

COUNCIL
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Chief Executive's Report to Council – Part 1

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**Classification - Public
Freedom of Information**

Not applicable as this paper is public

Summary:

This report provides an update on issues impacting on the Law Society and our members, along with our responses. The focus of our business plan for 2018/19 is around our four organisational goals and our long-term targets to 2022. Our goals set out what we are trying to accomplish through our activities and programmes.

This paper provides a quarterly update on activities for the period February – May 2019.

Our focus remains on promoting the profession and we can see progress around our brand campaign and our media coverage as we respond to the views and needs of members. Our training programmes are going well through accreditations and PDC alongside our events including sections & divisions which have been well used by members. Direct services have done well in the quarter including the support centre, PAS and publications and interest in the Gazette remains strong. The relationship management service has focused on specific issues such as Brexit and the WIL programme.

We have seen a great deal of change in the last 6 months and have many areas that we need to improve however I am pleased with the progress that has been made and appreciate the efforts that have been made by colleagues.

A concerted effort has been made to include the majority of the information within my Part 1 report.

Recommendations / Conclusions:

This paper is for: noting

Assessments. This should be either a summary of what is in the paper (cross-referenced to the relevant paragraph), or, if the issues are very straightforward, a full statement of the relevant position.

Financial:	There are no financial implications arising from the paper. Financial performance is included within the body of the report.
Risk:	There are no risks arising from the content of this paper
E D & I	There are no ED&I implications arising from this paper.
Organisational Values	Details of the ongoing work to embed our organisational values are included within the paper.
Consultation	Executive Leadership Team

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of issues impacting on the Law Society and our members, along with our responses. The focus of our business plan for 2018/19 is around four organisational goals. Our goals set out what we are trying to accomplish through our activities and programmes. These are:

- Goal 1 - Promoting the profession, so that their value to purchasers, society and the economy is understood and their place in the wider legal market is maintained
- Goal 2 - Influencing for impact, so that the profession's voice is listened to in public and regulatory policy
- Goal 3 - Driving professional excellence, to help members deliver for their clients and be the best they can be
- Goal 4 - Enhancing member value through organisational efficiencies, growth and developing our people

1. Brand awareness campaign

The solicitor brand campaign is a primary component of the core member offer, promoting the profession.

The Solicitor Brand Campaign is designed to promote the profession as honest and honourable, approachable and accessible, experts in their field, client focused, delivering value to clients and adding value to society. Key campaign activity for outdoor and radio/tv advertising will take place across a 6-week period beginning 1 June 2019. We also run an online social media campaign throughout the year and our social KPIs for January to March are shown below. Our headline KPIs cover:

- Impressions (number of times a social media post is displayed in a timeline or search)
- Interactions/engagements (number of times a user likes, shares, comments or clicks on a post)
- Unique users (number of social media users who have engaged with our account)
- Video views (number of times people have watched our videos on Facebook and/or Twitter)

KPIs	Target (per month)	January	February	March
Impressions	700,000	905,602*	924,918	848,546
Interactions/engagements	16,000	21,653*	30,422	30,003
Unique/engaged users	12,000	15,824*	21,559	20,879
Video views:				
• Facebook		77,112	73,379	80,469

*January figures include some risk and compliance figures but as this campaign only had a spend of £138.58 and was very focused on a specific audience group, it was only served to a very select audience and it hasn't contributed significantly to the stats above.

We focused on Facebook to promote videos in this three month period.

A total of 81% of members scored promoting the value of using a solicitor as profession as 7 or more out of 10 for importance in our latest member survey. It is seen as an important aspect of our work by our members and so we need to raise the visibility of it with them. We use real members and case studies and we use the recruitment of members to raise the profile of the campaign with the profession.

Principal photography for the latest phase of the campaign is now completed. The first round of video filming has also been completed. A second round will take place in May and June. The recruitment drive for both photography and videos featured in the Gazette, on our website, in messaging to local law societies and on social media.

We will be adding radio and possibly Spotify advertising to the media mix as part of the campaign for the first time this year in order to reach younger, harder to reach audiences.

2. Keeping members up to date

Whilst we develop the new website and put the foundations in place to improve our online experience, we continue to gain member information through My Law Society. We now have over 60,600 accounts, 93% of our 2018-19 target of 65,000. We have gained an average of 1680 accounts per month for the last 6 months.

A total of 36% of account holders have verified their SRA status. We want to make the registration journey simpler whilst gathering useful member data as we develop the new website.

