

**Minutes of CLLS Training Committee Meeting
Thursday 5 September 2024 – 12:30 – 14:00
by Teams**

Present (Committee members):

Patrick McCann (Chair) (PM)	James Harvey (JH)
Charlotte Wanendeya (vice Chair) (CW)	Charlie Moore (CM)
Colin Shaw (vice Chair) (CS)	Julia Robinson (JR)
Richard Album (RA)	Kathryn Smith (KS)
Grace Best (GB)	Nigel Spencer (NS)
Peter Carrick (PC)	Rachel Wevill (RW)
Louisa Mendes da Costa (LMdC)	
Victoria Cromwell (VC)	Camilla Brignall (clerk to the committee) (CB)
Katie Dyer (KD)	
Lindsay Gerrand (LG)	

Apologies: Joanna Hughes (**JHu**), Greg Lascelles (**GL**), Rosie Warren-Cafferty (**RWC**), Kirsty Wilkins (**KW**)

Guests: Julie Swan (**JS**), Luci Henderson (**LH**) and Sian Hughes (**SH**) (SRA) who attended for item 2 only, Idrin Sabahipour (Little Law), Jonny Hurst (BPP) (**JH**)

The chairman opened the meeting.

1. Minutes of 19 June 2024

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

2. The Exeter Report and its findings – LMcC

JS, LH and SH of the SRA shared the following thoughts on the Exeter Report:

LMcC stated that we had seen the Exeter research (which relates to professional legal assessments generally and used data from the LPC rather than the SQE). The Committee are interested in what membership firms can do to support the SRA and to learn what the SRA plans to do.

JS stated that the research was commissioned before the first SQE had taken place but was commissioned because the SRA expected to see disparities in outcomes across the SQE as well as on the LPC (and other exams as well). JS highlighted some of the recent reports. It is a really entrenched problem. As research shows, the causes of lower attainment go way back into the educational and family experience and are also influenced by perception of the profession. The challenge for “us” is to identify what “we” can do.

Insights were identified: law firm culture, safe spaces, membership and sponsorship, SRA as a change agent, providing research and data and looking at diversity of leadership.

The SRA has been having a series of meetings with interested stakeholders to explore insights and initiatives. They are going to have a number of people together at the beginning of October to explore what should be in the action plan. The SRA have regulatory levers but don't want that to be their only approach.

As a senior person quoted in the research report stated: “diversity issues are emotive and based on values” ... the SRA want to put together an action plan on a considered basis, not on a whim.

PM shared his thoughts: it is interesting for the SRA to consider whether SQE is exacerbating the entrenched educational systems. Does the SQE impact the “less confident”? Does the SQE work for neurodiverse students? He is hearing from students that the mental health pressure is intense (going into an unusual type of exam).

JS stated that the statistics relating to UG degrees are relevant. The most likely indicator of success is prior academic attainment. If you get a higher UG degree, you are more likely to pass the SQE. There is no shying away from the fact of differential outcomes by ethnicity, but research does not link it to type of assessment. The problem is expansive and complex.

LMdC: looking at SRA's role as a change agent, it would be helpful to have more data, for example, what the pass rates are for various educational providers. Granularity of data would be more helpful. Do we need more guidance for firms? Case studies? Do we need to bring people together? We have good practice in all of our firms, we know this is a problem, but we need a sense of urgency. There are easy things we could do to make things more inclusive, more videos and more case studies, there is not much on the SRA website which demonstrates diverse ethnicity.

NS: the thing we found which made the biggest difference was the practical learning and experience – they are changed humans after 8 months at a firm. NS would make a big plea for a practical learning approach.

SH: the challenge is we are all here and trying to do these things (the SRA included). There is a lot of good practice out there which we want to start building on. We need to do this hand in hand with the Law Society and SRA. The lack of evaluation has been in the background. Need a more consistent understanding of what is working and what is working across firms.

LMdC stated that this was an excellent point, but problem with report is that it is “just words” – there isn't any practical action. She would just like to think there is some urgency about this.

VC – in agreement about contextualised learning

CB: we mustn't forget about retention – it is important to get people in but equally important to retain them.

SH: LSB echoes some of the issues identified by Exeter. The parallels coming out of the research is interesting and they have an eye on their equality diversity inclusion statement. As to urgency, the conversations being held, and the October summit should drive that.

