

**Minutes of CLLS Training Committee Meeting
Thursday 25th February, by Webex**

Present (Committee members):

Richard Album (RA)
Edward Brown (joining from item 3)
Peter Carrick
Lindsay Gerrand
Caroline Janes (taking minutes)
Greg Lascelles
Patrick McCann (chair)
Louisa Mendes Da Costa (joining from item 8)
Frances Moore (FM)
Catherine Moss (joining from item 3)
Ben Perry (BP)
Julia Robinson (JR)
Stephanie Tidball (ST)
Sabina Clark (clerk to committee)

Guests:

Julie Brannan, SRA (JB, joining at item 8)
Victoria Cromwell and Sarah Hutchinson, Barbri (VC and SH, joining at item 9)

Apologies:

The chairman opened the meeting.

1. Minutes of 2 December 2020 meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 2 December 2020 were approved.

2. Wellbeing check in – standing agenda item

Committee members discussed how their teams were managing with the ongoing lockdown. In particular the challenges and opportunities for L&D teams.

3. The committee's year planner 2021 – an update

- JR attended and provided a brief summary of the Kings College's 'Racial disparity within the legal profession' event last month. JR's summary will be circulated.
- Our Chair attended the recent CLLS annual dinner event which had been reformatted and hosted as a webinar. Recognition was given to the good work of the committee over the last 12 months.
- Committee members had attended Law Society's Chatham House round table discussion on 23rd February on 'future skills of the legal profession'.
- Further possible committee events and thought leadership ideas were discussed, to be confirmed for later in the year.

Volunteers in particular sought for:

- Spring workshop focusing on post-Covid L&D: lesson learnt, hybrid design- when face-to-face and when screen-to-screen, design of virtual networking element – to take place in late April
- Summer workshop focusing on emerging topics – mental health, multi-located leadership,

emerging areas of legal practice, re-entry, junior development, team culture – to take place in July (*RA interested*)

4. **Committee’s ‘Now and Navigating the Return’ webinar** event on Friday 26 February 2021
 - Expecting 100 delegates, positive engagement.
5. **The SRA’s position** on whether paralegals and those working in the provision of legal services (not as solicitor) may be on the roll and may hold a practising certificate
 - a. The CLLS Training Committee and CLLS Professional Rules and Regulation Committee (“CLLS PR&PC”) are pleased to have received confirmation in writing from the SRA’s Ethics Guidance Team as follows:
 - That a solicitor can be employed by an SRA authorised firm in a non-solicitor role. However they will be subject to s1A Solicitors Act 1974 and will need a practising certificate.
 - The solicitor can choose to be removed from the roll of solicitors, at which point s1A will not apply.
 - This does not mean that the solicitor on the roll with a practising certificate cannot be held out as (or paid as) a paralegal. The rule allows for this possibility, but the solicitor and the employing firm will need to ensure that their publicity (including profiles on the website and job titles) is not misleading under paragraph 8.8 SRA Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs in this respect. The solicitor may be at risk under Principle 2 SRA Principles (maintaining public trust in the profession and provision of legal services) and paragraph 8.8 if, whilst employed in the role of a paralegal, the solicitor undertakes work relying on their qualification as a solicitor (for example, to appear in court) in the course of the same employment.
 - b. The chair gave thanks to Melanie Surroop and Sarah Boland from the CLLS PR&PC for all their work and support to receive this clarification. It was a collaboration across our two CLLS committees.
 - c. It was noted that the SRA Training branch’s webinar of 21st January 2021 had delivered a contradictory message on this point. Following correspondence between the CLLS PR&PC and the SRA this webinar was taken down and corrected.
6. **Collaboration with the Law Society**
 - a. Representatives from the Law Society will join our next meeting (25 May 2021).
 - b. Marialuisa Taddia has been commissioned by the *Law Society Gazette* to write a feature on the shift to screen-to-screen learning during Covid-19 (including with providers), the impact on continuing competence and competencies focus, and is looking for views on: (i) how legal education will change (notwithstanding SQE), and (ii) how law firms are adapting.
7. **Solicitors’ Company Trainee Essay Prize 2021**
 - The Committee are pleased to again be supporting this prestigious and important prize through the review and marking of the submissions. ***Volunteer requested – ST offered.***
8. **Collaboration with the SRA**

JB joined the meeting for this agenda item.

 - a. SRA confirmed that the recent SRA/Kaplan survey on future dates for SQE 1 and SQE 2 (beyond the initial sittings in November 2021 and April 2022) had closed on 19 February 2021. The SRA noted:
 - The survey results are currently being reviewed by Kaplan. Information will be shared through the relevant SRA update, this was likely to be in March 2021.
 - The plan is to get final dates out for future years in the SRA’s April 2021 update. This will be the dates for the second and subsequent years SQE exam dates cycle.

These will be the month 'placeholders' rather than the actual exam dates for SQE 1 and SQE 2.

- It was noted that for 2021, the SQE 1 calendar dates have been published. The first SQE 2 dates have not yet been shared, just the calendar month. The first actual SQE 2 dates will also be confirmed in the SQE's April update.
- b. There was a brief discussion on the LSB's work on Ongoing Competence, and the [report](#) it has published following its call for evidence.
 - Our chair conformed he had completed the survey and had spoken to the LSB.
 - The LSB is exploring the position around the ongoing review of competence of acting as an England & Wales solicitor.
- c. The SRA noted that market developments and press updates have been focused on law school costs, for example the recent University of Law and College of Legal Practice press articles.
 - The SRA are seeing a range of different courses, with different modes of study and price points. This is what the SRA wanted to see.
 - The SRA are hearing of some interest amongst national firms to use the apprenticeship levy to fund the SQE.
- d. There was a discussion around the reporting in the press of a possible two tier system of preparation with the SQE. Whether this potentially disadvantages the future prospects of those sitting the exam.
 - The SRA noted that they hoped there would be a range of courses and approaches to study to meet the business needs of different firms. That those who are self-funding can do so at a lower cost and therefore have the opportunity to qualify.

9. Social Mobility SQE scholarship

VC and SH joined the meeting for this agenda item.

- The chair discussed how we might establish a CLLS bursary to support course costs for the SQE. To be an annual award to support those who may not otherwise be able to afford the course.
- Barbri explained the context and opportunity:
 - that there are already many people fulfilling an important role in society and giving advice that is at a solicitor level, but the barrier to these hard working and committed people is the cost of qualification. The SQE has been designed for that purpose.
 - Barbri and the City can give back to the profession through a CLLS bursary.
 - Barbri are well placed to identify candidates who are working in that segment of the legal market, those working within legal advice centres delivering pro-bono advice to those that would otherwise be unrepresented. To support the goal of social mobility.
 - Barbri are setting up a fund to support social mobility, to work with their law firm clients to build this fund.
 - How might the fund work? For X (e.g. 4) number of CLLS bursary funded places Barbri would fund an additional place. The cost of funding four places would be £40,000, Barbri would fund the fifth place for free. This cost for the five places would cover the Barbri preparation course and the cost of the SQE exam.
 - Barbri do not want it to be a 'Barbri initiative', instead longer term for it to be a wider purpose initiative for other law school providers to join in due course.
 - ***Volunteer sought to work with the Chair to bring this to fruition (RA interested)***
- The committee were supportive of this initiative and agreed to take discussions forward with the CLLS and within firms. In the above context BP mentioned the Committee to the CLLS's Levelling Up Law social mobility initiative (BP will circulate details).

10. AOB

The committee congratulated FM on her recent promotion to Head of Learning & Development at Slaughter & May.