Monthly update from the Bar Standards Board

February 2017

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Authorisation to Practise 2017/18

Authorisation to Practise (ATP) 2017/18 is due to open soon and will conclude on Friday 31 March. As in the previous two years, the Practising Certificate Fee (PCF) is based on earnings rather than years of Call. There are six fee levels. The renewal process is simple and you can pay your practising certificate fee via Barrister Connect.

Please provide your Equality and Diversity information when prompted during the online ATP process. You can read elsewhere in this issue of Regulatory Update how we use that data confidentially to help fulfil our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Future of Training for the Bar: Future Routes to Authorisation – update

Thank you to everyone who responded to our recent Future Bar Training consultation which closed last month.

We are pleased that so many people – and so many barristers in particular – have engaged with us on this important topic. It is vital that we settle on a way forward that leaves a robust method for tomorrow’s barristers to train and qualify for practice at the Bar.

With this in mind, we expect to make a final decision on the best way
If you have any questions about authorisation to practise, please visit our website or call 020 7611 1444 to speak to someone in our Records Department.

BSB report shows diversity at the Bar heading slowly in the right direction but that further progress is needed

Last month we published our annual report on Diversity at the Bar. We have a statutory responsibility to monitor and promote equality and diversity both as an employer and as the regulator of barristers in England and Wales. The report shows that progress was made in 2016 with regard to both diversity and to the disclosure rates of barristers providing data.

While the diversity of barristers is improving, the report shows there is some way to go before the Bar is fully representative of the public it serves especially at the level of QC.

Disclosure rates amongst barristers have improved markedly since we started collecting diversity data. The lowest rate of disclosure, which was between 3 and 5 per cent in some categories in 2012, is now 30.8 per cent (for declaring caring responsibilities for others). The disclosure rate for gender is now only just below 100 per cent and it is 91.8 per cent for ethnicity.

We have also published our Equality and Diversity Strategy for 2017-19. Read more.

Should self-employed barristers enjoy similar Shared Parental Leave rights to employed barristers?

That is the question that we are asking in our latest consultation which closes at 5pm, Friday 17 February 2017. Read more.
Blog: Monthly message from our Chair Sir Andrew Burns KCMG

As we mention above, with the annual “Authorisation to Practise” period due to start soon, it is almost time for you to renew your Practising Certificate. Please look out for communications from our Records team about “Authorisation to Practise” and renew online.

When you do so, can I please join the Bar Council in urging you to answer all of the questions to do with Equality and Diversity. If you would rather not answer all of the questions, there is the option to enter “Prefer Not To Say”. We would much rather you select “Prefer Not To Say” than simply leaving the field blank please. In this way, it will be clear to us that you do not want to provide the information, rather than us not knowing whether or not you have completed the questions.

The information that you provide in this area is very important. It is the only reliable source of data available to help us understand the make-up and diversity of the practising Bar.

Why is understanding this so important? Read more.

BSB Handbook Explained: Rules about having a valid practising certificate in order to administer oaths

Along with King’s College London, last month we hosted a forum to discuss how the proposed regulatory reform of training for the Bar will affect the academic study of law. Read more.

BSB Workshop: CPD 2017 - Understanding the new regime

On 15 February, we are running a workshop in conjunction with the Bar Association for Commerce, Finance & Industry (BACFI) to explain the new CPD regime for barristers on the Established Practitioners’ Programme (EPP). Dr Vanessa Davies, Director General, Bar Standards Board is presenting the workshop.

The session, which runs between 6pm and 7pm, includes a short presentation on the rule changes and guidance on how to plan your CPD under the new rules. With handouts available, this workshop provides an opportunity to ask any questions you may have, directly to the BSB. The workshop is open to all barristers.

Followed by drinks, the event is being held at our
We would like to remind you that the administration of oaths is a reserved legal activity under the Legal Services Act 2007.

You are therefore required to hold a current practising certificate in order to undertake this service. Carrying on the activity when not authorised to do so is an offence under the Act.

If you hold a valid practising certificate as a barrister, you will automatically be authorised to undertake the administration of oaths. (Rule S67 of the BSB Handbook).

Barristers' Register

Please ensure that you have informed us of your correct primary practice address in accordance with rS69 of our Handbook. If your practice address changes, you must inform our Records Department within 28 days.

Feedback

If you have any thoughts about how we can improve the Regulatory Update or what content you would like to read, please email contactus@barstandardsboard.org.uk.