



The Bar Council

Meeting of the Bar Council

Minutes of meeting: Saturday 24 April, Microsoft Teams dial-in

Present

Derek Sweeting QC	Chair of the Bar	DSQC
Mark Fenhalls QC	Vice Chair of the Bar	MFQC
Lorinda Long	Treasurer	LL
Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC	Attorney General	The AG
Max Hill QC	Director of Public Prosecutions	The DPP
Paul Harris SC	Chair, Hong Kong Bar Association	PHSC
Baroness Blackstone	Chair, Bar Standards Board	BTB
Andrew Mitchell QC	Vice Chair, Bar Standards Board	AMQC
Rebecca Wilkie	Advocate	RW
Shyam Papat	Advocate	SP
Iain MacDonald	Law Reform Committee	IM
Nick Vineall QC	Education & Training Committee	NVQC
Elaine Banton	Equality and Diversity & Social Mobility Committee	EB

Members in attendance (listed alphabetically)

Christine Agnew QC; Dr Mirza Ahmad; Stuart Alford QC; Robin Allen QC; Simon Anderson; Nick Bacon QC; Michael Bellis; Philip Bennetts QC; Minka Braun; Ian Brookes-Howells; Alex Carr; Mark Chaloner; Sydney Chawatama; Ben Close; Richard Cole; Ivor Collett; Barbara Connolly QC; James Corbet Burcher; Tim Devlin; Emily Formby QC; Laura Gould; Andrew Granville Stafford; Birgitte Hagem; Amanda Hardy QC; Michael Harwood; Neil Hawes QC; Michael Hayton QC; Emma Heath; Isabel Hitching QC; Kim Hollis QC; Sarah Holmes-Willis; Matthew Howarth; Shobana Iyer; Sean Jones QC; Susan Jones; Faith Julian; Joanne Kane; James Keeley; Stephen Kenny QC; Henry King (alt for Sonia Tolaney QC); James Kitching; Cyrus Larizadeh QC; Donal Lawler; Edite Ligere; Ted Loveday; Kate Lumsdon QC; Tim Manley; Athena Markides; Eleanor Mawrey; Oliver May; Louise McCullough; Martyn McLeish; Christina Michalos QC; Andrew Morgan; Philip Moser QC; James Mulholland QC; David O'Mahony; Grace Ong; Lucinda Orr; Deshpal Panesar QC; Francesca Perselli; Alison Pickup; Michael Polak; Charlotte Pope-Williams; Jonathan Rees; Robert Rhodes QC; Ryan Richter; Lisa Roberts QC; Natasha Shotunde; Joe Smouha QC; Kate Spence; Gordon Stables; Jessica Stephens QC; Heidi Stonecliffe QC; Philip Stott; Jason

Sugarman QC; John-Paul Swoboda; Ben Symons; Leanne Targett-Parker; David Taylor; Steven Thompson QC; Linda Turnbull; Emma Walker; Colin West QC

In attendance:

	Wilf White	Director of Communications and Public Engagement, Bar Standards Board	WW
	Piran Dhillon-Starkings	Adviser to the Chair of the Bar	PDS
	Carolyn Entwistle	Director of Services	CE
	Phil Robertson	Director of Policy	PR
	Steven Rudaini	Director of Comms & Marketing	SRu
	Christian Wisskirchen	Head of Policy, International	CW
	Natalie Zara	Head of Governance	NZ
Minutes	Samantha Anderson	Executive Officer	SA

Apologies were received from

Zayd Ahmed; Lorna Badham; Kate Brunner QC; Zoe Saunders; Jacqueline Thomas QC; Sonia Tolaney (alt); Anton van Dellen

Welcome to the Attorney General who is joining for his first meeting as the Attorney General. The DPP will be speaking and will take questions, but not on the PSC Bill.

Paul Harris SC will speak.

1. Conflicts of Interest

None were declared.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes from the meeting of Saturday 30 January were approved.

