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Tim Pearce

Education and Training Unit

Solicitors Regulation Authority

By email: consultation@sra.org.uk

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Dear Mr Pearce,

This is the response of the Young Legal Aid Lawyers (YLAL) to the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) consultation, “Review of the minimum salary requirement for trainee solicitors”.

YLAL is a group of junior lawyers who are committed to practising in those areas of law, both criminal and civil, that have traditionally been publicly funded. YLAL members include students, paralegals, trainee solicitors, pupil barristers and qualified junior lawyers based throughout England and Wales. Currently, we have around 1,700 members.

In summary, we are strongly opposed to the abolition of the trainee minimum salary. In our view the minimum salary provides an important safeguard that protects against exploitation and contributes to social mobility and diversity within the legal profession. We find it surprising and disappointing that the SRA – a body charged with encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession and promoting the public interest – would even contemplate such a course of action. We have included in this response case studies from our own membership to highlight our concerns with the proposal.

Timing

Before turning to the consultation questions, we wish to raise an initial concern about the timing of the consultation. In our view the consultation is badly-timed given the ongoing Legal Education and Training Review (LETR), a joint project between the SRA, the Bar Standards Board and the Institute of Legal Executives Professional Standards. The LETR will consider whether the training contract remains appropriate and relevant to the provision of legal services. Given the potential serious impact of any SRA decision on the minimum salary as set out below, we would ask the SRA Board to delay a final decision until the LETR has concluded.

Response to the consultation questions

Question 1. On the basis of the regulatory principles set down in the Legal Services Act, do you think there is a regulatory role for the SRA in setting a minimum salary for trainees?

Yes.

Under the Legal Services Act 2007 (the 2007 Act) the SRA is an approved regulator and is mandated to act so far as is reasonably practicable, in a way which is compatible with the regulatory objectives as set out in section one of the 2007 Act. These regulatory objectives include protecting and promoting the public interest; protecting and promoting the interests of consumers; encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession; and promoting and maintaining adherence to the professional principles.

Of key relevance to this consultation is the regulatory objective to "encourage an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession". We would argue that the minimum salary for trainee solicitors helps the SRA to achieve this objective. Principally, in the experience of our members, the existence of a minimum salary for trainee solicitors since 1982 has allowed people from lower socio-economic backgrounds to enter the profession.

Our membership includes many individuals from state school backgrounds, who have financed themselves through university and postgraduate courses. It also includes those

with substantial debts due to career development loans; those with financial responsibilities; and also individuals with dependants. Many of these members could not have managed to subsist on anything less than the minimum salary during their training contracts.

The certainty of the minimum salary has also allowed a degree of security and financial planning for those looking to embark on a career as a solicitor. These factors are important for individuals thinking of changing careers or starting the route to qualification part way through their adult lives. It is particularly important to encourage these late-entrants to the profession as they bring with them a wealth of experience. This is significant as solicitors require transferable skills and experience to provide an effective service to clients. In this respect the minimum salary contributes to protecting and promoting the interests of consumers.

We believe it is vital that the profession is open to all, no matter what an individual's financial circumstances might be. The minimum salary plays an integral role in ensuring that there is equality of opportunity. This has wider consequences both for clients and for society as a whole. For example, in the context of criminal practice it is important for young people who become involved in the criminal justice system to understand and trust their solicitors. Without a relationship of trust and understanding it is not possible for the solicitor to effectively represent the young person. From the young person's point of view this may fuel their disenfranchisement with the criminal justice system. To counteract this it is important that lawyers reflect the ethnic and socio-economic make-up of society as a whole. It is our view that the safeguard of the minimum salary contributes to this goal (see also answers to questions three and six). In this respect the minimum salary, as well as encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession, is promoting a public interest as well as protecting "consumers".

For these reasons we consider that as an approved regulator of the profession, the SRA should continue to set a minimum salary for trainee solicitors.

Question 2. Do you have any comments on the compatibility of the SRA's strategy of outcomes-focused regulation with the setting of a minimum salary?

The SRA's strategic aim to regulate only in areas of identified risk to the public interest and the rule of law is compatible with the maintenance of a minimum salary. It is clearly in the public interest for the legal profession to be truly representative of society as a whole (see above). Further, it helps maintain the general wellbeing of society to ensure that the profession is open to all and there is equality of opportunity.

