



The Bar Council

Bar Council

annual report 2025/26





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About the Bar Council of England and Wales

The Bar Council is the voice of the barrister profession in England and Wales. Our 18,000+ members – self-employed and employed barristers – make up a united Bar that is strong, inclusive, independent and influential.

We lead, represent and support the Bar in the public interest, championing the rule of law and access to justice by:

- Providing advice, guidance, services, training and events for our members
- Inspiring and supporting the next generation of barristers
- Drawing on our members' expertise to influence policy and legislation that relates to the justice system and the rule of law
- Promoting the Bar of England and Wales to develop career and business opportunities for barristers at home and abroad

As the General Council of the Bar, we're the approved regulator for all practising barristers in England and Wales. We delegate our regulatory functions to the operationally independent Bar Standards Board (BSB).

The Bar Council's representative work is largely undertaken by committees comprising barristers and chambers professionals, who work in conjunction with the organisation's small but dedicated staff team. This work is overseen by the General Management Committee and the Bar Council. The Bar Council has 4 officers. The Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer are elected by Bar Council members in May and serve for one calendar year (January to December). The Commissioner for Conduct was appointed in January 2025 and will serve for a three-year term.

This report covers the year 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.



Foreword from the Chief Executive



I'm delighted to present the Bar Council annual report for 2025/26, but I must start by paying tribute to my predecessor Malcolm Cree CBE who led the organisation throughout this reporting period. As you will see from the following pages, the Bar Council's small but dedicated team achieved a great deal for the Bar and for the wider justice sector under Malcolm's leadership and, as I took the helm at the end of March 2026, I immediately recognised the breadth of the impact that the Bar Council has.

Although the officers of the Bar change annually, the underlying work of the Bar Council that aims to lead, represent and support the profession continues to build from year to year – thanks to our staff and the 500+ fantastic barrister volunteers who serve on our Council, committees, panels and working groups. In my first few months in post, I've been getting out around the country to meet the Bar, as well as attending as many meetings and events as possible, and the noticeable

dedication of our volunteers in giving something back to the profession is truly inspiring. Thank you for all for your time and expertise.

Some of the most impactful projects are often those medium-term projects that are delivered over the span of several chairs' terms. The independent review of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment at the Bar is a case in point and one of the standout achievements of 2025/26. This project was initiated under Nick Vineall KC, Baroness Harriet Harman KC was appointed to undertake the review by Sam Townend KC, her findings were reported to Barbara Mills KC, and the actions are now being delivered under Kirsty Brimelow KC, including Dame Maria Miller taking up her position as the Bar's first Commissioner for Conduct.

Baroness Harman's report was understandably hard hitting and so I am pleased to see the strong commitment to taking forward her recommendations,

Foreword from the Chief Executive

from individual chambers to the Inns, circuits and specialist Bar associations, right through to the senior judiciary and Bar Standards Board (BSB).

The BSB has also been through a period of change internally with a new Chair, Professor Chris Bones, taking up the post in September 2025, and a new Director General, Phil Golding, announced in April and taking up his position in July 2026. The Bar Council works very closely with the BSB to ensure the Bar's practising certificate fees are carefully spent and to reduce duplication. Over this reporting period I'm pleased to see that the BSB's plans have been shaped by our input to consultations and the findings of the Harman review. There is real strength in a regulator that listens to, and understands, its regulated profession.

Building on the first all-women officer team last year, this year the officer team plus the Young Bar Chair have all been women and the Bar elected its first employed barrister as Vice Chair of the Bar – Heidi Stonecliffe

KC. As the umbrella organisation for the profession, this is the One Bar approach in practice.

In representing the profession, the 'Justice needs juries' campaign has gained more public and political attention than perhaps ever before. The campaign was launched in response to the Leveson review of criminal courts and the government's subsequent plans to curtail jury trials. The concern from the Bar – far beyond criminal practitioners – was palpable and, working with the Criminal Bar Association and circuit leaders, we turned those very serious concerns into action. Thank you to every barrister who acted in support of the campaign – writing to your MPs, attending court visits and parliamentary events, and signing our open letter to the Prime Minister. All of which have served to keep our perspectives at the forefront of minds in both the media and with policymakers.

Looking to the future, we'll continue to build on this engagement and

representation to make the case for the things that the profession cares about – from legal aid and court infrastructure to international opportunities and access to justice.

Earlier this year we invited members to take part in the Bar Council's first ever member engagement survey. I want to thank everyone who took the time to respond – only by understanding what the Bar really wants and needs from us as the representative body, can we fulfil our mission to lead, represent and support the Bar in the public interest and to champion the rule of law and access to justice for all.

I look forward to digesting your responses and setting out a plan to serve and support you better in the coming months and years.

Jim Morris CB DSO
Chief Executive

Our year in numbers



4,945

ethical enquiries answered



29

responses to consultations



101

aspiring barristers hosted on the Bar Placement Scheme and 10k Black interns programme



5,624

event attendees



8

pieces of legislation reviewed



101 mentions in Parliament



43.4%

of barristers paid the Bar Representation Fee



125

training courses delivered



30

court visits arranged for MPs

12



submissions to parliamentary inquiries



599

barrister profiles on the Direct Access Portal



11,104

active barrister ID cards



686

pupillage vacancies advertised



3,326

signatures to our 'Justice needs juries' open letter

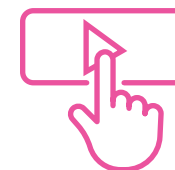
508

volunteers on our Council, committees and panels



29,171

Pupillage Gateway applications



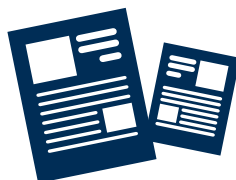
231

new on-demand training users



587,789

website views



1,547

media hits



60 blogs published



10,720

new followers on social media



479,784

engagements on social media



52%

BarTalk open rate

Meeting our strategic aims in 2025/26

- Leading, representing and upholding the independence of the united Bar
- Championing, protecting and promoting the rule of law
- Supporting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient profession
- Maintaining a sustainable, inclusive and resilient organisation



Leading, representing and upholding the independence of the united Bar

As the voice of the profession, the strength and breadth of our resources, connections and know-how uniquely positions us to lead the Bar. We guide and promote the profession under the principles of independence and justice.