3. Statement by the Attorney General

The AG thanked colleagues for inviting him to join this meeting; it was wonderful to see so many joining and taking part in these. The AG has been delighted to attend these meetings in his previous role as the SG. It is a testament to the dedication of members to the profession and the rule of law, that they partake in these meetings and for the work put in outside of remunerated hours. The AG appreciates the positive and constructive relationship he has with the Bar. It is incredibly helpful to have open and honest conversations with professional colleagues on big issues that affect us all, and it is important that we can speak in this way. The AG thanked colleagues for their unfailing efforts, in particular over the last 12 months of the pandemic. There is a huge breadth of topics in which the profession is involved, especially work undertaken to assist in keeping the courts up and running across all jurisdictions. If it was not for you and others in the profession, this would not have been possible. Your contribution is recognised not only by the AG, but also by the Prime Minister

and government as a whole. There is no doubt how incredibly challenging this continues to be. The working relationship between the profession and the government will continue to be crucial and understanding the pressures that you are facing is a vital part of the recovery programme for the government moving forward.

DSQC thanked the AG for his address and expressed his gratitude that the justice system is prominent on the agenda for government, as well as the recovery of the profession after the pandemic.

4. Statement by the Director of Public Prosecutions

Max Hill QC spoke. The official statement can be found on the [CPS website](#).

The DPP commented that it was good to see so many members joining the meeting; it is more important than ever, that the Bar is in strong, capable and committed hands.

The DPP thanked members for everything they have done; the pandemic is far from over, but there is hope that we can look forward with cautious optimism. We must reflect on the way we have responded and adapted to the challenges we have faced, which is nothing short of remarkable. The CPS have played a central role in ensuring the essential work of delivering justice has continued whilst doing what we can to protect our people, our partners and the public.

The events of the past year have highlighted the value of working constructively together and gave thanks to everyone for working in partnership with the CPS over this time.

The [Statement of Principles](#) was published in 2020 through which we agreed how we would work with the Bar during the pandemic and its recovery period. These principles have formed the foundation of a collaborative effort which has seen the Bar support us as we manage the significant increase in our caseload and has allowed the CPS to continue to offer opportunities to work with us. Another significant measure was to move swiftly, and this was done during the first week of the first lockdown – to temporarily adjust the fee schemes to mitigate the impact of Covid on the Bar. Our mutual understanding, of how we can work together to uphold the rule of law and deliver justice, will allow us to emerge from this crisis with confidence.

Over the next 12 months, our focus will be on mitigating the impact of the pandemic and supporting our operational frontline. We will continue to work with the Bar and other partners to tackle the backlog in the system whilst maintaining quality of decision making. This will not be easy, but we have done a lot over the last 12 months and we have been engaged in cross-criminal justice recovery and discussing how we can, collectively, tackle the backlog and the implications for all parts of the system. You have all been busy putting forward your views and this is gratefully received.

The court recovery plan involves maximising the use of current court rooms and providing additional capacity whether through Nightingale Courts or existing estate. If this means

there is a surge in cases being dealt with, then those on our Advocate Panel can expect us to look to you in great numbers and I am confident that our relationship with you will withstand and hopefully be strengthened by this latest challenge. In dealing with the quantity, we cannot and will not sacrifice quality; you have maintained your high standards throughout the pandemic and the CPS knows that you can be relied upon to ensure that continues.

We must continue to be conscious of the impact of the backlog on certain cases, especially RASSO cases where delays could be particularly difficult. The DPP was pleased that in the recent Judicial Review on the CPS approach to prosecuting rape, the Court of Appeal dismissed the claims on all accounts.

However, there is deep public concern that while the number of rape allegations have increased, the number going to court has fallen. The judicial review outcome means we can now give our focus to the extensive programme of work underway to address this problem. We must rebuild public confidence that every allegation of rape or sexual assault will be fully investigated by the police and will go before the courts whenever the legal test is met. There is unprecedented focus on this issue in central government following the death of Sarah Everard and the conversation about women's safety that followed. We are engaged in discussions to agree an end-to-end series of system improvements and need to work closely with our partners to jointly deliver improvements and find better ways to support victims. The DPP is grateful for members' involvement in these important cases.

The [2025 Advocacy Strategy](#) was launched in March 2021 and sets out an ambitious vision of how we see the future of advocacy in the CPS. It recognises that working collaboratively with our strategic partners is essential for delivering advocacy which meets the needs of the modern criminal justice system and facilitates our core role of fair and independent prosecutions. Members were encouraged to read it, though the DPP highlighted some important commitments.

Foremost, our pledge is to maintain a mixed economy of advocate, to meet our needs and support longevity in the provision of quality advocacy services. It is clear that raising standards and having high quality advocates at all levels and across all court venues, benefits not only the CPS but all participants in the criminal justice system.

