



Young Legal Aid Lawyers statement on Criminal Bar Association vote to accept government offer on Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme

Young Legal Aid Lawyers (YLAL) calls for unity amongst all members of the legal profession, following the outcome of the Criminal Bar Association (CBA) ballot, which resulted in 51.55% of respondents voting to accept the government's offer and discontinue their action in respect of the Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme (AGFS).

As the slim majority of the vote in favour demonstrates, this was an issue on which there were a range of opinions and deciding how to vote will have been a difficult decision for many people. Regardless of individual opinions on the merits of accepting the government offer, we as a profession must seek to move forward as a united front.

The end of the Bar's action on AGFS is not the end of this battle. The government's offer is a small step towards the vast reform and additional funding which our crumbling criminal justice system requires to function.

In order to achieve meaningful reform, we must approach this collaboratively – it is only by working together that we will be strong enough to face the challenges which the failings in our criminal justice system are throwing at us every single day.

YLAL is proud to be an organisation which represents individuals at the start of their legal careers across the legal aid sector, regardless of the route to qualification they have decided to take.

Siobhan Taylor-Ward, YLAL Social Mobility Coordinator, said: "Our report, [Social Mobility in an Age of Austerity](#), shows that there is a crisis of recruitment and retention in the legal aid sector. Many young lawyers are struggling to begin or sustain a career in legal aid. It is paramount that the system is reformed in order to ensure there is a new generation of legal aid lawyers able to fight for access to justice for our clients into the future. We cannot make these changes alone. We need the support, guidance and action of our senior colleagues, and at this time of great struggle we call for unity between those at the junior and senior ends of their career across the whole legal aid sector."

YLAL calls for unity between barristers, solicitors, legal executives and their relevant representative bodies. With the Law Society's judicial review challenge concerning the Litigators' Graduated Fee Scheme and the post-implementation review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 ongoing, this stage of the fight may be over, but there are many more to come.

For press enquiries please contact ylalpress@gmail.com.

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