JS: we could use City Century energy in our action plan, we need to be able to work together on actions, learning from the successful approach of City Century.

3. SQE update

JH provided an update on the bursary campaign letter: last year Jonny presented to the Committee about a social mobility fund which culminated in a letter to SRA, LSB and Law Society. The idea is to levy a £30 fee on PC renewal, this would allow 1,000 students to have their fees paid for.

There was a meeting at the end of July at which we got pushback from Law Society and LSB, but since that meeting, Richard from LSB has requested a further meeting. We are happy to look at alternatives to a levy (especially if it comes from the SQE “windfall” arising from increased numbers doing SQE).

LMdC: the hardship fund has nothing in it so is a no-go. Unfortunately, the meeting had no sense of urgency.

Law Society Guidance on SQE fails: Law Society going to put up some guidance on 9 September which we have been working with them on.

4. Introduction of Aster Crawshaw by PM

PM introduced Aster (in his absence) as the bridge to the main Committee. He is the Senior Partner at Addleshaw Goddard. He intends to come to the 5 Dec meeting

5. Update on the revisions to the Continuing Competence declaration

JR and RA provided an update on their understanding of the SRA's thinking on the amendments to the continuing competence declaration.

The wording in the August SRA update remains the "new wording". The confirmations given are expanded to include the legal, ethical and regulatory obligations. A lot of that goes to behaviour. RA has spoken to the SRA about what it means.

We have put something out on LinkedIn

6. Membership of the committee

CW reminded the committee members that membership of the committee was personal to individual members and couldn't be "passed along" to other colleagues at their firm if they wished to retire. Main committee asked us to remind members.

PM: Greg moving to a new firm in the next week or so – congratulations!

PM: CM going to be a senior paralegal at Kingsley Napley – congratulations to her also!

Also CM and JH joining the CLLS communications committee

7. Workshops

- **Supporting internal coaches in law:** JR provided an update on the session taking place on Mon 16 Sept. We have about 50 people signed up but hope it will increase a bit. A survey has been sent out for completion by the delegates. This session is based on internal coaching. It has been challenging to fit everything in, but we have 2 hours incl. a panel with Katy and Rachel (coming from the perspective of being internal coaches); Jamie Butler (been an internal coach now an external coach) plus Penny Terndrup. Talking about how internal coaching is being done in firms, supervision, accreditation, risk management. Book ended with external speakers: Dr Amanda McClean who will talk about her published research on internal coaches as change agents and Dr Susan Kahn, a Chartered Psychologist, RAPPS coaching supervisor and author who will talk about self-care for coaches. Had about 15 replies on the survey already
- **Partner Learning Development:** (on 1 October) Peter/Rosie provided an update. Rachel shared an outline which is coming together. Starts with some research to find out what is going on at the moment. This is conducted by Richard Macklin and Farzana Aslam. RW: Could 10 people agree to speak to Richard? Have 3 at the moment – please email Wanda If you are able to chat with Richard. Followed by a session by Jonathan Watmough, along the lines of what he spoke to us about – the skills required to be a successful partner. Following a break Katheryn Rousin will do a case study. This is followed by a bit of reflection in table groups. The last session with Colin Passmore and Holly Stepleton-Walshe and Usha Puri-Dewage goes through questions.
- **DE&I and L&D (Part 2):** Colin and Charlotte provided an update on what they hope will be a "part 2" to the previous DE&I workshop (in Jan 25)

8. Update on Armstrong Teasdale situation - PM

PM provided an update on the situation with trying to find new jobs for the junior lawyers impacted by the closure of the London office of Armstrong Teasdale. The LinkedIn post got quite a lot of attention,

and the press picked it up. 20 or so firms have come up as potential employers. This is the second time CLLS has had to get involved in the last year.

9. City Century Update

Programme going well – loads of followers. Patrick described various programmes and initiatives that are running.

