

City of London Law Society - Training Committee

MINUTES of meetings the CLLS Training Committee held at the offices of Cleary Gottlieb, City Place House, 55 Basinghall Street, EC2V 5EH at 9.30 pm on 21 April, 2016

PRESENT:

Caroline Pearce, Cleary Gottlieb Hamilton & Steen (Chair)
Hannah Kozlova Lindsay, Berwin Leighton Paisner
Stephanie Tidball, Macfarlanes
Frances Moore, Slaughter and May
Ben Perry, Sullivan & Cromwell
Lindsay Gerrand, DLA Piper (by phone)
Rita Dev, Allen & Overy (by phone)

ALSO PRESENT:

David Hobart, CLLS

APOLOGIES:

Ruth Grant, Hogan Lovells
Catherine Moss, Winckworth Sherwood
Patrick McCann, Herbert Smith Freehills

The meeting discussed the following issues:

1. SRA's Training for Tomorrow: SQE

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss next steps following submission of the committee's response to the consultation which has now closed.

The SRA seemed to be postponing meetings until after the SRA board's announcement of its response to the consultation expected some time in June. However, one to one meetings were taking place with senior partners of City firms, Stephanie mentioned a recent such meeting at Macfarlanes.

It was noted that the law schools were pressing ahead with plans on the basis of the SQE as presented in the consultation. They were also looking at offering "gold-plated" versions aiming at the standard that City firms would require and including the electives elements. These are expected to be costly.

A discussion took place on various aspects which are of most concern to member firms: the timing issues of studying for the SQE exams and the recognised training; getting the SRA to acknowledge the crucial nature of maintaining quality standards, especially in the context of international recognition of the qualification; and effectively promoting diversity issues to ensure that those from non-traditional backgrounds do not end up taking cheaper, less recognised courses and then at a legal cul de sac.

It was agreed that the committee would seek an early meeting with the SRA's training committee in attempt continue to make the City's case and influence the direction of the SRA before publication of its response.

2. Legal Apprenticeships

Again the law schools appear to be working on this. Their model of apprenticeships incorporates a law degree and it was noted that there was a certain irony in this if the SQE does not.

The paralegal apprenticeship and solicitor apprenticeship was compared and the former was seen as the lower risk. Those who are successful on the paralegal apprenticeship could then move on to the solicitor apprenticeship. Some committee firms are looking at this.

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Chair