We remain committed to the principle of instructing the right advocate for the right case, recognising the value and importance of having a talented, adaptable, and diverse cadre of advocates delivering justice for the public we serve.

Good progress has already been made with Bar colleagues on work to improve the diversity of our Advocate Panel and offer greater opportunities for progression.

We recently hosted an open evening for prospective [Treasury Counsel monitorees](#), and will be introducing a development programme for those interested in becoming Treasury Counsel in the future.

Another key development will be our new Briefing Principles which will set out the factors relevant to determining the right advocate for the right case. The principles recognise the importance of equality of opportunity and the role the CPS plays in supporting the progression of all advocates.

A new CPS Diversity and Inclusion Statement for the Bar will be published in the coming months. The Statement, which is being developed with Bar colleagues, will outline our requirements and expectations and will apply to all prosecuting advocates and sets of chambers whose members prosecute, or seek to prosecute on behalf of the CPS.

In all of this work, progress can only be made if we continue to engage openly, honestly and at all levels. We must be clear about our values and the high standards that we expect of those who prosecute, praising quality and also holding people to account where performance is not good enough.

This last year has tested us all professionally and personally. The DPP added that it has caused him to reflect on what is important in our justice system and he was pleased to discuss this at an event with the Bingham Centre last autumn. The CPS has remained firmly rooted in fair and independent prosecutions, which underpin the rule of law. Independence alone is not enough, it needs to be carefully balanced with being collaborative, responsive and adaptable, to make sure that the criminal justice system is here to serve everyone.

The DPP looks forward to working collaboratively with everyone in the challenges ahead that we will face.

DSQC thanked the DPP for his address, adding that the Bar is grateful for the support of the CPS over the last year.

Questions were presented via the Chat function on Teams:

GS: the CPS the CPS currently have pulled HCAs back in-house to act as Reviewing Lawyers. There is now sufficient prosecution work for Grade 1-2 practitioners to establish practices in crime. Should we encourage them to do so (rather than to practice in Family or Civil areas), and take on more criminal pupils, or will this situation reverse leaving them without this work in the near future? The DPP confirmed HCA will return to advocacy. It is key for our people to have their return to career progression, and this doesn't change the offer to the external Bar. The workload will be bigger rather than smaller and there should be no concern about the level of work for the next year. There will be more advocacy for the external Bar.

OM: Is there a reason the approach you just outlined for sexual offences (full investigation followed by being prosecuted when the full code test is met) wasn't already the approach of the CPS? The DPP clarified that there are three different phases; it doesn't mean that we failed to prioritise rape and sexual offences in the past, sexual offending and domestic abuse cases were always a priority. However, we want to triage and prioritise cases effectively, to make sure the focus on sexual offences continues and is doubled down on.

AM: What is the reaction to the LCJ position on CVP and remote appearances? The DPP added in the Chat function: Listing, and the manner in which cases are listed, is a judicial function. However, in all of his announcements the LCJ has continued to recognise the importance of tech advancements, and the part that remote hearings (CVP) can play in supporting our work to bear down on the backlog. It is a question of balance, and of course judicial superintendence of the interests of justice. My strong view is that CVP should continue to be used whenever and wherever possible for pre-trial hearings.

In July 2020, a speech was given by the Lord Chancellor at Mansion House relating to advocacy and successive announcements were made in January and beyond. Legislation has been put in place for remote hearings, with a sunset clause for two years, so will be in place until March 2022. The legislative scheme remains that even though we are coming out of the backlog and Covid restrictions, there must be many occasions when remote hearings will be the best way forward. This is one of the five strands of the CPS 2025 Advocacy Strategy, however the decision rests with the Judges.

GS: CVP will be essential going forward to enable the reduced criminal bar to cover the increasing throughput of work in the courts. The decision on the appearance via CVP of advocates should be bar led, not judge led.

MP: The problems with the interest of justice test for the CPS is that it leaves us at the whims of regional judges and the ability of our clerks to actually get a response from list offices / The problems with the interest of justice test for the CVP is that it leaves us at the whims of regional judges and the ability of our clerks to actually get a response from list office.

DSQC concluded that we have to acknowledge that listing is ultimately for the judiciary, but the judiciary are prepared to be collaborative. There are often good reasons why judges don't allow CVP hearings.

