



## Candidate Statements for the Bar Council Elections 2025

The candidates who are standing in the election for the 2025 Bar Council have been announced. Three categories are going to ballot:

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You are invited to vote regardless of whether you are an employed or self-employed barrister.

Online voting will commence via MyBar on Friday 4 October 2024 and votes must be cast by 10am on Friday 18 October 2024.

Candidate statements can be read below.

The election will be conducted by single transferable vote and the results of the election will be announced by listing successful candidates in the order of voter preference.

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Self-Employed Junior Counsel OVER 7 years in practice

Abigail Bright

**Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I am one of several of barristers at the end of the Bar Council's ethics hotline. I've been doing this since December 2021. I'd called the hotline when I was a pupil and a starter tenant and now I speak with barristers across all Call brackets. I think manning the Bar Council's ethics hotline is vital for wellbeing at the Bar. We all know that young and older barristers alike face bullying judges on occasions.

I can't give barristers advice: what I do is discuss with barristers the core duties in our Code of Conduct which are engaged in a real case. Because I really enjoy speaking with barristers who call the ethics hotline about issues and complexities that typically arise shortly before or in the course of trials or other contested hearings, I relish discussing problems that arise in real life cases when I teach law and ethics to undergraduates and postgraduates at the LSE's law school. Law students particularly value grappling with the sorts of questions and practical ethical issues that each of us face daily, take in our stride, or, if tricky, about which we ask each other in robing rooms and chambers and in the Inns.

### **What can you offer the Bar Council?**

I can continuity. It's as simple as that. I'm now familiar with all corners of our Code of Practice. That's particularly helpful when I answer the 'phone to a young or inexperienced barrister who calls the ethics hotline and who hopes to hear a reassuring, calm, friendly person at the end of the 'phone who can help navigate our many duties. I clear my diary when I take ethics hotline calls. I've spoken with barristers on evenings and at weekends to follow up a 'phone call and discuss how a worrying issue can be resolved in a timely, proportionate way.

### **What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

I want to stay at the end of the ethics hotline. I want to carry on taking your ethics hotline calls and talking over your options when you face a bullying judge. I want to reinforce what I already do by following up ethics hotline calls and making sure that hotline callers – YOU – are alright, are informed reliably and accurately about your core duties and how those relate to the BSB's outcomes and objectives. I want to carry on being a meaningful part of how wellbeing at the Bar looks and feels. I'd like to stick with doing exactly this.

Andrew Parsons

### **Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I'm a barrister, mediator, arbitrator and negotiator, with over 30 years' of experience in business, property, financial and commercial dispute resolution work, domestically and internationally. I have pioneered hybrid dispute resolution processes and conducted them in different cultural contexts, for example resolving tribal water rights.

I'm known as "THE QUIET MAN ON THE CORNER" in dispute resolution.

Also, I sketch cartoons and write jokes and stand-up routines.

I was called to the Bar in 1985. In 1998, I was one of the first English barristers to become an accredited commercial mediator.

For about 20 years, I've served on the Bar Council ADR Committee, (now Panel). With others, I have tried my best to ensure that the Bar adapts to and prospers in the fast-developing world of dispute resolution.

Recently, I've helped with the Bar Council's response to MoJ's Consultation about Singapore Convention on Mediation and with the Law Commission's Consultations about reforms to the Arbitration Act 1996. Also, I spoke about developments in mediation at the Annual Bar Conference and at a joint Bar Council and Cyprus Bar event in Cyprus.

I'm happy to invest time and money supporting the work of the Bar Council.

### **What can you offer the Bar Council?**

In summary, in the now super-fast changing world of dispute resolution, given my years' of experience, I think I am well placed to help the Bar Council and the Bar.

I will be able to provide such help keeping a sense of humour!

### **What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

My key motivation is to give something back, volunteering my time, money, knowledge and expertise to help the Bar Council and other barristers.

### Cleon Catsambis

### **Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I am a self-employed barrister at 3 Verulam Buildings. I was called to the Bar in 2011 by Lincoln's Inn, with which I maintain a special bond. My journey to the Bar was only possible because of the Inn's generous scholarship scheme and welcoming community.

My varied commercial practice encompasses banking & finance, financial services and regulatory & disciplinary law. I also specialise in the areas of media & art and sport (which my family finds only marginally more interesting). My work often has an international dimension.