This year we:

- Strengthened our relationships with ministers and other parliamentarians and delivered the first No10 reception for the legal profession in celebration of the legal sector and its role in contributing to the economy.
- Established greater circuit engagement with parliamentarians by organising circuit events for the North Eastern, Northern and Western Circuits in Parliament with regional MPs, creating opportunities to discuss local justice issues and priorities, as well as strengthening relationships across the circuits.
- In collaboration with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, we organised the 'Counsel of Nations' with the diplomatic community. This event brought the legal attachés of London's various international embassies together with barristers to highlight how the Bar of England and Wales represents states and diplomatic missions. Our Chair opened the event, jointly hosted with Inner Temple, which included a panel discussion on international law in UK courts and a networking reception.
- Successfully lobbied for the cap on Crown Court sitting days to be lifted so that courts could sit at their maximum capacity and begin to bear down on the backlogs.
- Established an expert working group to consider the minimum age of criminal responsibility under our 2026 Chair's priority of children in the justice system.
- Welcomed the Sentencing Bill which reflected many of the proposals the Bar Council put forward through the Gauke review to address the root causes of offending and reoffending.



Leading, representing and upholding the independence of the united Bar

- Opposed Ministry of Justice proposals to introduce an Interest on Lawyers' Client Account Scheme (ILCA) which would see a proportion of the interest earned on lawyers' client accounts in England and Wales remitted to the government. The Bar felt strongly that the plans were flawed and should not include legal aid firms.
- Expanded collaboration between our international and parliamentary work by coordinating visits for international delegations – including a Ghanaian delegation, an EU delegation, and delegates on the Anglo-Dutch Exchange – to Parliament and arranging meetings, briefings and tours with parliamentary stakeholders.
- Delivered our first Ukraine Law Day conference at Middle Temple, bringing together UK and Ukrainian lawyers, policymakers and judges to discuss key legal issues arising from the conflict. The event provided a platform for knowledge-sharing on a range of topics, such as the reconstruction and recovery of war losses, reinforcing our commitment to supporting the rule of law and international legal cooperation.
- Continued to strengthen our partnership with the Ghana Bar Association (GBA) through ongoing bilateral engagement. We hosted the annual GBA delegation in London, facilitating discussions with a range of Bar Council committees on areas of shared interest, and advancing work towards a revised memorandum of understanding. We continued to engage with developments affecting the legal profession in Ghana, including issuing a public statement expressing concern following the suspension of the Chief Justice.
- Added a family law focus to our international business development visits, widening the scope of international opportunities for the Bar of England and Wales
- Attended the East Africa Law Society Conference in Addis Ababa, strengthening relationships with Bar associations across East Africa and engaging with legal professionals on shared rule of law priorities. We contributed to discussions on a family law panel and a session on the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer, promoting international collaboration and the protection of the legal profession.
- Delivered our second business development visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), focusing on family law in response to significant legal reforms and increasing internationalisation within the region. The programme reinforced relationships with key stakeholders in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, promoted the expertise of the Bar of England and Wales through conferences and meetings, and explored opportunities for English and Welsh barristers to engage with the UAE's evolving legal sector.
- Held our 4th annual visit to Nairobi, building on the past few years of engagement with Kenya and cementing the Bar's visibility and goodwill with the Kenyan profession. We explored how barristers can work symbiotically with local lawyers in cross-border advisory and arbitration matters and showcased the Bar's expertise at the joint Kenya-UK Legal Symposium and CIArb Kenya's inaugural ADR Week.
- Jointly launched the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer alongside European Bars and we continue to call for its ratification.

Leading, representing and upholding the independence of the united Bar

- Organised the annual law reform lecture, this year delivered at Gray's Inn by former High Court judge Sir Nicholas Mostyn on 'A Priceless Inheritance', focused on family law, open justice and the rule of law. As per the headline from Earl Loreburn's speech in *Scott v Scott*, "the traditional law, that English justice must be administered openly in the face of all men, is an almost priceless inheritance..."
- Ran the annual law reform essay competition which attracted 63 applications with 6 prizes awarded through the Bar Council Scholarship Trust. The winning essay by Wasim Iqbal, 'Invisible violence: restoring the sight of the Online Safety Act 2023', was published by Counsel magazine online and we hosted the winners at a prize-giving reception at the Law Reform Committee Chair's chambers.
- Supported the Bar's pro bono charities Advocate and the Free Representation Unit and the London Legal Support Trust. We supported Pro Bono Week 2025 and promoted the second pro bono recognition list to celebrate lawyers who undertook more than 25 hours of pro bono work over the previous year. We represented the Bar on the Attorney General's Pro Bono Committee and the Attorney General's Public Legal Education Committee working with others to raise public awareness of the contribution of the legal sector.
- Published the profiles of 599 barristers on our Direct Access Portal to promote their services to the public.
- Proactively engaged with the media as a leading voice on the rule of law, access to justice and other policy issues of importance to the Bar. The key themes of our coverage included criminal court reform and the Harman review of bullying and harassment. We saw a 77% year-on-year increase in media hits as the Bar Council was mentioned 1,547 times, including in every national newspaper, as well as regional, online and trade news. Our spokespeople were interviewed by national broadcasters and podcasts. Highlights include:
 - Front page stories in the Guardian, Daily Telegraph and Sunday Times on our opposition to the government's plans to curtail jury trials
 - Our 2025 Chair Barbara Mills KC being interviewed on the Law and Disorder podcast and Bar Council mentions on the Double Jeopardy podcast
 - Our 2026 Chair Kirsty Brimelow KC being interviewed on Sky News to set out our position on jury trials and barrister wellbeing
 - Extensive broadcast coverage including on flagship news programmes BBC Radio 4 Today, BBC Radio 4 World Tonight and BBC News at One, as well as LBC and Times Radio
 - Wide-ranging local and regional media coverage of our court visits for MPs highlighting our concerns about the restriction on jury trials
- Amplified a range of voices from across the Bar through the media, social media, and our website. We published 60 blogs. Some of our most popular content included looking back at the Birmingham Six case, statistics about the profession and how it's changed over the years, top tips for mini-pupillages, and the Bar Council intervention in *XGY v Chief Constable of Sussex Police & Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)*.

