



Shaping our Next Strategy: Gathering insights and evidence

Introduction

Barristers play a fundamental role in our legal system and the rule of law and, therefore, in the promotion of the public interest. The Bar Standards Board regulates barristers and specialised legal services businesses in England and Wales in the public interest. We are currently developing our new strategy, which will be a comprehensive plan to set our priorities into the 2030s.

Recent years have shown challenges in barristers' ability to serve the public interest. There are ongoing concerns about the culture of the profession, demonstrated particularly in allegations of bullying and harassment. As the Post Office Inquiry has highlighted, there are questions around whether barristers are always meeting ethical standards. And ultimately, the profession should deliver good outcomes for people who need legal services. Work remains to be done to ensure that barristers, and the legal services market in which they operate, always work effectively for consumers and the wider public.

Barristers must also navigate significant external challenges effectively to deliver the public interest. These include the continued influence of cost-of-living pressures, challenges in funding of the legal system, and rapid technology change.

We are seeking to gather insights and evidence to inform our emerging thinking about the development of our new strategy. We will consult on a draft strategy later in the year.

Our vision, purpose and ambition

We welcome views on the articulation of our proposed vision, purpose and ambition, which are as follows:

Vision: *An excellent and ethical barrister profession which inspires public confidence and advances the interest of justice*

Purpose: *Regulating the barrister profession in the public interest*

Ambition: *To be recognised as an excellent regulator trusted to advance the public interest*

What do you think the BSB needs to consider and prioritise?

In considering the available evidence and the environment in which we work, we have grouped our initial thoughts under the following headings and we welcome views on whether these, or other priorities, should feature in our new strategy:

- **An effective, competitive market for barristers' services where consumers are empowered to engage effectively with barristers**



To address risks that affect individual consumers through effective standards, engagement and enforcement, with special attention to consumers who are experiencing vulnerability; and to ensure consumers from diverse backgrounds can benefit equally from a competitive market for barristers, with improved access to affordable services and the development of innovations that make services more accessible.

- **A competent and ethical profession**

To ensure that barristers demonstrate competence and uphold ethical standards, contributing to the proper functioning of the justice system and delivering in the public interest.

- **A profession where everyone has equal opportunities and success is not limited by background**

To ensure the barrister profession can deliver for the public through a professional culture where barriers to progression and retention are removed. The profession generally, and chambers in particular, should be welcoming environments for barristers of all views and all backgrounds.

This remains early thinking. We are very open to feedback from our stakeholders on these priorities, and the other issues we have raised here. We also welcome feedback on our approach to regulation in general, the extent to which we need to adapt our approach to take account of devolution in Wales and how we might more effectively monitor and report on our performance.

There will be further opportunities to engage with the strategy as we develop a draft on which we will consult later in the year.

How to respond

You can provide feedback using [this survey](#). If you require the survey in an alternative format, please contact us by email (policy@barstandardsboard.org.uk) or telephone (020 7611 1444). If you do not want to be named as a respondent, please also let us know.

We welcome views on the following questions:

1. What are your views on our draft statements of vision, purpose and ambition?
2. Can you offer insights and evidence related to the current environment in which the BSB and the barrister profession operate that will help inform our strategic thinking?
3. What do you think of these early emerging priorities for regulating in the public interest? Is there anything that has been missed, or should be prioritised less?
4. Do you have any feedback on our approach to regulation in general or of the barrister profession in Wales?



5. Do you have views on how we might more effectively monitor and report on performance?
6. Is there anything else you would like to add?

The deadline for responses is **Wednesday 9 April 2025**.