

<p>BAR STANDARDS BOARD</p>

REGULATING BARRISTERS

Part 1 - Public**Minutes of the Bar Standards Board meeting****Thursday 25 July 2024 (4.00 pm)****Hybrid Meeting, Rooms 1.4-1.7, BSB Offices & MS Teams**

- Present:** Kathryn Stone OBE (Chair)
Gisela Abbam
Simon Lewis
Andrew Mitchell KC
Irena Sabic KC – via Teams
Professor Leslie Thomas KC
Stephen Thornton CBE
- By invitation:** Malcolm Cree CBE (Chief Executive, Bar Council) – via Teams
Lorinda Long, Treasurer, Bar Council – via Teams
Barbara Mills (Vice Chair, Bar Council) – via Teams
Marie-Claire O’Hara (Member, Education & Training Committee, Bar Council) – via Teams
James Wakefield KC (Hon) (Director, Council of the Inns of Court)
- Press:** Neil Rose, Legal Futures – via Teams
- BSB Executive** Georgia Bozekova (Senior People Manager) – via Teams
Christopher Fitzsimons (Communications Manager) – via Teams
Rebecca Forbes (Head of Governance & Corporate Services)
Teresa Haskins (Director of People, BSB)
Joy Isaacs (Change Manager, BSB People Team)
Sara Jagger (Director of Legal and Enforcement)
Samantha Jensen (Corporate Services Manager) – via Teams
Ewen Macleod (Director of Strategy & Policy)
Rupika Madhura (Interim Director of Standards)
Mark Neale (Director General)
John Picken (Governance Officer)
Wilf White (Director of Communications & Public Engagement)
- Resources Group** Richard Cullen (Director of Finance) – via Teams

Item 1 – Welcome / Announcements**Action**

1. Kathryn Stone welcomed those present, in particular Barbara Mills KC and Marie-Claire O’Hara who were attending the Board for the first time.
2. She also noted, with regret, that this would be the last meeting for James Wakefield KC who leaves his role as Director of the Council of the Inns of Court in August 2024. She thanked James for his helpful and kind support over the years and wished him well for the future. The Board applauded his contribution. The incoming Director of COIC, Andy Russell, will be invited to attend future Board meetings.

3. **Item 2 – Apologies**

- Alison Allden OBE
- Jeff Chapman KC
- Emir Feisal JP
- Steve Haines
- Sam Townend KC (Chair, Bar Council);
- Saima Hirji (Acting Director of Regulatory Operations)

Item 3 – Members’ interests and hospitality

4. None.

Item 4 – Approval of Part 1 (public) minutes (Annex A)

5. The Board **approved** the Part 1 (public) minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2024.

Item 5a – Matters arising & Action List

6. There were no matters arising.

Item 5b – Forward agenda

7. The Board **noted** the forward agenda list.

Item 6 – Recommendations on changes to Authorisations process – Phase 1

BSB 035 (24)

8. The Chair thanked those who had responded to the consultation document for their careful consideration of this issue. She also acknowledged the diligence of those BSB staff who had initially prepared the relevant papers.
9. At the Chair’s request, Mark Neale explained the executive’s view that this item should be deferred until the next meeting. This is to allow Board Members sufficient time to access the associated guidance notes for Bar training providers. He commented that:
- there was unanimity among consultee respondents on the importance of maintaining standards – anyone embarking on Bar training must already have a sound understanding of the foundations of legal knowledge;
 - however, there are now more diverse (non-degree) routes available through which students can gain that understanding and the BSB would not wish to exclude applicants from these alternative pathways;
 - a consequential proposal is to afford a larger role on the part of Bar training providers to make judgments about whether students have achieved the necessary entry standard. The guidance referenced above will be relevant in that regard in providing quality assurance;
 - it follows that the Board will have a better and more informed discussion once that guidance is available.
10. The Chair concurred with this view and also suggested the option of an additional briefing for Board Members prior to the next formal meeting so that consultation responses can be considered fully.
11. **AGREED**
to defer consideration of the paper concerning Phase 1 of changes to the Authorisations process until the next meeting.

**MN to
note**

Item 7 – Annual Report 2023-24

BSB 036 (24)

12. Chris Fitzsimons commented as follows:
- subject to some further minor textual amendments we aim to publish the Annual Report within the next week;
 - the structure of the Report follows a similar pattern to last year ie a response to the business plan;
 - we plan to review next year’s iteration in terms of:
 - its design;
 - its content (possibly merging it with other, associated reports); and
 - the timing of publication (ie after BSB accounts have been audited).
 - any feedback on these ideas or the Annual Report itself are welcome.
13. Gisela Abbam welcomed the report but suggested that next year’s version could more closely align original business plan objectives with outcomes. The Board then **approved** the 2023/24 Annual Report for publication subject to the minor amendments mentioned above.

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Item 8 – Director General’s Report – Public Session

BSB 037 (24)

14. The Board **noted** the report.

Item 9 – Chair’s Report on Visits and External Meetings

BSB 038 (24)

15. The Chair highlighted her attendance at the Legal Services Board on 23 July 2024 and was accompanied by Andrew Mitchell KC and Stephen Thornton. This was a very positive and constructive meeting and a joint Board to Board meeting is now currently scheduled for 4 September 2024.
16. Andrew Mitchell KC also welcomed this meeting and was pleased that LSB publicly recognised the Board of the BSB as one which consisted of people with real expertise, knowledge, and experience (likewise the executive).

Item 10 – Any Other Business

17. None.

Item 11 – Date of next meeting

18. • Thursday 26 September 2024, 2.00pm.

Item 12 – Private Session

19. The Board resolved to consider the following items in private session:
- (1) Approval of Part 2 (private) minutes – 23 May 2024.
 - (2) Matters arising and action points – Part 2.
 - (3) Corporate risk – annual Deep Dive.
 - (4) Reform and reorganisation.
 - (5) Reappointment and recruitment of Board Members and appointments of Board Members to Committees.
 - (6) Director General’s Report – Private Session.
 - (7) Any other private business.
20. The meeting finished at 5.15 pm.