Championing, protecting and promoting the rule of law

No one is above the law, and everyone should be equal under the law. In uncertain times, it's vital to educate the public, media and policymakers about the critical importance of the rule of law in a healthy society.

To achieve this aim in 2025/26 we:

- Launched 'Justice needs juries', our major campaign opposing the government's plan to restrict jury trials through the Courts and Tribunals Bill following the publication of the Leveson review. Working with the Criminal Bar Association and circuit leaders, the campaign spanned policy, public affairs and media work to raise awareness of the Bar's concerns and proposals for alternative policies to reduce the Crown Court backlog. The campaign included:
 - Engagement with parliamentarians with two targeted events in Westminster – an MP drop-in briefing and a larger reception
 - Detailed written briefings for MPs ahead of key stages of the Courts

and Tribunals Bill and working with parliamentarians on amendments to the legislation, including our call for specialist courts for rape and sexual offences

- Local MP engagement through visits to criminal courts. We organised 30 MP visits between January and March 2026 across all 6 circuits, arranging for barristers to speak directly with politicians about their concerns and securing regional media coverage with the circuit leaders
- Template letters for barristers to send to their own MP – the template was downloaded 309 times
- An open letter to the Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer setting out our opposition, signed by 3,326 retired judges, KCs, barristers, solicitors, legal academics and other legal professionals. News of the open letter was covered across the media
- Securing two oral evidence sessions for the Bar in front of the Justice Select Committee on the Courts and Tribunals



Championing, protecting and promoting the rule of law

Bill. The first session heard from our Chair Kirsty Brimelow KC and the Chair of the CBA Riel Karmy-Jones KC. The second session featured three circuit leaders: Sam Hillas KC (Northern), Caroline Goodwin KC (North Eastern) and Claire Davies KC (South Eastern)

- A strong joint statement of the ‘Four Bars’ (England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland) which was covered on BBC Radio 4’s Today programme and achieved some of our best engagement on social media
- Set up the PECS delay reporting form for barristers to log every time they experienced a delay in someone being delivered late to court through the Prisoner Escort and Custody Service. We liaised with HMPPS to understand where and why delays are happening with a view to improving future contracts for delivering the service.
- Launched a package of policy recommendations to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG) through the family justice system, alongside the criminal justice system.

We welcomed the government adopting this approach in its new strategy.

- Published ‘System overload: a report on family legal aid’, our report based on 100 interviews with family barristers. It documents the negative impact the cuts to family fee schemes have had on working conditions for family barristers, leaving many feeling burnt out with unsustainable workloads. The report was shared with parliamentarians and featured as an exclusive in the Guardian.
- Responded to 29 consultations and calls for evidence from government departments, the Law Commission, the Tribunal, Family and Online Procedure Rule Committees, the Crown Prosecution Service, and legal regulators. Our expert committees provided input on a wide range of issues including criminal appeals, the regulation of private prosecutors, employment rights, expert witnesses, and first-tier complaints handling.
- Submitted evidence to 12 parliamentary inquiries, including tackling violence against women and girls, the rule of law, UK trade with the EU, dynamic alignment, and improving family court

services for children. We gave oral evidence to parliamentary committees on 6 occasions, including inquiries into police transcription, the UK-India free trade agreement, access to justice, and criminal court reform.

- Reviewed 8 pieces of legislation and provided briefings for parliamentarians on: the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Act, the Courts (Remote Hearings) Bill, the Courts and Tribunals Bill, the Data (Use and Access) Act, the Public Authorities (Fraud, Error and Recovery) Act, the Sentencing Act 2026, the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill, and the Victims and Courts Act.
- Successfully intervened in the case of *XGY v Chief Constable of Sussex Police and CPS* and welcomed the Court of Appeal judgment which restated the principle of core immunity for advocates. Our blog post explaining the case was one of our most read blogs of the year.
- Hosted the annual Bar Leaders’ Discussion at the Opening of the Legal Year on the topic of countering threats to the legal profession. The discussion, introduced by our Chair, included

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contributions from the President of the Istanbul Bar Association İbrahim Kaboğlu, the President of the American Bar Association Michelle Behnke, the President of the Law Society of Zimbabwe Lison Ncube and the LAWASIA President Shyam Divan. The discussion further raised awareness of the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer and we secured an exclusive interview in the Guardian for the ABA President.