I am an editor and contributing author to several leading publications, including Atkin's Court Practice (Financial Services and Administrative Law volumes), Jordan's Regulatory and Disciplinary Proceedings and Butterworths Financial Regulation Service.

I am engaged actively in the profession and the broader community in a variety of roles, including as:

1. a pupil supervisor for a number of years;
2. a mentor under a variety of schemes (including the COMBAR Mentoring Scheme for Under-Represented Groups);
3. a volunteer advocacy tutor at Lincoln's Inn; and

4. a Trustee and Company Secretary of a cultural school.

I live in London and am a dad to three young, Arsenal-mad, boys.

### **What can you offer the Bar Council?**

I hope that my skills and experience would enable me to make a positive contribution to the work of the Bar Council. In particular, I would bring:

1. A strong commitment to diversity and inclusion and to supporting junior and aspiring barristers, in part cultivated through my own background and my pupil supervising and mentoring activities;
2. Successful experience of working in committees (including the Pupillage, Business Development and Practice Group committees in Chambers), forging new relationships and adopting a pragmatic, collaborative approach;
3. Financial literacy, owing to the nature of my practice; and
4. An international perspective with an appreciation of the Bar's global reach, having lived in 5 countries and speaking several languages.

### **What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

The Bar faces seemingly unprecedented political, financial and technological challenges. I wish to join the Bar Council in order to help ensure that the Bar is well-placed to respond to these challenges, so that its members can continue to provide world-leading advocacy services.

I subscribe fully to the Bar Council's vision of a strong, inclusive, independent and influential Bar. I would work with diligence and enthusiasm to influence public policy on issues relevant to the Bar and to ensure that there is appropriate awareness and recognition of the valuable functions the Bar performs.

### Kalkoy Pandé

#### **Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

- Practice: First Ten years at the Criminal Bar
- Since 2014 worked on public inquiries including, Covid Inquiry, IBI, UCPI, Grenfell, Post Office, Iraq.
- Returned to academia part time in field of international environmental law completing an LLM and MPhil alongside practice. Currently preparing to apply to do a part time PhD relating to UK Climate Change Policy.
- Senior researcher in Climate Change law and Policy at the University of Cambridge
- Director of community benefit project to encourage businesses and environmental initiatives to thrive.
- Chambers Pupillage and Tenancy Committees

- Middle Temple Pupillage interview practice scheme and mentoring of prospective candidates.
- Middle Temple Revals
- Middle Temple Events Committee (when it existed)

### **What can you offer the Bar Council?**

I want to offer the Bar Council my experience as a female barrister from a non-traditional background with childcare responsibilities who has been in practice for over 20 years and who has learnt to adapt to and navigate an industry which has not always made it easy to remain in practice.

I want to bring a voice to all practitioners, and would-be practitioners, who do not know if the Bar still offers them a 'life long' career as it was once known to.

I want to offer the Bar Council a fresh perspective focused not wholly upon success but sustainability and represent a safe space for honest discussions and tangible actions which genuinely help each other to have healthy and diverse working practices.

### **What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

I am motivated by a desire to enable impactful changes that make life at the Bar easier and more welcoming than I myself experienced back in 2005. I want to help the Bar Council to be more visible, approachable and broach urgent and more meaningful conversations beyond 'imposter syndrome' such as climate change and better working practices for parents. I want to encourage more collaborations between the Bar and other industries to help our practices to be pioneers in sustainability.

### Katrina Mather

### **Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I have a busy commercial and insolvency practice which includes advisory and court work, both on and offshore. I have been at Gatehouse Chambers (formerly Hardwicke) since 2015. I am a very active participant in our comprehensive business development programme for this work, and often contribute to seminars, marketing initiatives and overseas trips as an opportunity to develop my own profile, but also as a representative of chambers. I have been an active and proud contributor to Chambers' life and believe in giving something back to the profession that has supported me to achieve what I have so far. I have sat on Chambers' pupillage committee, and our Sex and Gender Equality Taskforce. I am a member of Gray's Inn and have sat on the Barristers' Committee, Events Committee and Ball Committee. I am a member of the R3 insolvency professionals committee for London and the South East. This wealth of committee experience and my desire to contribute has equipped me with the skills and attributes to make a valuable contribution to the work of the Bar Council and effectively represent my cohort.