For information, the most viewed pages on our site in April were:

- Anti-money laundering guidance - 3,481
- No-fault divorce - 2,871
- Largest ever survey on gender equality in legal profession - 1,332
- Preliminary notice of Council elections 2019 - 1,323
- Brexit and the legal sector - our work so far - 1,278

Total practice note pageviews for April 2019 were 47,561

The top 5 practice notes were:

- Alternative business structures - 6,131
- Who owns the file? - 3,287
- Conflict of interests - 1,875
- Disputed wills: Guidance for practitioners - 1,733
- Client care information - 1,647

3. Career companion

The project to review our Diversity and Inclusion Charter has reached a new milestone. 16 firms have now begun to complete the pilot Gender module with support from the Diversity and Inclusion team. The firms in the pilot range from big 200 to small firms, this is to ensure we can understand the challenges for different types of firm in undertaking the more robust approach. The new modular charter will require evidence and action planning. Submissions will be peer assessed. Modules for ethnicity, disability, LGBT and social mobility have also been developed. Learning from the pilot firms will be applied to the scheme before it is finalised.

4. Media

Awareness of the Society's work commenting in the media is the aspect of our influencing work that the most of our members engage with and so this work supports our influencing objectives, but also builds our engagement with members.

We continue to have high volumes of print and online coverage. 528 online and print articles in the first four months of 2019 cited the president's comments on behalf of the Law Society

The media team's broadcast goal in 2019 is 150 to 200 'hits'. We're currently at 104 broadcasts this year. For info in 2018, our best ever year to date, we did 113 broadcasts.

Of particular note was coverage on BBC news, the Today programme and a wide range of other media of our relaunched legal aid desserts map.

5. Accreditations

Criminal Litigation Accreditation Scheme (CLAS)

We continue to make good progress on developing CLAS re-accreditation and the Criminal Law Committee has endorsed the final proposals for re-accreditation. We presented the business case to the Executive Leadership Team in Q2 and are following up on the final financial forecasting requests and outstanding legal advice on the roll out before proceeding. There could be potential to roll out at the end of the financial year.

Quality Assurance (QA)

There is no significant update since the last report. We have implemented several portfolio-wide improvements to align to the updated QA framework and started work on re-designing the Family Law, Family Law Advanced, Criminal Litigation (see above), Immigration and Children Law Accreditations to align them with the QA framework. These projects will run throughout 2019 with CLAS implementation starting from the end of the financial year and the remaining accreditations following in 2019/2020.

Conveyancing Quality Scheme (CQS)

The updated Core Practice Management Standards were launched in February and take effect in May 2019. A series of podcasts have been recorded to support members with the changes as well as Roadshows taking place throughout England and Wales in Q2 and Q3.

The training syllabus for August 2019 – August 2020 is out with training providers who are starting to develop the content for the training.

6. Events

Events has exceeded expectations in Q2. The Law Management Section *People in Practice* event saw an increase in delegate attendance of 102% on last year. The Private Client Section *Cross-Border* conference attracted 61% more delegates than last year.

We delivered 57 events against a target of 83.

7. Professional Development Centre (PDC)

CQS training continues to perform above expectations. This is the first year we have delivered training in the post-Socrates market. We are seeing increased demand for our Immigration & Asylum training, which has also helped to boost income.

Going forward we are expecting to track as per forecast and anticipate another revenue spike when the 2019 CQS update courses are launched on 1 August.

By the end of Q2 we had already scheduled over 50 webinars to run this financial year.

8. Library

The Library team will be migrating to the new CRM, Dynamics 365, this business year and are awaiting an update from IT regarding the Library's adoption of TouchPoint (our unified comms solution) which might enable the team to capture Member feedback after phone calls.

9. Publications

We have found and moved rapidly to a new distributor (Mitie), after the distributor we were using (Prolog) went out of business in Q1. While this disruption inevitably had an impact on

our ability to publish and sell books during the first part of the year, we are now up and running with our new distributor – we published three titles during Q2 and revenue is again being generated.

We aim to launch our new online bookshop by the end of May and expect to see an increase in revenue as it will be much easier for us to promote books and for customers to purchase them.

While our ability to publish books was restricted in the first half of the year, we were still able to commission future publications; in addition to the three titles published during Q2 we have a further 16 scheduled for publication before the end of this financial year and a pipeline of 17 commissioned for 2019-20. Many of these are brand-new titles (rather than new editions of books that we have published before) by authors who are new to Law Society Publishing.

The uncertainty as to when the final text of SRA Standards & Regulations will be approved by the LSB could have an impact on whether we are able to publish some titles related to it before the end of the financial year. Further delays would have a negative effect on revenue; unfortunately, this is out of our control.

10. Support Centre

Successful recruitment has seen the Support Centre back to full staffing numbers. Now that trainees are on live phone lines we are starting to see stronger service levels and lower abandonment rates.