5. BSB Report

BTB highlighted that the report shows that the number of pupillages registered in 2020 fell by 35% and whilst we are seeing some signs of recovery this year, both the BSB and Bar Council are concerned about the ongoing impact of the pandemic, especially on the publicly funded Bar. We are working together to consider whether there is anything more we can do to sustain the number of pupillages in the future.

The report also refers to the review of the BTAS Sanctions Guidance which covers every area of professional misconduct and began a year ago. We understand that the area of sexual misconduct is where most concern has been expressed. The BSB and BTAS exchanged letters with the Bar Council and there is a [consultation](#) on the review which BTB hopes members will get involved in.

BTB also mentioned the BSB Business Plan, noting that she is hopeful that members of Bar Council will welcome the intention to focus on the core regulatory activities and to reprioritise some of the new policy work. There is also intention to minimise the BSB budget.

There is important policy work to be undertaken but the priority of the BSB must be on its core functions and in particular, on ensuring that reports alleging professional misconduct and request for waivers are dealt with more swiftly.

Recruitment is underway for new members for the Independent Decision-Making Body (IDB), closing date 9am on Monday 3 May, and the Tribunal Representation Panel, closing date 5pm on Friday 7 May.

BTB finished by confirming that an [independent review](#) commissioned to look into the 2020 August BPTC exams will be published in the week beginning 3 May.

6. Statement by the Chair

DSQC notified members that the [Working Lives Survey 2021](#) has just been released and the deadline for responses is 18 May; whilst he is aware of the ‘survey fatigue’ that everyone is experiencing, this survey covers a wide range of areas and it has been discussed with the SBAs and Circuits. Where relevant, the data from the survey will be shared.

Many Bar Council members are involved in dealing with consultations, many with short deadlines and thanks were given for the hard work that is going into the responses. We have requested an extension for the IRAL consultation, to have more developed thinking, but even with an extended consultation period, this could still be difficult.

The [Sustainability Network](#) has been launched and is off to a really good start. This will become increasingly important.

Although we aren’t able to travel currently, the international work is moving forward, quickly, and we are doing a lot remotely with India; watch this space for a MoU with India.

DSQC has been in regular contact with Essex Court Chambers, members of government, and the law officers in relation to the PRC sanctions. The Four Bars will release a joint statement condemning the sanctions; we are not letting this go as it is an important issue.

Post-meeting note: the [joint statement](#) was released on 27 April 2021.

DSQC confirmed that GMC agreed the following barristers as representatives for the Attorney General’s Regional Panel Selection Boards for the London A, B and C Panels of Junior Counsel: Benjamin Aina QC, Kate Brunner QC and Peter Joyce QC

DSQC introduced Paul Harris SC, Chair of the Hong Kong Bar Association to the meeting. PHSC spoke to the members, giving thanks for inviting him to speak and explained that due to the new national security law, which was introduced in HK last year, he is under certain constraints as to what he can do or say.

The HK system, until 1997 was British overseas territory and when returned, HK was considered one country with two systems, where HK had its own legal system – the law allowed China to keep HK with its own legal system and HK refers to English precedents

in all its details, including the Bar Council in its form. For over 20 years, this was regarded to be working well, until 2019 when a situation developed because of the dispute regarding HK becoming democratic and the immediate effect of this was an extradition order; people are required to have visas in order to cross and there was a proposal for an Extradition Bill to allow extradition from HK to mainland China. The Extradition Bill was withdrawn but sadly, and counterproductively, the street demonstrations continued and became increasingly violent. The response of the China Central People government and HK government it to enact this national security law even though despite the street demonstrations dying out before the law was passed (partly due to Covid). The effect of the national security law is still being worked out in the courts and PHSC himself is involved in 3 cases as counsel.

Many of you will have read reports of things going wrong and the most constructive thing to do here would be to point out some things that haven't gone wrong.

An excess of 95% of the HK legal system is still operating as an unquestionably proper legal system and it is at least as good as it's ever been. The system has never been perfect, but for many years, but it has been a place where one has the best chance for a fair trial and generally speaking, that has not changed. PHSC has seen a number of statements made in England, that the HK system is corrupt and/or broken but this is untrue and some of you will know HK and hopefully will have a chance to come here again and see this.

