

February 2021



Urgent Action Call for Courts as COVID Safety Fears Grow

Solicitors' leaders today called for urgent action including a possible two week pause of non-custodial Crown and magistrates' court work amid escalating safety concerns.

The Law Society of England and Wales today wrote to HM Courts and Tribunals Service and the senior presiding judge, outlining fears about the safety of members and other court users, in light of the new more transmittable coronavirus variant. [Read more.](#)

Mental Health White Paper Published

On Wednesday 13th January the secretary of state for health and social care, Matt Hancock, delivered a statement in parliament on the publication of the new White Paper on reforming the Mental Health Act. The health secretary outlined four pillars of this work, covering: giving patients a voice in their own care; addressing the disparities that currently exist within the application of the Mental Health Act; supporting patients within the criminal justice system; and improving how those with learning disabilities and autistic people are treated under the Act. The government will consult on the White Paper and respond later this year before bringing forward a new mental health bill.



Changing the Way the Next Generation Enter the Legal Profession

Legal apprenticeships are still a relatively new route into the legal profession but are fast becoming a pathway to rival the well-travelled "traditional" university and LPC route.

As we move into the new regulatory landscape of the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) and Qualifying Work Experience, this means of recruiting and developing junior lawyers is establishing itself as a viable alternative to the traditional training contract model.

Our first cohort of legal apprentices started in 2016 and will qualify in 2022. The number of firms (of all shapes and sizes) and apprentices are growing. In just four years we have seen an increase from 70 legal apprentices (from 16 employers) to more than 400 (from over 100 different employers).

We are seeing a cultural shift taking place with highly capable students from a variety of backgrounds making a deliberate choice to follow the apprenticeship route. [Read more.](#)

Events & Training

Set Your People and Business up for Success in 2021

Positive reflections from 2020 and shared expertise to set your people and business up for success in 2021. [Book here.](#)

Date: 16/03/2021
Start Time: 12:30
End Time: 13:30

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MARCH

An Introduction to Legal Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are available to anyone who wants to enhance their career regardless of their background, age or experience. [Book here.](#)

Date: 03/03/2021
Start Time: 12:30
End Time: 13:30

03
MARCH

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION CONFERENCE 2021



By popular demand and following the successful event held in 2020, the Leeds Law Society in conjunction with the Law Society of England and Wales will once again be holding a virtual Diversity and Inclusion Conference to mark National Inclusion Week from 14th September 2021 to 30th September 2021 (Tuesdays and Thursdays and at various times of day).

The conference will consist of virtual events across six days, with recorded sessions being released at the same time. Each will focus on a particular strand of diversity and inclusion: Mental Wellbeing,

Social Mobility, Gender, Disability, LGBTQ+, Religion, Age, Race and Ethnicity.

This national conference will range from panel sessions made up of leading figures within a particular strand of diversity and inclusion to individual talks from experts within their field, as well as contributions from various other organisations. The events will also offer guidance on the business case for diversity and inclusion, as well as offering firms and other organisations hints and tips on diversity and inclusion best practice.

The conference will once again look to tackle the complex and difficult issues facing individuals, firms and organisations across a variety of diversity and inclusion strands, as well as the promotion of diversity and inclusion within the legal sector.

The event will build on the themes of last year's conference and, with a host of contributing speakers from across the county, looks set to be the biggest and most ambitious event of its type yet.

Please save the dates of the conference in your diary now to avoid disappointment and watch this space for further information on timings and how to register in due course.



Family Mediation Week



In January each year, the process of family mediation is celebrated and it's benefits to many separated families including children is promoted nationwide. This year family mediation week fell on 18th – 22nd January.

The Family Mediation Council organised daily activities for practitioners to get involved in. At the start of the week, the FMC chair, John Taylor, hosted a virtual event including a number of guest speakers. It was great to also hear from local Leeds based family mediator, Anna Vollans who was involved in the unenviable task of organising the agenda for the week.

On Tuesday, a Mock mediation online video was circulated and shared across various social media platforms. The video is a truly insightful piece, giving the viewer a real taste of what it is like for parties in a family mediation session. The video can be watched [here](#).

On Wednesday, mediation practices around the Country took part in a virtual coffee morning. At Consilia, we hosted our own virtual coffee morning which was a great opportunity to catch up with local practitioners in Leeds and surrounding areas and answer any burning mediation questions.

On Thursday, Parenting app, Our Family Wizard showcased their app and how it can assist separated families in improving communication and reducing conflict.

To try and get mediation trending on Twitter to finish off the week, the FMC asked as many people as possible to tweet #FamilyMediationWeek.

It was fantastic to see so many practitioners in Leeds getting involved in the activities of the week and playing their part in promoting and sharing information about the benefits of family mediation. Whilst separated families have experienced additional pressures and strains as a result of the pandemic, family mediation practices have done a phenomenal job of, in the words of FMC Chair John Taylor "keeping the show on the road", particularly when the courts are struggling to manage the number of family law applications and the situation does not appear to be easing.

Family mediation services deserve widespread recognition for the critical work that they continue to do to help separated families resolve conflict not only during family mediation week but all year round.

Laura Clapton, Consilia Legal
Chair of Resolution West and North Yorkshire



Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer

The official journal of Leeds Law Society. The Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer has been keeping the local legal community fully informed since 1991. You can access the latest issue [here](#).