The team has migrated to StaffHub, a web-based workforce management application which will assist any moves to working remotely. Touchpoint satisfaction survey scripts have been drafted and we plan to test these in the next quarter.

11. Practice Advice Service (PAS)

The PAS team has just completed internal testing of working from home, by using offices away from the team elsewhere in the building. The trials have gone well and we're now preparing to test out actual working from home. Like the Support Centre, PAS are also in the process of testing StaffHub.

12. Risk and Compliance

We held our successful annual London Risk and Compliance Conference in March, selling out three weeks before the event and attracting almost 300 delegates. We attended and spoke at four SRA Handbook and Mitigating Risk Events with Relationship Managers in Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds and York. Our digital offer also continues to grow, with a new podcast on data protection and a webinar on the SRA Accounts Rules being released this quarter.

13. Relationship Management

The team continues to focus on Brexit hosting several events and meetings across all segments of the profession, throughout the regions and the city. We have worked closely with the Public Affairs and International teams to bring members together with the MOJ and the Department for Business, Energy Industrial Strategy (BEIS). This engagement continues to add value for members and enables us to promote the guidance that we have produced. Feedback from all events has been very positive, leading to improved perceptions of the Law Society's ability to represent members on the issues.

The team has also been focussed on the area of diversity and inclusion, wrapping up the final Women in Leadership events and continuing to engage with members in forum events

across the city and the regions. Members have expressed their appreciation of the forums as an opportunity to understand best practice and share knowledge.

Finally, the team have maintained the engagement programmes for each area ensuring that members across the regions and the city have access to the Law Society where they live and work.

14. Sections & Divisions

Product Managers in the Communities team have been working through the second quarter of their engagement plan for their respective Section or Division. This quarter has seen the team deliver 18 events across the country of varying nature, including; conferences, networking events, seminars, the JLD ball and forums. The events have obtained excellent delegate feedback with all feedback being used by Product Managers in the development of future events.

In terms of other content, the Communities webpages have had over 60,000 views, meaning that the topical content and information included on the website is being accessed regularly. The team have delivered six inclusive webinars on key topics which will be promoted throughout the financial year. The team have sent 13 Newsletters featuring articles and current awareness updates on the respective area – open rates are consistently high (on average, between 30-50%) demonstrating the value of the content.

15. Gazette

The Gazette's website – lawgazette.co.uk – continues to perform strongly. In the first half of the year, over 1.7 million people visited the site, generating 4.5 million visits and 9 million page views. Year-on-year traffic is up by 11.33% and page views are up by 4.47%.

In mid-March we launched a page dedicated to Women in the Law (it can be found at <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/people/women-in-the-law>). The page contains a variety of content, covering history, profiles, opinion, news and lifestyle, and includes a regular blog by an anonymous female practising solicitor.

The page began as a contribution to mark the Centenary of the Sex Disqualification Removal Act (1919). It provides context to the celebration and reflections the centenary has prompted, with most of the history articles commissioned from groups of academics the Gazette is working with.

With the profession (including the Law Society) closely focused on equality issues, and ways to improve its record on diversity, the Women in the Law page is a key tool for commissioning and collating fact, comment and opinion. It is updated daily with fresh content and has attracted very positive feedback.

16. Litigation Update

Medical Justice v Secretary of State for the Home Department (SSHD) (Administrative Court)

In January 2019 the SLG approved a recommendation for the Society to support, by way of witness statement and supporting evidence, Medical Justice's application for permission to seek judicial review challenging the government's removal windows policy. Medical Justice also sought an injunction.

Brief background:

In November 2018 the Home Office issued guidance setting out a new policy severely restricting the right of individuals to challenge immigration removals at short notice. The policy is thought to have wide reach with the result of limiting access to justice. In some instances, contrary to earlier Parliamentary assurances, an individual was at risk of being detained and removed on the same day without the ability to take legal advice and bring an effective challenge.

The policy replaced similar earlier policies that were the subject of legal challenge, including a matter previously brought by Medical Justice in 2010 in which the Society intervened providing witness and supporting evidence.

On 21 December 2018 the Society wrote to the Home Office setting out concerns and requesting that the SSHD take a number of actions as a matter of urgency. The letter was shared with a number of stakeholders including members of the Society's Immigration committee and Medical Justice.

The SSHD failed to respond substantively to the Society's correspondence and requests, ultimately leading to the issuing of proceedings seeking judicial review and interim relief in the form of an injunction. The Law Society provided supporting evidence together with a witness statement.

Current position:

The application for permission to seek judicial review together with the application for interim relief were heard on 15 March 2019. Walker J granted both permission and interim relief as well as a cost capping order.

The substantive hearing is to be heard at the end of June.