There is a question over British judges who sit in HK's highest court. HK's High Court is comprised of the Court of First Instance and the Court of Appeal. Above the Court of Appeal is the Court of Final Appeal which has both permanent and non-permanent judges; the non-permanent judges are extremely distinguished judges and the highest qualified in the Common Law world. PHSC stated this is reassurance to him, that if the cases he works on are raised to the Court of Final Appeal, they will be considered by judges of that calibre. PHSC stated that the worst possible thing for those practising in HK, would be if the foreign judges who practice there, leave; PHSC emphasised how utterly damaging that could be and confirmed that barristers and solicitors working in HK would feel that same way. The British judges working in HK are invaluable.

Questions were raised via the Teams Chat Function:

MP: How can the young Bar of England and Wales help/support the young bar of Hong Kong?
PHSC confirmed they have an International Practice Committee, chaired by Hugh Kam, which is about maintaining links. They have been constrained by Covid and although there isn't an overseas ban, there is a 21-day quarantine period upon returning to HK. The vaccination programme is in progress and is moving quickly so there is hope that the quarantine period will be reduced or removed, so the work of the committee can continue more effectively. There is also a Young Barristers' Committee chaired by Geoffrey Yeung; he, along with Hugh would be delighted to be involved with the YBC in England and Wales.

CMQC: Is there any help that you would suggest the Inns of Court could provide to support the HK Bar in particular in relation to the issue of the withdrawal of Judges you referred to? PHSC noted that this is an issue in England. In HK, the overwhelming view is that the overseas judges are an asset and we want to keep them. PHSC is not very familiar with what the Inns of Court do at the moment so was unable to make a comment on that. There has been a political battle on this issue and PHSC would be open to contact from the Inns if there is a way for them to support further. Guy Fetherstonhaugh QC added 'the topic of British judges sitting on the Hong Kong CFA is due to be debated between Lords Neuberger and Falconer at 6pm on 6 May - details on how to sign up in Bar Talk.

DSQC thanked PHSC for being extremely illuminating on HK and the particular issues that he raised.

7. Treasurer's Report

A report was shared via Teams and explained by LL.

The Bar Council is in a good position to face the ongoing challenges of the pandemic and this position is much better than we thought it would be. We have successfully negotiated the CBILS loan which has a government guarantee, and those funds were received on 31 March.

The PCF collection is nearing completion. It will be a few years before we get back to the pre-pandemic levels, but the numbers are looking better than we expected. 9% of barristers have dropped a PCF band and we assume this is probably as a result of the pandemic. The main areas which have been affected are crime; personal injury; immigration and employment.

Additional income has come from more PCF and BRF than originally budgeted and there have been considerable savings over the last year; there has been a total of £1.499million in savings, of which £943k is for Bar Council, £473k for the BSB and £83k for Resources Group.

8. Changes to the Constitution / Standing Orders – ToR for GMC (and others): for approval

NZ gave background to the changes that were being proposed and DSQC agreed that all were sensible proposals.

The proposals were accepted by Bar Council.

9. Advocate Report

RW reported that the Bar's readiness to participate with Advocate has been extraordinary and we have been proud to facilitate this. We know the pandemic has brought and continues to bring new issues to the public. Payment holidays have been withdrawn which has seen an increase in searches for County Court Judgements being made through Citizens Advice.

Additionally, divorce rates have risen through the pandemic. And advice given by the RCJ suggests that the figure for domestic abuse cases pre-pandemic was 900, whereas in 2020, that figure has risen to 7000 cases. Similar figures are being seen by Advocate.

SP highlighted that the need for Advocate is increasing and they have received 300 new applications within the last month alone. In 2020, through Advocate's core casework service alone, the Bar provided over 1400 pieces of advice, drafting and representation; a 79% increase on the year before.

Recent case examples include a lady obtaining an injunction against a former employer, a single mother for personal injury, wrongful death of carbon monoxide poisoning, and an elderly man whose ceiling collapsed. Two further cases, a family came to us needing help as due to a language barrier they had not managed to find a legal advisor for their 8-month-old child who was on life support and the hospital had made the decision to turn it off. We were able to provide legal advice, the night before the hearing – if it had not been for Advocate, the family would not have had the possibility to present anything to the judge. The other, related to an older woman whose husband had passed and his family were claiming that the two had not been married; the casework team recognised a need for consistency. The tribunal was slow at organising a video hearing and the other side were not forthcoming with their documentation, but by having someone in her corner, she has secured counsel from Blackstone chambers and her hearing is next month.

