

**Minutes of CLLS Training Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday 4 December 2025 – 16:00 – 17:30**  
**at Norton Rose Fulbright and by Teams**

**Present (Committee members):**

Colin Shaw (Chair) ( <b>CS</b> )	Charlie Moore ( <b>CM</b> )
Charlotte Wanendeya (vice Chair) ( <b>CW</b> )	Julia Robinson (vice Chair) ( <b>JR</b> )
Richard Album ( <b>RA</b> )	Dominic Sedghi ( <b>DS</b> )
Maddie Berry ( <b>MB</b> ) (Clerk)	Kathryn Smith ( <b>KS</b> )
Grace Best ( <b>GB</b> )	Nigel Spencer ( <b>NS</b> )
Peter Carrick ( <b>PC</b> )	Rosie Warren-Cafferty ( <b>RWC</b> )
Deborah Carter ( <b>DC</b> )	Jonathan Watmough ( <b>JW</b> )
Katie Dyer ( <b>KD</b> )	Rachel Wevill ( <b>RW</b> )
Lindsay Gerrand ( <b>LG</b> )	Kirsty Wilkins ( <b>KW</b> )
James Harvey ( <b>JH</b> )	
Greg Lascelles ( <b>GL</b> )	
Richard Macklin ( <b>RM</b> )	
Louisa Mendes da Costa ( <b>LMdC</b> )	

**Apologies:** Victoria Fearne (**VF**), Chris Walsh (**CWa**)

**Guests:** Patrick McCann (CLLS Chief Executive) (**PM**), Julian Richards (extense) (**JRi**), Thomas Mwadime (extense) (**TM**), Julie Swan (SRA) (**JS**), James Catchpole (City St George's) (**JC**)

The chair opened the meeting.

**1. Minutes of 4 September 2025 – CW**

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

**2. Introduction and welcome to James Catchpole and Patrick McCann – CS**

The chair invited PM and JC to introduce themselves and the work they did.

**3. Update from the CLLS – PM**

PM introduced himself as the Chief Executive of the CLLS. He noted the CLLS currently operates with a three-person team (soon to be four) under the chair, Colin Passmore. PM outlined the developing CLLS strategy, comprising strands on reputation, resonance and responsibility. The “resonance” strand includes consideration of committee composition and practices, such as ensuring committee membership reflects the City, enabling non-partners to become members, and setting sensible term limits for chairs. PM reported positive engagement across other law societies and constructive collaboration with the SRA. Overall reaction to the strategy work to date has been encouraging.

**4. Update on Workshops – JR/CB and RW**

RW reported that communications have been issued for the Engagement in L&D workshop. The format will include stakeholder mapping and practical in-session group work with cameos from NS, GL, DC and an external coach. CM and RW confirmed arrangements are progressing well, with preparatory touchpoints scheduled; the workshop will take place on 4 February at Slaughter & May. CS noted strong collaborative support for the initiative.

For the AI workshop, JR noted the collaboration has been more logistically challenging, in part due to turnover and the need to coordinate across committees where relationships are less established. A tentative date of 24 March has been proposed. JR may reissue a venue request for that date and thanked

those who had previously offered rooms. CB reported a productive recent planning meeting and engagement from the new Director of AI at Linklaters, who is keen to be involved as a facilitator or otherwise. The format is expected to centre on table-based discussions using case studies, with report-backs from each group. CB noted the likely audience will now skew towards early careers and trainee level, who will be focused on recruiting the right number of early careers candidates and ascertaining what skills they need to have, as well as the importance of equipping junior talent to become future leaders, despite changes in the nature of the work required to develop them.

#### **5. Update on LinkedIn & thought leadership pieces – KS and RWC**

RWC reported that the LinkedIn page has reached approximately 1700 followers. There are currently no thought leadership pieces in the pipeline; CM offered multiple ideas and RWC invited further proposals. CB and CS confirmed the end-of-year roundup that was used for the “Celebration of Impact” event should be used for a year-end “mop up” post on LinkedIn. RWC confirmed it would be posted shortly. On broader PR and visibility, RWC referenced a recent call with JR and KS regarding broader thought leadership opportunities, noting LinkedIn is not a searchable repository and questioned whether the CLLS website serves its purpose if someone were to research the committee. PM expects to undertake more CLLS website uploads but cautioned against building a large library of historic materials, recommending continued use of LinkedIn to meet audiences where they are. PM noted that a meeting is planned for January with the PR agency to consider media engagement and topical contributions, inviting ideas on themes where the committee can add value. He also reiterated the aim will be current relevance and impact rather than building a library. CM suggested leveraging the City Solicitor magazine for an introductory or profile piece on the committee.