- Spoke out in support of the American Bar Association on the Day of the Endangered Lawyer (24 January) and warned against associating lawyers with the causes of their clients.
- Endorsed the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) expression of grave concerns about the 10 members of the Istanbul Bar Council and its President who faced criminal charges in early 2025.
- Issued a strong statement alongside the law societies and Bars of the UK – jointly representing 250,000 lawyers – to express serious concern about legal professionals being politically and physically attacked and vilified.
- Held the annual International Rule of Law Lecture delivered by Professor David Cole of Georgetown and Columbia law schools and former National Legal Director of the American Civil Liberties Union. This blockbuster lecture titled ‘State of the Union: the US Presidency, the Constitution and the Rule of Law’ at Inner Temple, took the audience through the constitutional issues posed by the current US administration, highlighting the importance of civil society in maintaining the rule of law.
- Hosted successful fringe meetings at all three main party conferences exploring on the Bar’s contribution to the UK economy and issues relating to access to justice.

Supporting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient profession

Our vision for the Bar is only possible if the profession is sustainable, adequately funded and open to all.

To support this aim in 2025/26 we:

- Successfully advocated for the long overdue increase to civil legal aid fees in immigration and housing through our detailed submissions to the Review of Civil Legal Aid (RoCLA). Our work in calling for an independent fee review body and on securing increases in other areas of civil legal aid, including family, continues.
- Delivered three legal aid billing seminars for civil (family and non-family) and criminal practitioners.
- Worked with the Inns, the Criminal Bar Association and the Ministry of Justice on plans to deliver a new scheme that will provide government match-funding for criminal pupillages to boost the criminal practitioner workforce. This initiative will be rolled out in 2026/27 and will deliver one of the key asks in our 2024 manifesto for justice.
- Supported the publicly funded Bar through the significant difficulties caused by the Legal Aid Agency cyber attack. We worked with the Family Law Bar Association to provide timely information to barristers and clerks (including an assistance document on the VAT treatment of contingency payments), supported system testing as it was being rebuilt, and kept the pressure on the LAA and ministers to arrange contingency measures and resolve the problems as quickly as possible.
- Published updated data on earnings by sex at the Bar to support work in chambers to tackle the earnings gap. We promoted our guidance on earnings audits and practice reviews, alongside our training and bespoke support. The earnings report was one of our most downloaded reports.
- Responded to 4,352 ethics calls and 593 written ethics queries from barristers through our ethical enquiries service.



Supporting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient profession

- Reviewed and updated ethics and practice guidance documents, including revisions in light of the *Mazur* case, affecting who can be involved in conducting litigation activities.
- Delivered ethics training to the Bar through:
 - An ethics-focused session at Bar Conference 2025 covering the duty to maintain confidentiality, the use of social media, sexual harassment and NDAs, and the ethical challenges of in-house practice, including maintaining legal professional privilege and the duty to remain independent
 - An online ethics seminar for the Young Bar, featuring a panel of expert practitioners from our committee providing practical advice on how to deal with challenging ethical scenarios
 - An online ethics seminar for the whole Bar – employed and self-employed – with BACFI on maintaining ethical independence and resisting external pressure
- Analysed the findings of the Barristers' Working Lives 2025 survey on Bar ethics to establish where barristers obtain ethics support from, whether they feel sufficiently well supported, the types of issues that cause them ethical difficulties and whether they undertake ethics CPD activities
- Represented the Bar's views in our responses to consultations on ethics, including the Legal Services Board consultation 'Upholding professional ethical duties'.
- Updated our practice note on the case of *World Uyghur Congress v NCA* through our Anti-Money Laundering Working Group to provide further clarification for barristers. The working group also responded to the HM Treasury consultation on 'Anti-Money Laundering / Counter Terrorist Financing Supervision Reform: Duties, Powers, and Accountability'.
- Reviewed a draft clause which would introduce costs protections for enforcement authorities in High Court civil recovery proceedings. This has now become Clause 103 of the Crime and Policing Act 2026.
- Added a model sanctions policy for chambers when updating our sanctions guidance.
- Successfully kept regulatory costs down for barristers through responding to consultations and making representations to the Legal Services Board (LSB), the Legal Ombudsman (LeO), HM Treasury and the Bar Standards Board (BSB). The LSB agreed an almost flat budget and decided not to award the full budget to LeO that had been requested.
- Pressed the LSB to tighten its focus on oversight activities and organisational efficiencies through our response to the Ministry of Justice call for evidence in its Public Bodies Review of the LSB.
- Successfully shaped changes to the BSB's enforcement rules and processes through our response to the consultation and the Harman review.
- Represented the Bar in a range of regulatory consultations including the Office for Legal Complaints draft business plan, the BSB consultation on first-tier complaints handling, and the BSB call for evidence on its 5-year strategy.

Supporting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient profession

- Updated our guidance for the Bar on the use of generative AI following the High Court judgment in *R (Ayinde) v London Borough of Haringey* [2025] EWHC 1383 (Admin). We also fed into the BSB's complementary guidance through our joint technology and innovation working group.
- Provided 11,104 barristers with court ID cards through the HMCTS Professional Users Access Scheme – the highest number of users since the scheme launched in 2019.
- Sponsored 110 barristers and pupil barristers under our immigration support scheme for skilled workers.
- Launched a further suite of new employment policy templates to support chambers professionals and heads of chambers with best practice in employment. The templates cover matters relating to parental leave, flexible working, and expenses and can be tailored to meet the different needs of sets.
- Delivered a comprehensive programme of 68 open training courses attended by 679 barristers and chambers professionals, 57 bespoke training courses for chambers attended by 786 barristers and chambers professionals, and 35 events bringing together 5,624 attendees.
- Published Baroness Harriet Harman KC's review into bullying, harassment and sexual harassment at the Bar and accepted the 36 recommendations, including appointing a new Commissioner for Conduct, Dame Maria Miller, in January 2026. The Harman review was welcomed across the Bar and the launch email achieved some of our highest open and click-through rates. The review was covered across national broadcast and print news with nearly 300 pieces of coverage.
- Set up a new steering group with the Bar Standards Board to oversee the recommendations in the Harman review relating to regulatory matters.
- Delivered anti-bullying and harassment training to 433 barristers and chambers staff.
- Developed a new course on managing complaints about harassment, bullying and inappropriate behaviour for leaders in chambers, and designed a new on-demand bullying and harassment course for everyone.
- Ran our 'Stop it' anti-harassment campaign over the Christmas season in 2025 with downloadable posters and social media messaging to signpost barristers to Talk to Spot and other sources of support.
- Hosted three sessions of the 'EDO Network' providing over 500 chambers equality and diversity officers (EDOs) and others in chambers management roles with support on a range of topical equality, diversity and inclusion themes.
- Successfully opposed the Bar Standards Board's plans to change barristers' core duty on equality and diversity, arguing that the lack of clarity would make it impossible to enforce and could reduce overall commitment to equality and diversity initiatives.
- Refocused our work on disability inclusion at the Bar by:
 - Auditing the 200 largest sets of chambers on physical access for