- Outreach (LinkedIn and Tik Tok, 100% 100s and 10s)
- Recruit (UCAS events, Forage, CityEntry completions, CC Live!)
- Employ (housing workstream, 10/10 business skills training – CLLS TC members required/volunteers, NAW conference, possible awards)
- Awards update (9 shortlisted, 4 won (so far))
- New: CityCentury: In-House version – 4 firms confirmed as funding that

RW ran through some slides on 10 out of 10 programme – called on volunteers for help

10. Introduction to Little Law

PM introduced Idin Sabahipour. Idin is a former corporate lawyer and first-generation university student. He identified that aspiring lawyers struggle with commercial awareness:

1. what is it?
2. cost of developing it – a lot of people don't have access to FT/the Lawyer
3. social mobility – if your parents are lawyers the conversations around the dinner table will be different.

Slides attached.

Littlelaw takes business news and simplifies it for aspiring lawyers. It is free and written in simple language. For every news story we focus on “why a law firm would care”. Have 17,000 readers and are really proud of the diversity of the readers.

Helps law firms by directing diverse applicants their way. Did this for Gowling for example.

The second way Littlelaw help is through the L&D angle – using the firm's work to attract the lawyers we want. Taking posts that firms make and turning them into something aspiring lawyers can learn from.

Littlelaw will also come and speak to firms.

Reason PM showing you Idin is you might want to consider introducing him into the firm.

CW: How do young people subscribe? google “Littlelaw” and put in your email to subscribe.

11. SWSQF Update – VC

VC shared some slides:

- Cohort 1: qualifications – of 22 we have 10 who have now qualified. The balance are in the process of qualifying save for a few who have withdrawn
- Cohort 2: results – 32 people were awarded funding – 4 have qualified (didn't need to take SQE1) 26 took SQE1 in Jan (18 passed at first sit)
- Cohort 3: progress report: 33 awarded funding – 27 doing SQE1 in Jan
- Cohort 4 funding update: as of today, we have 16 funding organisations – have £177,100 in already – goal is £300,000.

12. LinkedIn update:

KS: just under 1,450 followers – posted just under 30 thought leadership pieces this year plus other bits. Lucy Allen's post did really well (August post) – 1200 people looked at that. Most posts getting 600-1,000 views. Posts which have a human element do really well. There are quite a number of pieces in the pipeline.

PM: if you haven't contributed this year, it would be great if you can.

13. Junior Law Society conference: PM

PM gave an update on speakers and topics: there is a junior lawyers conference, run by the Law Society. Patrick is on a panel regarding entry into the profession. Jonathan Watmough is doing another panel.

The Committee is getting more and more requests, so we are going to try and pass them around

14. Law Society Learning – discussion between KW and Chris Walsh (Law Society)

Camilla read an update from Kirsty on her discussion with Chris Walsh:

"There are two 'buckets' of content that The Law Society Learning provides. One is accreditation courses in areas such as conveyancing, immigration, capacity etc. The other is CPD courses, with a mixture of bitesize courses and long form courses. Topics in this category are mixed but tend to deal with issues such as career development, returning to your career after a period of absence etc. All the courses map to the SRA Competence Statement. They also have curriculum paths an individual can follow, which cover 'Business management', 'Client at the core', 'Commercial development', 'Compliance', 'Leadership and Management', 'Personal development', 'Practice areas and interests', and 'Technology', all at 'Foundation', 'Intermediate' and 'Advanced' levels. Their system keeps records of attendance and certificates for any courses attended. They have a mixture of delivery methods including online, live webinar, recorded webinar, and examinations for accreditation courses. For those that know and use MBL, it is similar to that platform and concept. There are new course releases added every week. A CPD diary was also recently launched, so individuals can use that to keep track of their CPD.

In conclusion, I think this could be a decent option for smaller firms, but probably not firms like ours that have their own CPD tracking system, do less family, immigration, conveyancing etc., however I did use it on occasion at my previous firm for one off courses, usually in the area of risk and compliance for our small London based Office of General Counsel, so it's worth people considering this as an option if they are looking at one off course solutions like that. A link to the relevant section of The Law Society site for access will be provided in the meeting notes for anyone interested in signing up and taking a look at what's on offer: <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/learning>"

15. CLLS – Celebration of Impact – PM

PW – running a Celebration of Impact evening – PM, Chrissy Digings and KW going. Is £80 if you wish to attend.

16. AOB

Colin Passmore book on privilege. Would be good to get him in. Reminder from Kevin Hart about IP Committee. Stardust letter will be attached to minutes.

The chairman closed the meeting.