**What can you offer the Bar Council?**

As an experienced committee member and proud contributor to the profession, I have the knowledge and drive to represent my peers. Coming from a 'non-traditional' background, I can offer a range of perspectives and contribute towards the Bar Council's initiatives on increasing diversity and inclusion within the profession and those hoping to join it. I am a mum of two very young children and have first hand experience of juggling work and a full on family life. I can make a valuable contribution to the Bar Council's work on retention at the Bar of parents and those with caring responsibilities.

**What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

I have been supported by and benefitted from the work of the Bar Council in first coming to the Bar. I am proud of my profession and would like to give something back to encourage others to join. I have benefitted from being in a chambers that has policies in place to support my return to work from two rounds of parental leave and would like to offer something in terms of support, training or policy work to contribute to the Bar Council's work being fit to recruit and retain talent for the future of our profession.

Leanne Targett-Parker

**Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I came to the Bar as a 2<sup>nd</sup> career and cannot think of doing anything else. I am now a specialist family practitioner covering all areas of family law but predominantly representing local authorities in public law proceedings often with an international aspect. I am a pupil supervisor, Chair of the Board of Trustees for Temple Legal Centre (providing free family legal advice nationally) and sit on the Bar Council's Pro Bono & Social Responsibility Committee (PB&SRC) having been its co-chair from 2019-2022. I am the treasurer of Women in Family Law and a member of the North West Family Court Experts' Committee.

**What can you offer the Bar Council?**

Having sat on a number of committees and been at the Bar for nearly 20 years, I have a plethora of skills, which would assist the Bar. I am passionate about access to justice and am instrumental in the Bar's project to make it easier for pro bono Counsel attending hearings remotely – an ongoing project. I have attended Bar Council meetings consistently since being first elected in 2016 and will continue to do so if re-elected. I am fully committed to the Bar Council and its members.

**What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

I want to continue seeing projects I started as co-chair of the PB&SRC to fruition especially regarding pro bono Counsel attending hearings remotely. I want to ensure

that Bar Council members' interests are well represented and that the Bar Council continues to be diverse.

Martyn McLeish

**Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I am a PIBA supported candidate. I am currently an elected member of the Bar Council. I am a Vice Chair of the Remuneration Committee. I am also a member of the Executive Committee of the Personal Injuries Bar Association and am Head of Cloisters Chambers.

**What can you offer the Bar Council?**

As Vice Chair of the Remuneration Committee, I have represented the Bar in various matters, most recently in relation to uprating the advocacy fee in personal injury claims on the Fast Track, and Counsel's fees for trial under Fixed Recoverable Costs.

**What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

It has been a huge pleasure to represent the Bar and work so closely with the officers and staff of the Bar Council who work tirelessly on our behalf and achieve tremendous results in difficult economic circumstances. If elected, I look forward to continuing this work and assisting as best I can to help the Bar meet the next round of funding issues.

Michael Harwood

**Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I practise from 4-5 Gray's Inn Square Chambers specialising predominantly in public, regulatory and local government law, investigations and inquiries. Since 2020 I have been an elected member of Bar Council, and was privileged to serve as Chair of the Young Barristers' Committee in 2023.

I currently sit on the Legal Services and Bar Representation Committees of the Bar Council, and earlier this year was appointed to the steering group assisting Harriet Harman KC with her independent review of bullying and harassment at the Bar – an issue I strongly advocated on as YBC Chair.

Away from Bar Council I am an elected member of the Middle Temple Hall Committee, and served as President of the Inn's young Bar association between 2018-2019.

**What can you offer the Bar Council?**

As YBC Chair I represented the junior Bar across a wide range of issues, seeking input and expertise from colleagues where required, and fearlessly held to account those connected with the profession that had fallen short in serving the junior Bar. I spoke

continuously about the blight of bullying and harassment at the Bar and the unjustifiable lack of action to tackle it. I achieved real and meaningful results – most notably a 15% increase in fees for the junior Bar under the LCCSA Magistrates Court Fees Protocol – a direct result of extended communication and lobbying from the YBC to the LCCSA alongside the CBA, IBC and Bar Council remuneration committee.

**What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

I believe that I can continue to offer the same value, engagement and desire to achieve results for Bar Council, and the Bar as a whole, that I have been able to show up to now. I am keen to continue the work I am involved with on issues such as court reform via the Legal Services Committee, at a time when change is happening faster than ever; on ensuring the Bar Council provides the best quality service to members; and most importantly with assisting the Bar's ongoing work in stamping out misconduct and its impact on barristers.