Supporting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient profession

- mobility impaired barristers, identifying gaps in planning and information available to aspiring and practising barristers
- Using the findings of that audit to deliver our annual disability inclusion seminar, providing insights and guidance on making chambers accessible to everyone
- Continuing to work with HMCTS to improve physical access to court buildings
- Publishing guidance on neurodiversity as part of a suite of resources to support the Bar and aspiring barristers
- Celebrated Black History Month 2025 under the theme ‘standing firm in power and pride’ highlighting the work and achievements of 9 Black barristers – both junior and KC – nominated by our Race Panel.
- Agreed new guidance on court dress and wigs with the senior judiciary to enable reasonable adjustments in relation to protected characteristics.
- Launched a new format ‘Pride in Practice’ event with the Law Society and Inns to celebrate LGBTQ+ colleagues during Pride month with 200 barristers and solicitors at Inner Temple.
- Published our regular ‘Wellbeing at the Bar’ report with the University of Portsmouth which found that respondents to the Barristers’ Working Lives survey reported generally higher levels of work satisfaction and wellbeing compared to 2023.
- Developed a new stream of work on wellbeing in response to our 2025 Chair Barbara Mills KC’s priority to explore ways to scale up reflective practice at the Bar:
 - We piloted group reflective practice using Balint groups for 24 practitioners: family and crime in Bristol and Chancery and commercial in London. The programmes offered monthly group sessions for 6 months
 - We partnered with Trauma Informed Law to pilot the delivery of two online courses for barristers and clerks on trauma-informed practice and developed a series of 5 short films to explain the impact of trauma
 - We delivered the Chair’s annual event focused on ‘Advancing wellbeing at the Bar’ – an in-person evening event sharing practical advice to support wellbeing in practice
- Processed 29,171 applications from 4,247 candidates through the Pupillage Gateway, in response to advertisements from authorised education and training organisations (AETOs) for 686 pupillage vacancies.
- Ran contextual recruitment within the Pupillage Gateway to help chambers better evaluate candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds and widen access to the Bar. The tool enables AETOs to assess a candidate’s achievements in the context of their academic and socio-economic background and personal circumstances.
- Published our annual Pupillage Gateway report which helps us to understand who obtains pupillage and what contributes to their success. Overall, the total number of pupillages increased by 6.8% – while the number of pupillages registered in chambers decreased, the number of pupillages registered at the employed Bar increased and now makes up 20.5% of all registered

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pupillages. Academic excellence remains the most significant predictor of success in attaining pupillage.

- Held our 10th Pupillage Fair welcoming hundreds of aspiring barristers to meet AETOs and delivering a range of advice sessions, including insights into different specialisms, routes to the Bar, disability access, practising on circuit, and making applications through the Pupillage Gateway.
- Participated in other careers fairs including Pupillage Fair North, PowerUp Fest and Target Jobs Pupillage Fair and updated our 'Becoming a barrister' guide.
- Coordinated the Bar Placement Scheme 2025 to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to find out more about careers at the Bar. 74 students were hosted across 39 chambers and, working with the Northern Circuit, we delivered a day of court visits and advocacy training in London and Manchester.
- Organised the 4th 10,000 Black interns at the Bar programme over the summer, placing 27 interns across 85 chambers

and organisations for a 6-week internship kindly funded by chambers and other Bar-based organisations.

- Created 'Speak for Success' – lesson plans for state primary school pupils aged 7–11, linked to the national curriculum and focused on oracy skills and understanding the role of barristers. We worked with education consultancy Hark to create the lessons and successfully piloted them with 170 schoolchildren.
- Sponsored the Young Citizens Bar Mock Trials 2025/26 which saw 3,700 young people from 232 schools taking part in events across the country.
- Developed the 'Thriving in your first years of practice' event series for junior barristers in their first 7 years post qualification and delivered the first two online seminars covering speaking with gravitas and starting your practising period as a pupil barrister.
- Updated our 'Starting at the Bar' guide, packed full of advice and tips from members of our Young Barristers' Committee.

- Published the results of our annual pupil survey. 90% of respondents reported a positive experience of pupillage (up 4% from 2024) with 8 in 10 feeling well supported by chambers or their employer.
- Grew international opportunities for the young Bar by hosting the 59th Anglo-Dutch Exchange which welcomed the Young Bars of Amsterdam, the Hague, and Rotterdam to London. Our Young Bar Chair also attended the 63rd International Association of Young Lawyers annual conference in Washington DC and the International Bar Association conference in Toronto.
- Hosted a panel discussion at the Employed Bar Dinner exploring and promoting careers as an employed barrister.
- Set up a working group to consider support for employed barristers and others in navigating the King's Counsel competition process.
- Handed the Bar Sustainability Network over to Achill Legal to run and grow the network proving advice and resources to more than 40 chambers wanting to measure and reduce their carbon footprint.