We consider that it is important for the legal profession to represent the community it serves. It can only be good for the profession (and society as a whole) to include solicitors from a full range of backgrounds. It is important to recognise that a diverse profession means that there should be male and female lawyers, people of different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, people with disabilities as well as people from different socio-economic groups.

It should also be recognised that clients for whom English is not a first language may prefer to instruct a solicitor who speaks their own language, instead of having to use a third party as interpreter. Research conducted by the SRA in 2008 supports this, particularly in relation to clients reliant on legal aid. The results of the survey showed that 54% of ethnic minority respondents who had used a legal aid solicitor felt they needed a solicitor who spoke their native language (as opposed to just 22% of those who paid privately). As the report states, “[t]his would indicate that the ability to speak a particular language is a significant issue for the majority of people in ethnic minorities who use legal aid solicitors, but not for the majority of those that pay privately.”¹

In relation to whether it is important to clients for them to instruct a solicitor with the same ethnic background, the SRA survey results were revealing. Thirty-nine per cent of the legal aid respondents felt that it was very or quite important, compared to 10% of clients who paid privately. More than two-thirds (68%) of the legal aid respondents felt that it was important that their solicitor understands their culture and lifestyle”²

¹ P25 “Consumer research study 2008. A survey of public attitudes towards solicitors”, February 2009, SRA available from <http://www.sra.org.uk/sra/how-we-work/consumer-research/consumer-research.page>

² *Ibid* p27

The survey results indicate that the solicitor's cultural background and ability to speak the client's native language are important factors for some clients when deciding whether to obtain legal help or not. There is a risk that clients may forego legal help entirely if they cannot access help from a professional who speaks their language or who is from their own ethnic background.

This may mean that a decrease in the diversity of the profession could lead to a section of society being less willing to seek legal help in future, thereby risking people going without advice as to their rights and entitlements. In light of this it can be seen that the removal of the minimum salary would undermine access to justice and the rule of law.

In relation to the legal aid sector, the removal or severe reduction of the minimum salary could see a decrease in the number of people entering or drawn to legal aid work. This is because it is likely to be firms offering legal aid services which will choose to pay less than the minimum salary should the restrictions be lifted (see below). A reduction in the level of pay in legal aid firms (already low relative to the rest of the legal profession) is likely to impact on entry to the profession for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

A drop in the number of solicitors willing to work in these crucial areas of law for the very poorest in society would be detrimental to the public interest.

Case study 1

T is from a Black and Minority Ethnic background and she speaks a native language not widely taught to non-native speakers. She applied for a training contract with a firm that had several offices. One of the offices was based in a part of West London where the language was spoken by 80% of the residents. The fact that T spoke this particular language made her stand out as a candidate and reduced the need for the firm to use interpreters. The firm instantly decided that T would be placed in this office for the majority of her training contract.

T was able to deal with clients more efficiently. It also seemed that clients preferred to see T over the other lawyers as they knew T would be able to advise them in their native language, which put them at ease. Some of T's clients said that they preferred coming to see her because they could convey their issues clearly to her and felt comfortable in her presence. T working in the firm benefited the clients and the community as well as the firm.

Commenting on the proposal to abolish the trainee minimum salary, T said that this would have prevented her from applying to the firm where her language skills and cultural awareness were required. This is because her firm was a long distance from her house and the costs of travel and living expenses would have meant she would have struggled financially.

Question 3. To what extent do you think the removal of the minimum salary requirement will result in employers reducing the salary paid to trainee solicitors?

Within the legal aid sector we believe this is a significant risk. Many firms and legal organisations who conduct legal aid work are already at the margins of financial viability, as set out in a report published by Otterburn Legal Consulting for the Law Society in 2011³. The report set out the findings of a survey of around 160 firms carrying out legal aid work. Many were struggling already due to a number of pressures, including the recession and changes to rules and procedures for payment from the Legal Services Commission. This had resulted in major cash flow issues for a number of firms. The authors reported firms' worries that Government's legal aid proposals would undermine further their financial viability.

Since that survey Government has reduced fees paid for legal aid work across-the-board by 10%. It is too early to see clearly the consequences of this cut in income, though it has already led to the high profile closure of a major legal advice organisation⁴. The cuts are likely to severely impact on the ability of other firms and organisations to stay afloat.

