

## **Update from Law Society Council Meeting on 17 May 2017 – Lubna Shuja**

I attended the Law Society Council meeting on 17 May 2017 in my capacity as Council Member representing sole practitioners. I attach below an update on some of the work being carried out by the Law Society together with a summary of the key issues discussed by the Council during that meeting. Updates are also available on the SPG website. If you would like to discuss any issues affecting sole practitioners, which you would like me to raise at future Council Meetings, or indeed with any of the Officers of the Law Society, please do not hesitate to contact me on [info@legalswan.com](mailto:info@legalswan.com) or on 0121 551 7866.

### **Law Society Practice Notes**

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you all that you need to register your details on [My Law Society \(www.lawsociety.org.uk/log-in/\)](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/log-in/) as soon as possible as from June, full practice notes will only be available to those who have registered.

### **Governance**

Council considered proposals to make progress on the governance review by setting up a time-limited Implementation Board to oversee the steps required to establish the Main Board and Appointments Recommendations Committee. These proposals were overwhelmingly supported. It is also planned to ask the Council Membership Committee to undertake a review of the role and composition of Council itself. Robert Bourns has written on the decisions in the *Gazette*, and you can find a link to his article here: <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/comment-and-opinion/shaping-up-to-help-members/5061163.article>.

Council also noted the incoming President's presidential plan, which sets out Joe Egan's views on how he will ensure that he works effectively within the overall aim of delivering the Law Society's strategy to support, promote, and represent our members, including continuing the 'pride in the profession' campaign.

### **Promoting the profession - market and regulatory change**

Significant ongoing work on issues to do with economic crime came to Council's attention. The Law Society responded to the HM Treasury consultation on draft money laundering regulations, supporting the objective of ensuring the robustness of the UK's anti-money-laundering regime but emphasising the need to avoid imposing excessive burdens on legitimate, law-abiding businesses. The response is here: <http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/policy-campaigns/consultation-responses/documents/money-laundering-regulations-consultation-response>. We are arranging webinars and events for firms in relation to the Criminal Finances Bill which will create two new offences in relation to tax evasion that will present significant compliance challenges for affected law firms. And we responded to the MoJ's consultation on corporate liability for economic crime.

The Law Society has responded to the SRA consultation on waivers which involve a proposal that any regulatory rules not based on legal requirements can be waived provided that the waiver does not conflict with the regulatory objectives of the Legal Services Act. This would be a relaxation of the current system where exemptions are granted only in exceptional cases. We have welcomed the simplification in principle, but

raised concerns about consumer protection (especially in relation to the PII rules) and the lack of detail in the proposals. Our response is here:

<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/policy-campaigns/consultation-responses/sra-consultation-on-rule-waivers-law-society-response/>.

### **Representing and supporting the profession in the public interest**

Council was updated on the Law Society's plans to ensure that the interests of our members are well represented during the UK general election campaign and afterwards, with a focus on four main themes: the standing and integrity of the profession and jurisdiction; Brexit; access to justice; and the protection of human rights.

On Brexit, we have increased our activity with key stakeholders in government as well as engaging with the EU Commission, EU Parliament and UKRep.

Council members were pleased to hear that, following the publication in the *Times* of a joint letter from the Law Society and family law organisations, the government had dropped plans to allow councils to apply for exemption from social care legislation: this will ensure that children's legal protection remains intact.

### **Council member motion**

David Dixon, Council member for South Wales, proposed a motion, seconded by Jonathan Stephens, Council member for West Country and Gwent, to commemorate the achievement of David Lloyd George in being the only solicitor (so far) to become Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The proposal - to rename one of the Law Society's principal meeting rooms in Chancery Lane after Lloyd George - was passed by acclamation.

Lubna Shuja  
Law Society Council Member (May 2017)