There is a diverse and varying need for support and volunteers. There is a massive backlog of employment cases and how they are dealt with will be a problem as the backlog in courts will affect this and is another area where it is not viable to do anything soon as there is a problem with the capacity of judges.

DSQC added that he is aware that Michael Mylonas QC took on the case of the 8-month-old in hospital and is astonished at the lack of funding through the LAA which meant that they could not support this case. The LAA have been contacted about this. It is sobering that the family could've been in front of a judge, fighting for their child, and not having any legal representation if it hadn't been for Advocate.

IBH asked whether the fees that people can voluntarily add when they pay the PCF goes towards the services of Advocate. RW confirmed this is the case and they have seen a 40% increase, which is astonishing as everyone has had a poor year, adding that Advocate are hugely grateful for these contributions as it makes up around half of the funding for Advocate.

PR added via the chat function: Becks and Shyam: huge thanks for your engagement with the staff at the Bar Council, which really is better than ever. Particular thanks for all the help you have given us recently with the litigants in person research we are currently planning.

10. Law Reform Committee Report

IM expressed recognition for the hard work of the LRC members, vice Chairs and the executives, Eleanore Hughes and Sarah Richardson.

The report shows the very wide range of consultations that the committee has responded to over the last year. These are listed in paragraph 2, from a-p and can be found on the Bar Council [website](#).

The Independent Review of Administration Law (IRAL) hasn't gone away and some of the LRC members have been co-opted onto the panel. We are currently waiting to hear whether the 6 weeks we were given for the consultation will be extended, however we have a number of drafters on hand to deal with it, so whether or not an extension is granted, we will have enough time to respond.

We are currently finding that with an emergency, ministers and others think people can work at that pace all the time, so as we emerge from the pandemic and from the emergency state, there should be a shift to the time that we are given to respond to legislations etc. The IRAL is just one case in point.

There has been significant increase in the liaison between the committee and parliamentarians, the Justice Select Committee in particular, which is a real step up and a step forward. It has given us the opportunity to get involved in the process that we didn't have beforehand, and we have increased the routes of communication through the pandemic.

The committee is starting to plan the Law Reform Lecture for 2021; Lord Carnwath gave the lecture in 2020 and focussed on judicial review and the committee hopes to be able to broaden on the topic this year. The lecture will be a virtual event again this year, to allow for the increased attendance seen last year and will likely be on the topic of the environment.

IM confirmed that the committee has a team looking into the calls for views on artificial intelligence; the third consultation has been responded to, however urged members to let him know if there is anything in particular that we should be looking at. SI highlighted that the LSB has set up a new report on legal services and law tech; Stuart McMillan has just sent this out to the IT panel however the Regulatory Review Working Group is working on it.

11. Education and Training Committee Report

NVQC gave thanks in particular to Rose Malleson (committee executive) who looks after us so well, and also to the vice-chair, Joanne Wicks QC and the rest of the committee, almost all of whom are regular attendees, which makes a huge difference when the same people attend the meetings regularly.

One of the committee's big jobs in the last year was the response to the [LSB Call for Evidence on Ongoing Competence](#). There is a real problem at the moment with the LSB, which is

beginning to see itself as a regulator for all legal services providers rather than a body to check that the regulators are working efficiently. There is no good evidence for further testing or demonstrating of ongoing competence. They have produced a [summary of responses](#) and we are concerned that they aren't really listening, and we will have further battle from them.

We recognise that there has been some sensible and welcome flexibility from the BSB to get over the problems surrounding pupillage that have been caused by the pandemic and we are getting a picture of the look of it. The headline figure provided by the BSB showed a 35% drop for pupillages commencing in 2020 compared to 2019 and there is improvement this year. We have seen more organisations advertising this year than who offered places last year. The recruitment timetable is the same, whether the Pupillage Gateway is used or not. And the gateway figures are striking; in 2021, there were 3300 applicants for 246 pupillages, and whilst this is not many more pupillages than were advertised last year, there is a problem with disparity for such a large income of applicants to a small outgoing of successful candidates.

We carried out a pupillage survey in March which had a 57% response rate. The [report](#) showed that 83% of responders felt supported by their chambers through the pandemic and although the pupils aren't in the same room as their supervisors, felt they had gone out of their way to provide support.