Further, the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill (LASPO) currently working its way through parliament is due to remove many areas of law from the scope of legal aid. These areas include the vast majority of private family work, employment, education and clinical negligence. In our representations to Government we have argued that the reduction in scope is likely to have a negative impact on the financial viability of firms and organisations, as individuals are unlikely to be able to afford to pay privately for the same work carried out previously under the legal aid scheme. Therefore firms and organisations are likely to lose a great number of clients and income will drop accordingly.

³"Impact of the MOJ Green Paper proposals on legal aid firms" Otterburn Legal Consulting, February 2011
<http://www.otterburn.co.uk/legalaidreport.pdf>

⁴ The 10% fee cut was cited as one reason why trustees of Law For All decided to close the organisation down with effect from July 2011 – "Law for All blames bureaucracy burden for closure", 29 July 2011, Law Society Gazette
<http://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/law-all-blames-bureaucracy-burden-closure>

It is also Government's intention to impose a mandatory telephone gateway for all civil legal aid services. This would change completely the way in which legal services are provided to publicly-funded clients, again leading to a reduction in the numbers of clients for firms and organisations without contracts to provide the telephone advice.

Against this background, it is clear that if firms and organisations are able to reduce costs to try to ensure a continuing service to individuals, they will do this. There is no evidence or reason to believe that a reduction in salaries will be balanced by an increase in the number of training contracts being offered (see below).

Any reduction in the level of wages paid to trainee solicitors will hit those individuals hard. However, for those working in the legal aid sector, we believe it will be doubly difficult for them to accept a reduction in salary. This is because in the main, trainee solicitors working in the legal aid sector do very difficult and crucial work for vulnerable individuals. Often they have their own caseload and regular client contact. They negotiate and litigate. They deal with key rights and entitlements, including helping to defend individuals charged with serious criminal offences; advising parents whose children have been taken into care by the state; or defending tenants against eviction.

Further, many trainees in legal aid firms work over 35 hour weeks and some work up to 45-50 hours a week on a regular basis with no additional salary. The removal of the trainee minimum salary is likely to mean that trainees will, in effect, be working for less than the national minimum wage when overtime is taken into account.

In 2010 the Legal Services Commission stopped its training contract grant scheme. This has led to a reduced number of training contracts being offered by legal aid firms and organisations and increased competition for sought-after placements. This shortage means that employers are able to offer very low salaries in the knowledge that there are many willing and able individuals desperate to secure one of the rare training contracts in the legal aid sector. Whilst some current law students may be willing to work for less than the minimum salary now there will be some who will not be able to accept a reduction in wages – particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds and those with dependants or financial responsibilities.

Any reduction in the salary of trainee solicitors is likely to have a knock-on effect for others working in the firm or organisation. The wages of paralegals or caseworkers are often lower than those of trainee solicitors. A reduction in the minimum salary is likely to lead to a reduction in the salary of those even lower down the scale. As set out above, we believe this will have consequences for the diversity of the profession.

The reduction in salary for trainees is likely also to see a reduction in salary for qualified solicitors, as many firms use the trainee salary as a marker for rates of pay for newly-qualified staff members. Again, this could deter some people from entering the profession, if they know that their salary is unlikely to cover living costs and financial responsibilities.

Case study 2

M started her training contract with a legal aid firm. Due to legal aid cuts the firm went into administration and M was made redundant with eight months of her training contract left. There were very few firms that wanted to take M on. She had previously been paid at the trainee minimum salary and expected all firms to do this. Eventually a firm agreed to sponsor the remaining eight months of her training contract and cover her PSC costs. However, the firm first took her on as a volunteer and then afterwards paid her at the National Minimum Wage. The firm had not sought prior permission from the SRA to do this. However, they knew that M was in a difficult position and therefore would be unlikely to complain. M was often required to work 10-12 hour days paid at the salary of 35 hours per week on the National Minimum Wage during her training contract. She felt that she could not report the firm to the SRA as this could risk the completion of her training contract and she did not want to gain a reputation as a trouble-maker.

Question 4. To what extent do you think the removal of the minimum salary requirement will discourage individuals from less wealthy backgrounds from pursuing a career as a solicitor?