Maintaining a sustainable, inclusive and resilient organisation

To support the Bar, we need to be sustainable and resilient for the long term. As a small organisation, we need to recruit and retain the brightest talent from diverse backgrounds and foster an environment where employees can thrive.

In 2025/26 we:

- Took the annual Bar Conference on circuit to Birmingham with strong support from the Midland Circuit. We delivered a distinct programme based on recommendations from the circuit and enjoyed a pre-conference Bar Mess.
- Delivered the annual BRF campaign under the strapline 'the Bar Representation Fee gives you more' to highlight the range of benefits subscribers receive in addition to supporting the Bar Council's work.
- Refreshed our business partner offering and increased the number of partnerships to 15. This increased and diversified revenue to the Bar Council while providing attractive offers for the Bar



Maintaining a sustainable, inclusive and resilient organisation

to support them in their personal and professional lives.

- Achieved ISO 14001 Environmental Management certification by the British Standards Institution (BSI) in recognition of our commitment to environmental sustainability. The award reflects our work to integrate environmental practices and build staff awareness of environmental responsibilities.
- Continued to take action under our people strategy, to support our ambition to be an employer of choice, including:
 - Successfully implementing new private medical and wellbeing benefits
 - Securing additional volunteer mental health first aiders
 - Improving systems and processes by upgrading our technology and increasing support for recruitment
 - Organising regular all-staff awaydays to provide opportunities to meet face to face, communicate progress against our strategic objectives, engage our workforce and encourage collaboration beyond team boundaries
- Further enhanced our cyber security framework through strengthened access controls, improved governance arrangements and the ongoing review of security policies and practices. These measures have helped protect the organisation against an increasingly complex and evolving landscape of cyber threats.
- Improved our business continuity and disaster recovery (BCP/DR) arrangements, focusing on increasing organisational preparedness, reducing operational risk and improving our ability to respond effectively to disruptive incidents.
- Continued to explore opportunities where generative AI could improve operational effectiveness, automate routine activities, support better decision-making and help deliver sustainable efficiencies and cost reductions, while ensuring that appropriate governance and risk controls are in place.
- Strengthened our governance by publishing a new scheme of delegation to make governance roles, accountabilities and authorities clearer across the organisation. We also improved our reporting on strategic risk management to our Joint Audit Committee and introduced a new process for reviewing committee effectiveness.
- Undertook an audit of our social media channels to understand our strengths and areas to improve and developed a new strategy to ensure we're engaging effectively with our audiences on the right channels.
- Added 10,720 new followers and achieved 479,784 engagements (a three-fold increase on last year) across our social media channels. Some of our most popular content included the Four Bars statement on lawyer safety, nostalgia pictures for International Women's Day, and media coverage of the launch of our policy paper on tackling violence against women and girls.

Our financial performance

The Bar Council is firmly committed to the principle of transparency and publishes financial and other transparency metrics as part of the annual report. We pay close attention to how we spend barristers' money:

- Our budgets are set annually, and our budget envelopes are informed by our business plans
- The budget is divided into departmental budgets managed by our directors
- Each month we examine detailed management accounts for areas with significant spending across the organisation, with ad-hoc reviews taking place for areas where smaller spending occurs. This enables us to keep a close eye on our business expenditure
- Each month we think about what we might need to spend in the future and produce forecasts
- We tightly monitor our largest area of spend which is our staffing costs
- We make sure our resources are directed at our key priorities, and
- Our financial performance is scrutinised by the Finance and Audit Committees and reported to the Bar Council



Income

Practising certificate fees (PCF)

Barristers are only legally entitled to undertake reserved legal activities if they are authorised to do so. To be authorised they must hold a current practising certificate renewed annually via a process known as ‘authorisation to practise’, which includes payment of a practising certificate fee (PCF).

The PCF funds the expenditure that falls within the ‘permitted purposes’ as defined by the Legal Services Act 2007. The PCF is shared between the operationally independent Bar Standards Board (BSB), which carries out the regulatory functions, the representative body, the Bar Council, which carries out non-regulatory ‘permitted’ activities, and levies for the Legal Services Board (LSB) and the Legal Ombudsman (LeO).

	£ thousands	£ thousands
Financial year	2024/25	2025/26
Total PCF revenue	£22,080	£25,328

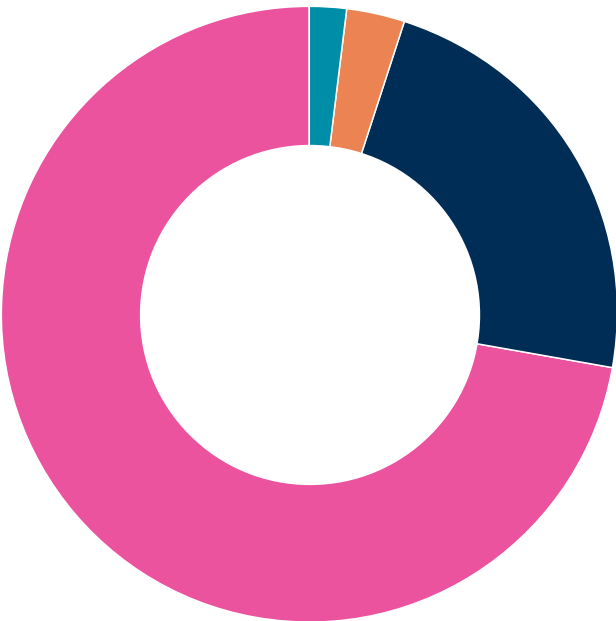
In 2025/26 practising certificate fees were set as follows:

Band	Income band	2025/26 fees
1	£0 – £40,000	£119
2	£40,001 – £60,000	£316
3	£60,001 – £90,000	£635
4	£90,001 – £150,000	£1,154
5	£150,001 – £240,000	£1,753
6	£240,001 – £350,000	£2,377
7	£350,001 – £500,000	£2,540
8	£500,001 – £750,000	£3,213
9	£750,001 – £1,000,000	£3,399
10	£1,000,001 – £1,500,000	£3,855
11	£1,500,001 and above	£4,080

Income

Allocation of PCF between the LSB, LeO, the Bar Council and the BSB

- Legal Services Board, £497k (2%)
- Legal Ombudsman Levy, £724k (3%)
- Bar Council, £5,807k (23%)
- Bar Standards Board, £18,300k (72%)



	2024/25	2025/26
Portion of PCF funding ‘non-regulatory permitted purposes’	31%	28%
Total permitted purposes reserves	£5,579k	£5,008k
Total general reserves	£13,037k	£13,177k

Income

Apart from the PCF, some of our income comes from charges we make for specific services we provide to individuals and organisations and funding we receive to deliver specific pieces of work. These direct income streams include the Bar Representation Fee (BRF), Inns' subvention, training and events, commissions and services income, and administrative income.

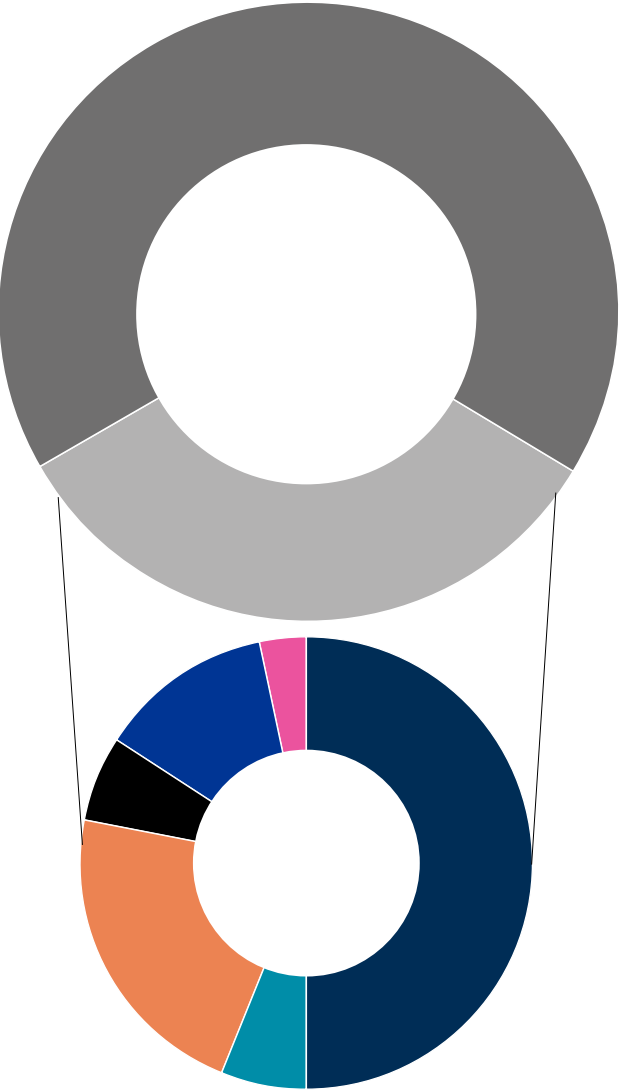
As with previous years, income from the BRF remained the most significant proportion of Bar Council-controlled income during 2025/26. The budgeted income for the BRF was set at £1,360k based upon expectations modelled on the 2024/25 authorisation to practise income adjusted for changes in key assumptions.

However, we generated £30k more BRF income than expected. The number of BRF subscribers increased against the previous year, resulting in the increased BRF revenue. This was supplemented by an increase in other Bar Council income including new business partners, new training and events revenue streams, and reinstating the Bar Conference. Overall, the Bar Council exceeded its non-PCF income target by £349k (14%).

Income area	£ thousands 2024/25	£ thousands 2025/26
Bar Representation Fee	£1,349	£1,390
Inns' subvention	£165	£165
Training and events	£463	£627
Commissions	£161	£160
Services income	£346	£379
Administrative income	£71	£78
Total Bar Council-generated income	£2,555	£2,799

Income

Bar Council income



Total income for the Bar Council	£ thousands 2024/25	£ thousands 2025/26
PCF contributions	£5,646	£5,807
Share of income from GCB Resources Group	£199	£159
Planned contributions from reserves	£0	£0
Total income not directly controlled by the Bar Council	£5,845	£5,966
Total Bar Council-generated income	£2,555	£2,799
Total non-regulatory income	£8,400	£8,765

- Other Bar council income, £2,799k (33%)
- Income not directly controlled by the Bar Council, £5,807k (67%)

Other income

- Bar Representation Fee, £1,390k (16%)
- Inn's subvention, £165k (2%)
- Training and events, £672k (7%)
- Commission, £160k (2%)
- Services income, £379k (4%)
- Administrative income, £78k (1%)