The pupillage Fair was delivered virtually in 2020 and we were sceptical as to whether this would work, however it was surprisingly successful; it was clear, at least from students, that it works really well. There were more attenders than we have had previously and a mixed demographic. Whilst the students liked it, exhibitors provided mixed views, however we have decided that the event will be run virtually again this year as there are strong advantages to do it this way.

DSQC gave thanks to NVQC for chairing the committee as well as the regulatory review working group and congratulated the Training & Events team for the great event they held last year.

SI added, via the Chat function: The IT Panel are also looking into training for pupils and the Bar to deal with Remote hearings (prep and presentation). Probably something that would be mandatory in training for the future?

12. Equality, Diversity and Social Mobility Committee Report

EB gave thanks to the very busy committee members and to Sam Mercer and Savannah Sevenzo for sorting the committee as well as the Race Working Group (RWG). Everyone is working collaboratively, and the committee has been very active. A number of the committee's initiatives are expressed within the report.

We have been actively concerned with monitoring the differential impact of Covid and the RWG has been very busy looking at policies that we have produced to encourage chambers to look at aspects of EDSM that they may not have previously been aware of. We have encouraged discussions relating to race and go into depth and details for chambers to deliver more initiatives around these issues.

A number of chambers have signed up to the [10,000 Black Interns](#) programme and we hope that the mini pupillages on offer with this, be extended. We are hopeful that those involved will get to see what happens in chambers, spend time with barristers' clerks and go to court etc. EB confirmed that if there are any member's chambers looking to get involved in this initiative, to get in touch with Sam Mercer and we can take it forward from there.

We are working with Harry Matovu QC on the [Charter for Black Talent](#) which was founded last year, to establish how Bar Council can best support the initiative and it is gaining traction.

The Accelerator Programme is moving forward, and we are keen at looking at fairer allocation of work. We want to make sure we have a details piece of work in relation to enquiries, appointments, allocation and distribution of work, once on panels.

On judicial diversity, the Pre-Application Judicial Education (PAJE) initiative is popular, and we are offering another course over the summer this year. We will be doing key pieces of work on this and have spoken with DSQC on how we would like to take this forward and how Bar Council should support to increase judicial diversity based on the Justice report recommendations.

The Bar Council Leadership Programme is very popular and very active. The first programme is due for completion in June this year and we are pleased that everyone involved is keen for it to progress forward.

There are a number of activities being planned for this year and the RWG in particular are meeting with sub-committees to see how we can gain the momentum on diversity.

One of the areas that falls within a number of different committees and one that we'd like to join up to see what is being done across the committees, is social mobility. The IAmTheBar campaign is with the Bar Council Comms team and we are looking into mentorships, access to mini-pupillage schemes etc. The RWG work will have a knock-on effect on social mobility which is really important.

IBH noted that Middle Temple have recently set up a [Diversity and Inclusion committee](#); EB confirmed that the committee has been working with Middle Temple quite a bit to ensure we are all working toward similar goals. Via the Chat function on Teams, CC confirmed the Planning and Environment Bar Association has also just set up a working group, so will be in touch with the committee. Additionally, AHQC confirmed the *ChBA, COMBAR and Tech Bar* have established a *Black Inclusion Working Group* who have undertaken a significant survey and

we have been talking to Phil Robertson this week about sharing our data. We also have members of this group on the Bar Council Working Group.

Questions were presented via the Chat function on Teams:

JKe: What is being done in respect of social mobility and the JAC and becoming a Bencher? EB confirmed that we could see more mobility within the Inns and we should be looking at all of the Inns on this issue.

EFQC: At PIBA SBA we are also setting up and looking into the diversity issues and what we can do in the SBA so I would like to connect and reach out to Elaine - join the Inns as well and SBAs too.

MB: Inner Temple have just had an event (last week) explaining how to become a Bencher in order to make the process more accessible (<https://www.innertemple.org.uk/who-we-are/how-we-operate/benchers-election/>). CMQC: Gray's has also changed it's process for Bencher recruitment and members can apply. PMQC: Annual Trinity Term Elections of Masters of the Bench Nominations and applications for the election of new Masters of the Bench in 2021 are open and will be accepted until 5pm on Friday 7 May 2021.

CMQC: Could you tell us a bit more about the Women In Law Pledge and your view of the current take up rate for the Women In Law Pledge? I wasn't previously aware of it and wondered if it needed a bit more publicity. DSQC confirmed that there has been a lot of recent up take on this and the recent trend is an increasing one, however more publicity on it is always a good idea. Information is included on the Bar Council [website](#).