Sarah Guant

**Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

A Criminal Practitioner on the Midland/Southeastern circuits, my practice involves prosecuting and defending cybercrime/crypto asset offences; economic serious organised crime (usually Internationally based); homicide, serious sexual offending as well as other serious criminal offences. I have been involved in the Undercover Policing Inquiry (2019-2024), and I have ancillary experience in Civil/Regulatory Law (Police Disciplinary). I am/have been on the Bar Council's Bar Representation/Chambers Management/Bar Conference committees (2023-2024). I have participated in Bar Council International workshops in Kenya/Tanzania (2022)/Mexico (2023 & 2024), and I currently sponsor a Kenyan Young Lawyer through the Bar Council Young Barristers initiative. I teach advocacy and ethics and I have been involved in vulnerable witness training for Lincolns Inn. Amongst other organisations I am a member of the International Bar Association and have been involved in promoting direct access for the Bar generally both domestically and abroad. I have participated in several forums/research supporting equality, diversity, inclusivity and/or social mobility at the Bar.

**What can you offer the Bar Council?**

Having served on Bar Council committees and been involved in Bar Council events as a non-elected member, I would be delighted to serve the Bar as an elected member. I am a strong supporter of equality, diversity, inclusivity and an avid supporter of the Young Bar, I would wish to highlight and support these areas if elected. I also wish to promote Wellbeing at the Bar, both at the Bar generally and specifically in respect of the Criminal Bar (as well as addressing other areas of concern). I would seek to represent Circuit issues (being a member of the Midland Circuit).

**What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**



I hope to serve the Bar more efficiently and extensively as an elected rather than co-opted member. Having had a family whilst practicing at the Bar, I am particularly aware of the pressures of practice upon domestic and personal life. With the current acute pressure of delays and underfunding, it can be seen as economically expedient to sacrifice a Barrister's work/life balance and wellbeing. I wish to strongly advocate that the long-term survival of the Bar requires a consideration for Barristers' wellbeing by ensuring a proper work/life balance (when possible), sufficient remuneration, and an appropriate level of respect from Criminal Justice partners.

Shazia Akhtar

**Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I practise in public and administrative law - including education, discrimination, community care and Court of Protection matters- in health and welfare and property and affairs cases. I also sit as a tribunal judge in Wales.

I am a member of the Middle Temple Talent Retention Working Group which provides support to barristers either returning from time out of practice or switching practice areas. This project has particular importance to me personally, as I have taken two periods of extended leave from the Bar, combining this with working abroad.

I am a current member of the Bar Council. My motivation for joining was to secure an income protection scheme for self-employed barristers, many of whom are unable to take out individual insurance due to underlying disabilities, medical conditions and age. As a member of the Bar Representation Committee, I and colleagues are actively working on this.

I am an active committee member of the Education Law Association; a member of ALBA and COPBA; and I serve on chambers' EDI committee.

**What can you offer the Bar Council?**

Through my work at Middle Temple and the Bar Council, I have connected with barristers from different practice areas and circuits, affording me a greater insight into the needs of barristers across England and Wales. Our working culture can vary enormously, but many of the challenges we face as a profession-at the employed and self-employed Bar- are shared: remote working; managing career progression and family life; the impact of successive cuts upon our justice system. Some barristers face additional challenges arising from disability, class, sex, sexual orientation or race, and my experience can serve to offer an additional perspective on the Bar Council.

**What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

An idea that colleagues and I had was to secure a Bar-wide income protection scheme for those in self-employed practice. Such a scheme would mean that no one would be 'priced out' of income protection. The Paris Bar offers this to its members- we wished to do something similar here. I joined the Bar Representation Committee knowing that

this was a long- term project and required ongoing commitment and support but, thanks to the work of the Committee, we are getting closer to achieving this.

I would be delighted to be re-elected and see the income protection project to conclusion!

Thomas Chacko

**Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I have been in practice since 2009, specialising in tax. My practice is a mix of advice and litigation, and since 2015 (when I was first appointed to the A-G's panel) I have done a considerable amount of high profile work for the government. I was appointed to the A panel this year. I take public access work, and my private instructing clients are a mix between accountants and solicitors.

I have taken on various roles in the management of chambers, sitting on pupillage, social, diversity and management committees. Through this I have been involved in digesting and implementing the increasing regulatory and training requirements to which the Bar is subject.

