. Treasurer's Report

Lucinda Orr, Treasurer, presented an overview of the September 2025 Management Accounts:

- A budget surplus of £50k was planned for the current year, however the current forecast showed a deficit of £208k
- This change was related to additional non-staff costs from the BSB and the Defined Benefits Pension buy-out
- The additional costs had been partially mitigated by additional income, and it was the current assumption that further mitigation of these costs would bring the figures closer to a breakeven position by the year end.

7. Commission for Conduct Role

The Chief Executive presented a paper seeking approval, by way of extraordinary resolution, for the establishment of the new GCB Officer Role: Commissioner for Conduct, which required amendments to the GCB Constitution.

Members considered the constitutional changes required and approved all changes, subject to the addition of one further amendment to include a definition for the role in the GCB Constitution. The extraordinary resolution was therefore passed.

8. Legal Services Committee

Philip Stott, Co-Chair of the Legal Services Committee presented a report to the Bar Council, and highlighted the following points:

- Bar Council representatives had been nominated to sit on the Crown Court Improvement Group (CCIG)'s newly formed working groups
- A formal response from the Government was awaited in relation to recommendations from Sir Brian Leveson's Independent Review of the Criminal Courts

- Following the decision to intervene in the case of *XGY v Chief Constable of Sussex Police & Crown Prosecution Service*, the Court of Appeal ruled in favour of the Bar, restating the principle of core immunity for barristers.

9. International Committee

Marion Smith KC, Chair of the International Committee presented a report to the Bar Council, and highlighted the following points:

- The Committee's former Chair Hugh Mercer KC was elected judge to the European Court of Human Rights, in respect of the United Kingdom in June 2025. Marion Smith KC had succeeded as Committee Chair, appointed 1 August 2025.
- A successful business development visit took place in the United Arab Emirates, to showcase the expertise of the family bar. The Chair and international team were thanked for their contribution to the visit.

10. Bar Human Rights Committee

Members received and noted the Bar Human Rights Committee's report to the Bar Council.

11. Bar Representation Committee

William Dean, Co-Chair of the Bar Representation Committee presented a report to the Bar Council, and highlighted the following points:

- Two new business partners had been contracted in the previous 6 months, with current strong interest from other organisations.
- The Services and Communications teams were thanked for their efforts
- Compared to the previous year, there was a slight increase in the number of barrister subscribers to the Bar Representation Fee (8,487), however the percentage of practising barristers of this number was slightly down (44.4%)
- The Bar Conference took place on Circuit for the first time (Birmingham), headline speakers included the Rt Hon. the Baroness Harman KC and the Lady Chief Justice

- Thanks were expressed to the Chambers Management Panel (which produces guidance and model policies for sets of chambers), and members were reminded of the Services Appointments Panel (free referral service) and encouraged to become registered and added to the list of mediators for appointment.

12. Any other business

Chambers UK Bar Awards

The Chair recognised Jason Pitter KC, who had been named Crime Silk of the year at the Chambers UK Bar Awards 2025.

Well wishes to the Chair

Noting this as the last Bar Council meeting for Barbara Mills KC as GCB Chair, the Chief Executive thanked the Chair for her contribution to the General Council of the Bar throughout her term and wished her well in future.

Members expressed sincere appreciation for the impact and contribution to the Bar achieved over this time.

13. Date of next meeting:

Wednesday, 3 December 2025, 17:30