Expenditure

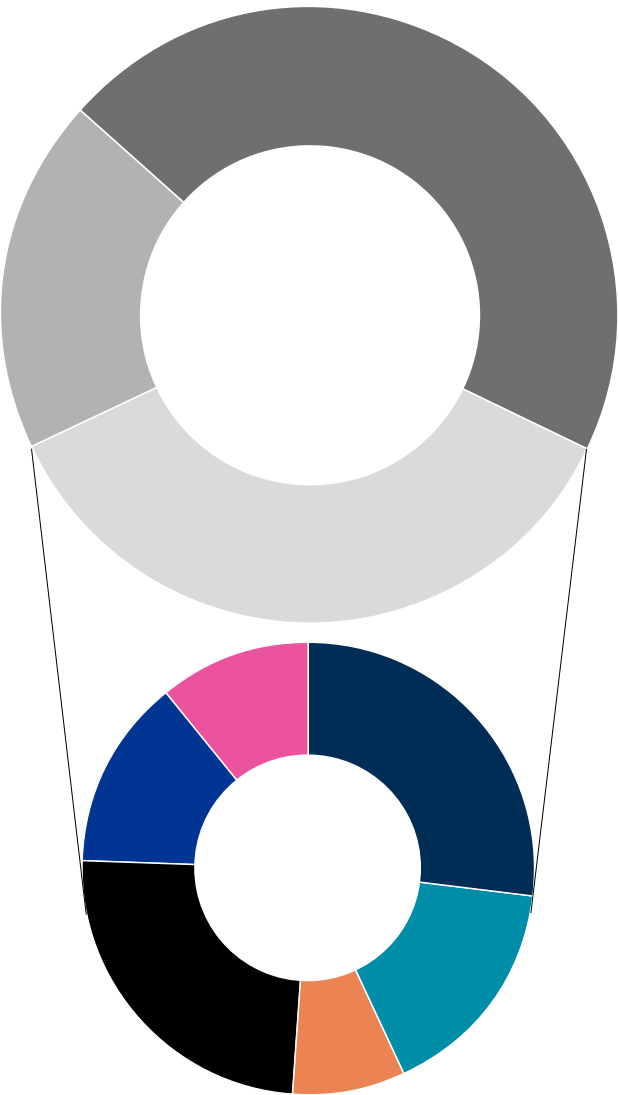
Bar Council directly controlled expenditure was £6,138k against a budget of £5,990k (2.5% overspend). The reasons for this overspend relate to temporary staff costs covering for staff vacancies and additional costs in Services, but these were matched with additional income.

The full cost of the Bar Council includes an allocation of shared costs (IT, finance, HR and premises costs) from the General Council of the Bar (GCB) Resources Group, which provides shared services to both the BSB and the Bar Council. The Resources Group expenditure budget is apportioned to each side of the GCB consistent with the allocation of PCF income.

Bar Council department	£ thousands 2024/25	£ thousands 2025/26
Executive and communications	£2,323	£2,796
Policy	£1,834	£2,184
This is made up of:		
Regulation, law reform and ethics	£344	£285
Legal practice and remuneration	£224	£261
Diversity and inclusion	£441	£587
International	£336	£351
Brussels	£135	£176
Policy directorate	£354	£524
Services (A)	£1,075	£1,158
Total direct Bar Council expenditure	£5,232	£6,138
Resources Group and other adjustments allocated to Representation and Policy	£1,748	£1,839
Resources Group allocated to Services (B)	£544	£539
Total Bar Council expenditure (C)	£7,524	£8,516
Total non-commercial Bar Council expenditure: (C) – (B) – (A)	£5,905	£6,819

Expenditure

Direct Bar Council expenditure in 2025/26



Cost to each authorised individual	£ 2024/25	£ 2025/26
Average cost of the Bar Council for each authorised individual ¹	£317	£321

¹ The average cost of the Bar Council for each authorised individual is calculated by dividing total Bar Council PCF income (£5,807k in 2025 /26) by the number of practising barristers at 31 March 2026 (18,115).

- Executive and communications, £2,796k (46%)
- Policy, £2,184k (36%)
- Services, £1,158k (19%)

Policy expenditure

- Diversity and inclusion, £587k (10%)
- International, £351k (6%)
- Brussels, £176k (3%)
- Policy directorate, £524k (9%)
- Regulation, law reform and ethics, £285k (5%)
- Legal practice and remuneration, £261k (4%)

Staff resources

There are 4 Officers of the Bar; three are elected annually and the newly created role of Commissioner for Conduct is appointed for a three-year term. The Chair of the Young Barristers' Committee also receives payment for their work on behalf of the young Bar.

- The Chair of the Bar was paid £248,548 pro rata (2024/25: £235,600)
- The Vice Chair of the Bar was paid £117,686 pro rata (2024/25: £108,191)
- The Treasurer of the Bar is a voluntary position and unpaid
- The Chair of the Young Barristers' Committee was paid £21,676 pro rata (2024/25: £20,584)
- The Commissioner for Conduct was paid £16,926 – part year (2024/25: NIL)

No other member of the Bar Council received remuneration in the year, and all gave their time freely. The same applies for members of our committees, panels and working groups. In total this comes to some 500+ barristers and chambers professionals working pro bono to support the Bar Council's work.

Remuneration of the Officers of the Bar and executive

Consultation per LSB submission	2024/25	2025/26
Headcount (excludes Resources Group)	47	47

The average staff remuneration at the Bar Council in 2025/26 was £64,066. The Bar Council has 6 senior managers paid in a remuneration band which in 2025/26 was between £81k and £144k.

Total remuneration includes salaries, allowances and employer pension contributions.

The Bar Council considers 'key management personnel' as officers, CEO, directors,

and the adviser to the Chair of the Bar. Key management personnel are those people having authority and responsibility for planning, directing, and controlling the activities of an entity, either directly or indirectly.

The pay of all staff, officers and key management personnel is reviewed annually, with regard to changes in inflation, pay benchmarking, and affordability.

Remuneration of key management personnel

Total remuneration level	2024/25	2025/26
£160,000 or greater	2	2
£140,000 – £159,000	-	2
£120,000 – £139,000	2	1
£100,000 – £119,000	3	2
£80,000 – £99,999	-	-
Less than £80,000	-	-

Further information

Find out more about what the Bar Council does and stay in touch:

- Visit our website: www.barcouncil.org.uk
- Follow us on social media: @thebarcouncil on Bluesky, X (Twitter), LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram
- Subscribe to BarTalk: our fortnightly email newsletter providing news, information and updates on areas of interest to the Bar

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The Bar Council