**What can you offer the Bar Council?**

With the ongoing technological transformation of the profession and improvements in online resources used by our clients, we need to ensure that the Bar remains the most attractive source of expert legal advice and representation. As well as working for the government, my private work ranges from major law firms to high street accountants and public access. In this way I have experience of the different needs of a range of clients.

I am also familiar with the practical side of implementing the increase in regulatory and training requirements for the Bar.

**What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

I work from a small specialism (tax) and am a member of a small/mid-sized chambers. The burden of regulation and data security is felt differently in smaller sets and I would like to help ensure professional obligations remain realistic and practical for the self-employed, while maintaining the highest standards of professional competence: so barristers can maintain the confidence of their clients while still able to focus on doing (and obtaining) a high standard of advice and litigation work.

Lawyers have recently been attacked (from a variety of political directions) for the work they do, the clients they assist and the opinions they hold. I would like to help maintain the independence of the Bar and the importance of barristers being able to defend unpopular clients and ideas.

Employed Junior Counsel OVER 7 years in practice

Ben Bentley

**Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

Over the past 15 years I have practiced as an employed barrister and partner at Browne Jacobson, a UK top 50 law firm. Based out of Manchester, I head up the firm's Pupillage Committee and help to lead the team of 15 barristers whose practise spans across professional discipline, clinical negligence, regulatory, public law and employment.

I have the privilege of acting as lead counsel on behalf of the Department for Education in regulatory prosecutions within the teaching profession and advising on policy matters. My regular court practice includes routinely representing NHS mental health and acute trusts, local governments, schools and academies in inquest proceedings and before tribunals.

Outside of professional practice I enjoy serving as a Chair of Governors to a local school, a position I have held for some 5 years now. I also have had the privilege of supporting and working closely with anti-human trafficking charity Hope for Justice which advocates for victims of modern-day slavery.

**What can you offer the Bar Council?**

As part of the Browne Jacobson's recognised commitment to social mobility and improving access to the legal profession, solicitors and barristers alike, I am proud to be part of the industry wide Barrister Apprenticeship steering group. I hope to offer that voice and experience to the Bar Council, as part of a "One Bar" emphasis as an employed Barrister, advocating for routes to practice that sees excellence in advocacy and diversity of experience as two sides of the same coin.

**What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

I firmly believe that the development, training and mentoring of the next generation of barristers is critical to maintaining access to justice and the ability to speak the truth to power, advocating without fear or favour. I welcome any contribution I can make to developing excellence in training and preserving and enhancing the Bar.

Hannah Smith

**Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I am a principal lawyer at the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) working in enforcement. I provide advice and legal support across the fitness to practise and systems regulation functions. I have been an employed practitioner since 2009 when I joined a solicitors' firm as in-house counsel after pupillage, mainly practising crime.

I have worked in professional regulation since I joined the Nursing and Midwifery Council in 2017. I have acted as a pupil supervisor for employed pupillage. I am on the Bar Liaison Committee at Inner Temple. I am also an advocacy trainer and assist with Inner Temple's outreach work.

I have been a member of the Bar Council since early 2022, first joining the Employed Barristers Committee and later the Ethics Committee. In that time, I have contributed to the Employed Barristers Committee's series of articles on employed pupillage and appeared on a panel of the Ethics Committee at the 2024 Bar Conference. I also provided the Ethics Committee's input into Bar Council's response to the Civil Justice Council's consultation on capacity in civil proceedings.

**What can you offer the Bar Council?**

I hope to continue in the same vein as I have contributed over the last two and a half years. I am committed to, and engaged with, the work of the Bar Council and the committees I have been a member of. As an employed barrister I want to champion the role of the employed bar within the profession as a whole. I would also like to work on increasing the employed bar's connection to the Inns through my place on the Bar Liaison Committee.

**What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

Overall, I want to contribute to ensuring an accessible and diverse Bar, in particular in relation to joining and remaining in the profession. I have really enjoyed the work I have done far on the two committees I am a member of but believe I will be able to contribute more as I build my experience. Further, the planned work the Employed Barristers Committee is planning on independence at the employed bar is something I'm extremely keen to be involved with, as it's something of a passion/bug

Helen Tung

**Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

My name is Helen Tung and I practice at the employed bar primarily in sanctions, ESG and dispute resolution. I have previously been involved with the international committee of the Bar Council and also in the China and Korean Training programs. I am an active member of the Inter-Pacific Bar Association and am interested in creating greater opportunities for the junior bar, especially in their international practice. Moreover, I am currently a Board member of the International Institute of Space Law and look forward to engaging more members in this field.