#### **6. Confirmation of hosts for 2026 TC meetings – JR**

The following hosts were confirmed for 2026 meetings: March at BPP; December at Travers Smith (RW confirmed). CB will check availability with Linklaters for June. Clyde & Co and DWF were also offered as alternatives.

#### **7. Submissions by Specialist Committees reminder – JR**

JR reminded members of MB’s email regarding external submissions and encouraged use of the provided template for any such submissions.

#### **8. AOB**

CM will circulate City Century update following the meeting.

#### **9. Update from the SRA – JS**

CS welcomed JS to give an update from the SRA, with a proposal to gather further questions after the meeting and then invite JS to return to another meeting in the new year.

JS reported improvements to Kaplan’s booking system since the last discussion, including expanded capacity (particularly in London). The aim is to ensure availability across centres (although not everyone will secure their first choice). There have now been eight SQE1 exams and twelve SQE2 exams. Pass rates were noticeably higher in the January SQE1 sitting than July, reflecting that July cohorts include a greater proportion of resitters who historically have lower pass rates, and that January cohorts often include sponsored candidates with stronger performance profiles.

Solicitor apprentices continue to perform well. Candidate complaints that sample questions do not reflect the live exam have been addressed: Kaplan has released retired questions and associated performance data, which aligns with live pass marks, and has published average word counts for live questions.

Kaplan also ran workshops over the summer and will extend similar support to SQE2 for the first time.

Candidates declaring disabilities and receiving reasonable adjustments are performing strongly across both SQE1 and SQE2; in some cases, their pass rates are higher than average. Neurodiversity forms the majority of reasonable adjustment cases, and some candidates still report additional challenges with

SQE1. However, the performance data does not indicate worse outcomes for neurodiverse candidates. By contrast, recent LPC data shows lower completion rates among disabled candidates compared to non-disabled candidates.

On differential outcomes by ethnicity, JS noted that the SRA has published an update on actions to address underlying causes. Exeter University has also proposed actions for firms and providers, and the SRA is interested in how other bodies will contribute and how the SRA can support. The SRA expects to publish findings from an independent perception survey of the SQE (spanning firms, providers and candidates). Next year, the SRA will commission an external technical review of the SQE, with reporting anticipated around Q4, and will also review the underlying competencies that determine SQE content. Members were invited to join a forthcoming focus group.

CM asked whether candidates could be prioritised within their local catchment areas for both SQE1 and SQE2. JS confirmed the aim is to place candidates at their preferred location wherever possible, noting capacity constraints and the growing volume of reasonable adjustments, which not all centres can accommodate.

LMdC asked about SQE provider data publication, noting that the LSB had called for publication as soon as possible and no later than year end. JS indicated the SRA will soon issue information on this topic, though not the full data currently being requested. Data quality remains a challenge, and the SRA is working to ensure any published data is not misleading. JS emphasised that candidate cohort characteristics materially affect outcomes regardless of course quality. The SRA is prioritising improvements to data quality to create useful data.

## **10. Discussion on race inclusion – JRi and TM**

RW introduced guests from extense, noting that it is unusual to bring providers into committee meetings but that an exception had been made in light of the topic's importance. The discussion focused on active allyship and racial fluency in the current political and global climate. RW acknowledged a lack of diversity in the room and welcomed broader perspectives.

JRi outlined extense's work as an inclusion consultancy, training provider and lateral headhunter across professional services, with a mission to support the retention and development of under-represented talent, including socio-economic diversity. He noted an intensified focus in 2025, linked to US executive orders and market developments affecting transatlantic firms, as well as UK 2024 race riots and continuing race- and faith-based crimes. This political climate has affected staff and how they show up at work.

JRi referenced the "1% study" [a study that found only 1% of partners in the City are black] and noted that despite increased attention to diversity, attrition among minority ethnic (ME) fee earners has risen, in contrast to trends in other diversity strands such as gender. Attrition is disproportionately affecting ME lawyers, with some moving to US firms. He highlighted two principal drivers: first, reduced exposure to career-advancing work, which has a significant impact on progression; and second, weaker strategic relationships with senior individuals, reflecting a "proximity gap". Where senior leaders have limited personal or professional interaction with ME colleagues, affinity and sponsorship may be reduced. Reducing the proximity gap involves deliberately building on shared commonalities rather than focusing on difference. JRi summarised that diversity can be achieved through recruitment, but inclusion requires sustained work across the entire employee lifecycle, with both positive-impact and negative avoidance motivations shaping retention strategies.

## **11. Close and confirmation of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held at BPP on 5 March 2026.

The chair closed the meeting.