We believe that it is very likely that people from less wealthy backgrounds will be discouraged from pursuing a career as a solicitor. This is particularly a risk in the legal aid sector where the salary paid has always been significantly lower than other training contract providers including the Government and commercial firms.

Over recent years the cost of studying law has increased, with university fees increasing dramatically in addition to the costs of the Legal Practice Course (LPC). Since the financial

crisis many banks have stopped offering career development loans for LPC places. This means that for those wishing to work in legal aid there are fewer financial opportunities than previously. As a consequence, people have had to take loans from banks with high interest rates and shorter periods of repayment. Also, unlike with student loans, there is no minimum income threshold which must be reached before an individual must start paying back these bank loans. This means that even for those earning the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or an apprenticeship rate of pay they could be faced immediately with demands for repayment at a rate that is unaffordable.

In our view the mounting debts already being incurred by prospective trainees coupled with a reduction in salary means that very many people will be unable or unwilling to train as solicitors and represent the communities they are from. This situation is likely to be exacerbated as tuition fees rise. This is likely to affect a large number of people who wish to train in legal aid firms and do not have the safety net of wealthy parents or partners who can support them whilst working for a lower salary and paying back a large debt.

It is important that a decision to remove regulation of the trainee salary is not looked at in isolation. The LETR findings are due in December 2012. They may recommend a different route to qualification as a solicitor including work-based learning or a move to a training contract similar to that of trainee accountants who undertake intense learning during employment. If the LETR recommended the replacement of the LPC with this work-based learning, then this would remove the added burden of LPC fees. This in itself would help to reduce the level of debt repayments for trainee solicitors and in such circumstances more individuals may accept a lower rate of pay as a trainee. Therefore consideration of the minimum salary should be carried out in conjunction with any findings reached by the LETR.

In legal aid firms the retention of trainees cannot be guaranteed in light of the increasing legal aid cuts. Therefore there is no guarantee that on qualification as a solicitor the salary will increase by any significant margin; in fact it is likely that it will increase only a fraction from what was paid at trainee level. With the burden of debt due to the high cost of legal education and no guarantee of earning a reasonable salary, many people will be deterred from pursuing a career as a solicitor.

Case study 3

K currently works as a paralegal and is paid approximately £5,000 a year more than the current trainee minimum salary. He previously worked as a paralegal for a successful national legal aid law firm which paid him less than the trainee minimum salary. He has completed a non-law degree and is interested in training to be a solicitor. He is contemplating studying part-time whilst working so that he can support himself financially. He is currently unable to afford the cost of the LPC and therefore will need to apply for a loan. However, K has been put off by the recent talk of removing the trainee minimum salary. It would be far less than what he is currently receiving and he feels it would not be feasible to survive on either the National Minimum Wage let alone the £2.60 apprenticeship salary. He has decided that he will see what will happen to the trainee salary before making any career choices as he simply cannot risk getting into further debt. K said he will also consider training as a Legal Executive if the trainee minimum salary is no longer regulated.

Case study 4

S currently earns around £16,500 as a caseworker at a leading regional firm. The main competitor (a national charity) pays around £22,000 for the same position. Until now, S has stayed with the law firm purely because she hopes to get a training contract. This would be paid at the same rate as she is currently receiving but would validate her decision to study the LPC, for which she has paid a hefty fee.

Time must be served as a caseworker because the likelihood of getting a training contract is greatly increased if you are an internal applicant and there are already a number of people waiting for their turn to come. Three out of four trainees in the last intake were previous employees of the firm. Should S be lucky enough to obtain a training contract she will still have to spend a couple of years on a paralegal wage as the firm recruits trainees several years in advance. She was willing to accept this given the hope she had of being successful in applying for a training contract. However, she has now started looking for other jobs as the likelihood of a training contract recedes due to the current legal aid climate and because she simply cannot afford to stay on her current wage.

A salary of £4,500 per year would be an insult in the context of the training that she has undergone, the expense she has incurred and the difficulty of her job. She is not on a par with trainees in other fields. She is a highly educated graduate with a significant debt burden.

S would not be able to cope if she had a child or was the main source of income in her family.

Question 5. To what extent do you think the removal of the minimum salary requirement will encourage some employers to take on trainees or to take on more trainees?