**What can you offer the Bar Council?**

As an individual that has worked in various settings, more specifically in-house and abroad, I am an ideas person where more than ever I value having a balanced life

between work and self care. Over the last few years I have discovered that hard work only does not necessary equate to great results, rather it is about worker smarter than harder that does and that includes self care and physical manifestations. As a visionary, I would like to develop innovative and expressive opportunities for members of the Bar including more sporting and mindful events, where we can do well at work and also excel on our personal growth.

**What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

Having been through a few transformations, I think being successful at the Bar means rolling with the times and waves (metaphorically speaking). Some times it is less about the competition, and more about how we perform, how well we know and/or acknowledge our strengths and weaknesses and our willingness to change. Having spent time cheering athletes and paralympians on in the recent Olympics and Paralympics, I am interested in working more with disabled and disadvantaged members of the Bar. It is truly powerful to see how with a little support and positive energy can do to change someone's life. As a contributor of the Mindfulness movement from the outset at the Bar, I am interested in building on the good work that has been done and to continue fostering a stronger Bar.

Lorinda Long

**Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I am a qualified barrister with over 30 years' experience in the Financial Services Sector. Currently, I am a Managing Director and Associate General Counsel in the Equities Legal Department at Bank of America, heading up the Cash Equities and Regulatory legal team based in London. Before joining Bank of America, I worked at several financial institutions, NatWest Capital Markets, BNP Paribas, Credit Suisse and Barclays, specialising in securitisation and debt capital markets. I was General Counsel of the Treasury Division at HBOS with responsibility for managing and building a legal department of 30 people to provide legal support to the Treasury Division's businesses globally. I was Treasurer of the Bar Council for four years between 2015 and 2018 and again between 2021 and 2024.

**What can you offer the Bar Council?**

Having been Treasurer of the Bar Council for a total of 8 years, I have an excellent and in-depth knowledge of the operations of the Bar Council, the relationship tensions with the BSB and the immense challenges that the organisation faces. In addition, my many years of experience in the commercial world means that I can see the bigger picture across the profession as a whole and help the Bar Council face and deal with the challenges to the Bar and the Legal Services sector in general during these turbulent times.

**What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

A great deal of work has been done to improve the relationship between the Self-employed and the Employed bars over the last few years, but there is still work to be done. I feel very strongly that we can be much more effective if we all work together. It is crucial that the Employed Bar raises its profile both within the profession and outside and as Treasurer, I have worked hard to do that. I want to continue that mission and with my experience and expertise believe I can effectively represent the interests of the members of the Employed Bar and

Mike Jones KC

**Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

A former pupil from a comprehensive school in Caerphilly, I was Called to the Bar in 1995. I completed pupillage and practised from Chambers in South Wales.

In 2009, I joined the Crown Prosecution Service to become its first Senior Crown Advocate in Wales and continued to prosecute in the Crown Courts across Wales.

In 2018 I was appointed (then) Queen's Counsel, the first ever to have done so from the Crown Prosecution Service in Wales and only the third KC appointment from within the Crown Prosecution Service in its history.

I also remain, in Silk, a pupil supervisor as I am keen that the next generation of employed barristers have real support and are able to flourish together with their contemporaries at the self-employed Bar, across England and Wales.

I am a former Chair of the Employed Bar Committee of the Bar Council - where we continue to bring together, represent and promote the many diverse and challenging areas of the Employed Bar.

I am a member of BACFI, a former Chair of the Middle Temple Employed Bar Society and current Secretary of the Middle Temple Wales Circuit Society. I am also a Bencher at Middle Temple.

**What can you offer the Bar Council?**

The Employed Bar - we are a diverse but significant aspect of the Bar. In addition to supporting the work of our Bar Council, I am committed to continue to highlight issues that affect all employed barristers. The Bar Council exists as "One Bar". Given our personal and professional diversity, employed barristers can, at times, feel isolated and disadvantaged. I am keen to continue to be a positive voice to support and promote employed barristers and to, for example, encourage those who wish to shape the future of Bar Council and to advance in applying for Silk and/or judicial appointment.