13. Any Other Business

DSQC posted MentiPolls to the membership:

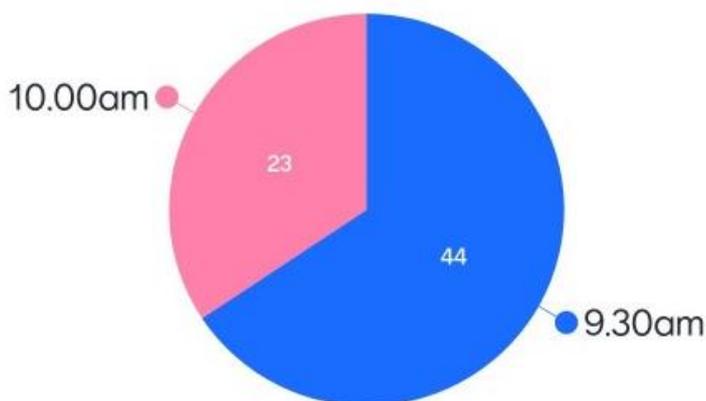


Figure 1: What time would you prefer to start remote meetings?

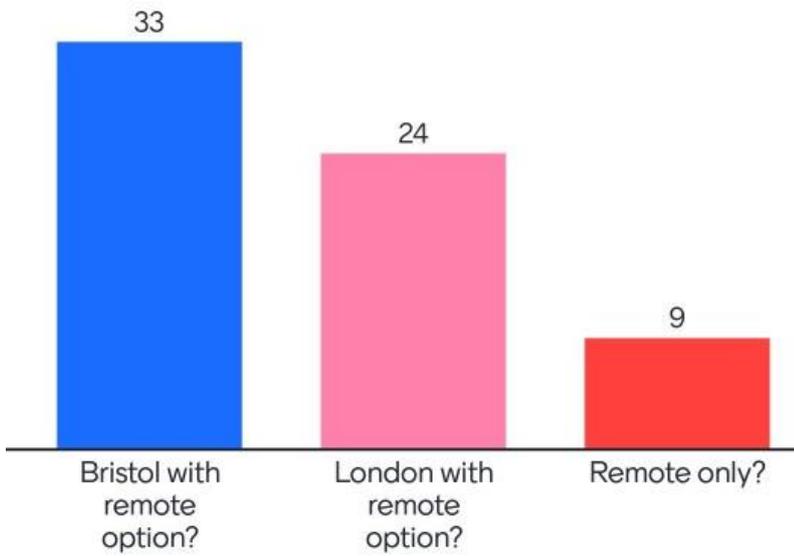


Figure 2: How would you like the September AGM to be run?

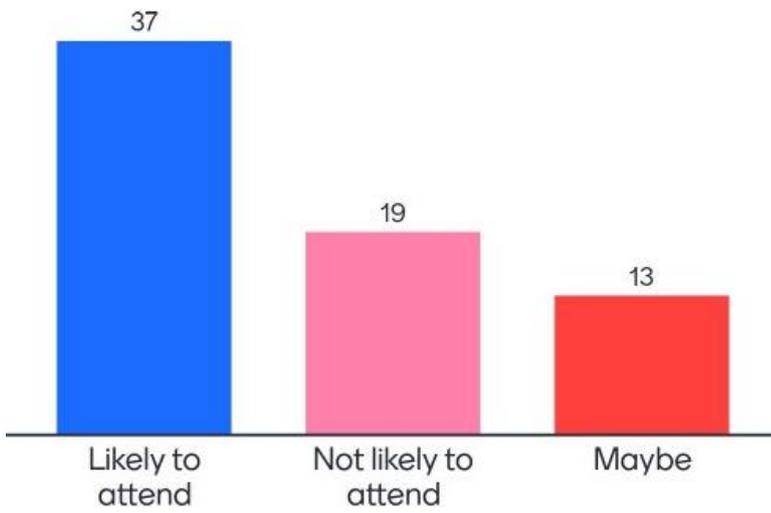


Figure 3: Would you be interested in an informal meeting ahead of the scheduled July meeting?

14. Details of Upcoming Meetings

Saturday 10 July 2021, 09.30, Remote via Microsoft Teams