In our view the removal of the minimum salary is an entirely unacceptable method to encourage employers to take on trainees. The detrimental effect that this would have on social mobility is disproportionate to any conceivable benefits.

In any event, in the legal aid sector, we consider it unlikely that more training contacts will be offered. There are a number of other costs associated with offering a training contract which a firm needs to take into consideration before taking on trainees. These include the cost of the Professional Skills Course, a principal solicitor, supervisor to trainee ratio (as required by contracts issued by the Legal Services Commission), adequate training and supervision, regular meetings, providing training in a range of areas and skills, along with other factors related to all employees such as holiday pay and national insurance contributions. A small reduction in the payroll is unlikely to encourage firms to take on more trainees. Instead it may lead to firms simply consolidating their financial position, by reducing running costs, instead of taking on further responsibility for another two years.

There also appears to be no evidence to suggest that the number of training contracts on offer have a correlation with the level of the minimum salary. In fact, analysis of statistics published by the Law Society on an annual basis show that there is little (if any) correlation between the *level* of the minimum salary and the number of training contracts registered with the regulatory body, as set out in the table below. The statistics instead point to wider economic factors such as the recessions in 1991/92 and 2008-09 as being more relevant to the number of training contracts offered⁵:

Year	Central London Minimum Trainee Salary (MTS) (£k)	MTS elsewhere (£k)	No of TC registered
1987	6.6	5.2	2918

⁵ Statistics obtained from the Law Society annual statistical reports
<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/aboutlawsociety/whatwedo/researchandtrends/statisticalreport.law>

1988	7.2	6	3058
1989	8.5	7.3	3254
1990	9.9	8.7	3841
1991	11.3	10.1	3941
1992	12.15	10.85	3681
1993	12.15	10.85	3874
1994	12.15	10.85	4170
1995	12.15	10.85	4063
1996	12.15	10.85	4739
1997	12.15	10.85	4826
1998	12.15	10.85	4827
1999	12.15	10.85	5285
2000	13.6	12	5162
2001	13.6	12	5385
2002	14.6	13	5650
2003	15.3	13.6	5708
2004	15.9	14.2	5732
2005	16.45	14.72	5751
2006	17.11	15.33	6012
2007	17.66	15.82	6303
2008	18.42	16.5	5809
2009	19.16	17.16	4874
2010	18.59	16.65	-
2011	18.59	16.65	-

For firms wishing to offer a training contract, but who are struggling to afford the minimum salary, the SRA allows them to apply for exemption from paying the minimum salary. We understand that there are very few applications each year, which would suggest that it is not the level of the salary which is deterring employers from offering training contracts.

Question 6. Are there any potential equality issues we should consider in deciding on our future role in regulating minimum salaries for trainees?

The SRA is a public authority for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. As such, it is bound by the public sector equality duty, in force from April 2011. The equality duty requires the SRA, in the exercise of its public functions, to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic (such as age, disability, race, sex) and those who do not. We would argue that if the trainee minimum salary were removed potentially the SRA would be in breach of this public sector equality duty. This is because although the existence of the minimum salary in itself will not guarantee equality of opportunity, it does help to ensure that the profession is open to people from different backgrounds.

In addition to the public sector equality duty, the SRA has published equality objectives, which include promoting diversity in the workplace; continuing to closely monitor the disproportionate outcomes for BME solicitors and firms and seeking where possible to reduce that disproportionality; and encouraging a diverse profession. As part of the latter objective, the SRA has stated that it will “be looking at further opportunities for promoting access to the profession through our review of the current legal education and training system for lawyers in England and Wales”⁶. We believe that the removal of the minimum salary will impede the SRA’s objective of encouraging a diverse profession.

It is widely recognised by those regulating the legal profession that social mobility within the sector is not as good as it should be. The Legal Services Board (LSB) report, *Barriers to the profession*⁷ from July 2010 states that many senior positions in law firms are ‘dominated by white, male lawyers from the highest socio-economic groups’⁸. The LSB believes that this outcome is not a result of ‘overt discrimination but instead barriers to entry and progression occur over the lifetime of individuals seeking a career in law from initial education, to training, to gaining experience within a law firm’⁹. We believe that the removal of the trainee minimum salary could act to produce a new barrier for entrants to the profession.

