



The Chair of the Bar

Sir Christopher Bellamy QC

19 January 2021

Dear Sir Christopher,

Congratulations on your appointment as Chair of the Criminal Legal Aid Review.

We are pleased to see that the second stage of the review is now underway and share the Lord Chancellor's desire to ensure 'the criminal legal aid market remains effective and sustainable, while reflecting the diverse society it serves.'

It is two years since the review was initially announced. The first phase has led to an additional £51m going into the system which is welcome, but much of the review's work remains outstanding to ensure that criminal defence solicitors and the criminal bar be put on a sustainable footing. It has been more than six years since Sir Bill Jeffrey concluded that 'the particular strengths of the English and Welsh criminal Bar are a substantial national asset'^[1]. The years since have seen the professions continue to age rapidly, as many leave prematurely for other areas of practice or more stable careers.

Criminal barristers are crucial to delivering justice. It is in the public interest for the criminal justice system to be properly funded. For the sake of many in the system including victims, witnesses and defendants, this once in a generation review must report quickly. We welcome the ambition to do so within the next 6 months.

We will do everything we can to assist you with your work and hope that the timescales indicated for this second part of the review are met and that implementation can be achieved this year.

^[1]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/310712/jeffrey-review-criminal-advocacy.pdf

We look forward to working with you.

Yours Sincerely,

Derek Sweeting QC, Chair of the Bar

James Mulholland QC, Chair of the Criminal Bar Association

Christine Agnew QC, Leader South Eastern Circuit

Kate Brunner QC, Leader Western Circuit

Mike Duck QC, Leader Midland Circuit

David Elias QC, Leader Wales & Chester Circuit

Lisa Roberts QC, Leader Northern Circuit

Richard Wright QC, Leader North Eastern Circuit

THE BAR COUNCIL

www.barcouncil.org.uk

289-293 High Holborn, London WC1V 7HZ DX: 240 LDE Tel: 020 7242 0082 Fax: 020 7831 9217