⁶SRA Equality and Diversity Objectives 2011/12, Para 28, <http://www.sra.org.uk/sra/equality-diversity/framework/objectives.page>

⁷“*Barriers to the Legal Profession*” Sullivan, R, July 2010

http://www.legalservicesboard.org.uk/what_we_do/Research/Publications/pdf/literature_review_on_diversity2.pdf

⁸Pg2 *ibid*

⁹*ibid*

The SRA's consultation document at Table 2 shows that currently it is trainees from black and ethnic minority (BME) backgrounds who are mainly paid at the minimum salary or less. In addition Table 1 also shows that women are more likely to be paid at the minimum salary than men. These statistics are likely due to trainees with these characteristics being over-represented in legal aid or smaller firms. As it is those firms and organisations which are likely to have to reduce the trainee salaries to consolidate their financial positions, it can be said that the removal of a trainee minimum salary is likely to have a negative impact on BME and female trainees.

A survey carried out by the Law Society of its BME solicitor members highlighted the problems faced by new entrants to the profession¹⁰. The report found that some individuals were working unpaid in law firms in a bid to secure training contracts. This impacted on the individual's self-worth as well as the view the firm had of them.

We believe that the guarantee of a minimum salary would prevent some exploitation of trainees and those looking for training contracts. If the minimum salary were removed it is likely that those looking to secure training contracts would continue to be exploited and would be fearful to speak out against their employers.

Question 7. In light of the amendment to paragraph 24 of the consultation document — see also the introductory note to this consultation—is there anything further you would add regarding the potential impacts of the proposed changes?

If firms and organisations are able to pay trainee solicitors at the apprentice rate of pay then those which are struggling financially are likely to seek to do this. As stated above, in the legal aid sector there are likely to be many firms that will consider this as an option due to the legal aid cuts and difficulties with receiving payment from the Legal Services Commission. In our view all of the problems highlighted above (including reduction in diversity of the profession) will be further exacerbated should firms be allowed to pay £2.60 per hour for trainee solicitors.

One of the Government's stated reasons for the low level of the minimum rate of pay for apprenticeships is to encourage employers to offer more apprenticeships. However, the low

¹⁰“Ethnic Diversity in law firms – understanding the barriers”, The Law Society, May 2010

rate of pay is balanced by the fact that apprenticeships are aimed at school-leavers, usually aged 16 or 17, who are likely to be living with parents or guardians. Also, they are unlikely to have substantial debts, unlike trainee solicitors who will have paid for university education and maintenance. Therefore, although the rate of pay is still very low, it is likely to be more manageable for apprentices than for trainee solicitors.

Further, trainee solicitors in legal aid firms often deal with complex and challenging cases ranging from homeless families to people detained in custody charged with serious crimes. Many trainees have responsibility for a caseload and their clients rely on them to resolve very serious problems. In contrast, apprentices usually have little responsibility so early on in their careers. The high pressure and responsibility trainee solicitors face at work is unlike that faced by those undertaking apprenticeships. We believe the rate at which trainee solicitors are paid should reflect that fact.

Question 8. In light of the amendment to paragraph 24 of the consultation document, would you be in favour of an option to retain an SRA-prescribed minimum salary set at the level of the standard national minimum wage?

No.

If the SRA feels that it is able to regulate for a minimum wage but not a minimum salary then this undermines completely the Board's provisional view that they have no regulatory power to regulate salaries within the legal profession. We believe that the SRA does have the regulatory power to impose a minimum salary; and that by doing so it would be fulfilling regulatory objectives.

The amount of the minimum salary involves consideration of different issues. If the SRA is proposing to lower the minimum salary to the level of the National Minimum Wage (currently £6.08 per hour) then we would also be strongly opposed to this. This rate is often paid for employment that does not require a high level of skill or qualifications. We believe that trainee solicitors, particularly in the legal aid sector, should be paid a living wage that reflects the crucial work that they do for vulnerable individuals (see also our answer to question seven above).

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above we strongly oppose the removal of the trainee minimum salary. We believe that it would constitute a retrograde step undermining social mobility and diversity within the legal profession. This would run counter to the public interest. We urge the SRA to abandon the proposal or at the very least delay making a decision on this issue until the LETR publishes its recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

Katie Brown & Connor Johnston

Co-Chairs YLAL