**What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

To be a constructive presence for the Employed Bar and in the decision-making processes of the Bar Council, particularly given the various challenges we all face. Given my background, I also am passionate in continuing to advance and build upon

the ethos of “One Bar”, particularly as there is increased movement between the self-employed and employed Bar, whilst also continuing to strengthen and promote our diverse but united profession. Irrespective of geography or practice area, we were all, once, Called to the Bar.

Sarah Williams

**Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I started at the self-employed bar, on circuit, in Manchester in 1995 (18 St John Street) practising criminal law and public and private family law, undertaking both legal aid and privately funded cases. I was appointed to the Attorney General’s B Panel of Junior Counsel to the Crown. After a decade of self-employed practice, I relocated abroad with my family and thereafter returned to London.

In 2017, I started in private practice as an employed Barrister specialising in family law and am now a Partner in the Family Department of Payne Hicks Beach LLP. Outside my practice, at Inner Temple, I am Chair of the Bar Liaison Committee (first co-opted in 2019, Chair since 2022), a member of the Executive Committee (from 2021), the Bencher Nomination Committee (from 2023) and the very active Employed Bar Forum (since 2021). I have mentored bar students via the Inner Temple scheme for many years.

I lecture in family law and ethics at Guys and St Thomas’s NHS Trust (medical foundation year), write extensively on family law, am shortlisted as Family Law Commentator of the Year at the forthcoming 2024 LexisNexis Awards and named on the inaugural 2024 Pro Bono Recognition List.

**What can you offer the Bar Council?**

I can offer the Bar Council my first-hand experience as an employed barrister and continue to raise the profile of the employed Bar on an even wider scale, with more reach and opportunities for widening access.

I have helped increase the profile of the employed Bar also through my work as Chair of the BLC and the Employed Bar Forum and am keen to do more.

There are still many challenges facing the employed Bar on issues such as limited access, lack of awareness, lack of adequate support, ill-suited continuing education provision and underrepresentation at silk and within the judiciary.

**What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

My primary motivation is to ensure the voice of the employed Bar is heard, the profile raised and opportunities are increased so that it does not just withstand the challenges of modern day practice but can thrive in future.

I am totally committed to widening access and raising the profile so that the employed Bar is a viable career choice for all, whatever their background or stage of career, and

representing the views and interests of the employed Bar as a whole. Being a representative of the Bar Council would provide an opportunity to achieve this.

## Employed Junior Counsel UNDER 7 years in practice

Aimee Stokes

### **Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I am currently practising at Mills and Reeve LLP within the Regulatory, Public and Commercial disputes team. I have recently joined the firm having spent three and a half years at the Crown Prosecution Service. As a Senior Crown Prosecutor, I worked initially in the Crown Court team before moving over to Homicide. During this employment, I also gained experience in the role of District Crown Prosecutor.

I made the decision to move in-house during lockdown. It was an immense shift from practising at the independent Bar. It is through my roles on various committees that I have continued to feel connected to the wider Bar.

Throughout the last five years, I have fulfilled multiple elected and voluntary positions. I was elected to the Criminal Bar Association Executive Committee and Social Mobility Sub-Committee. I held the elected positions of Secretary and Pre-Pupillage officer for the Middle Temple Young Barristers' Association. I am also a member of the Bar Council's Wellbeing Panel and have written multiple blog posts for the Wellbeing at the Bar website. I have thoroughly enjoyed all these commitments.

### **What can you offer the Bar Council?**

My previous committee experience, along with the skills gained from employed practice, have prepared me to stand for election to the Bar Council. I have now spent the majority of my practice as an employed barrister and feel well placed to represent the employed junior Bar. I am a very organised, enthusiastic and proactive person. My employment within two national organisations has given me real exposure to the challenges faced by employed junior barristers. I feel confident in raising these issues and proposing solutions during Council meetings and would welcome the opportunity to participate in discussions on broader issues.

### **What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

As a young, female, state school educated barrister, I am driven by wanting to promote our profession and the environment we work in, to all. I am a proud member of the Bar and am keen to contribute to its improvement and progression.

Being a junior barrister during a global pandemic was no easy feat. There were many challenges, still experienced by the junior bar today, which resulted in a significant



loss to our profession. I feel particularly passionate about supporting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient profession in accordance with the Bar Council's strategic plan.

Alexandra Sutton

**Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I was called in 2017 and completed pupillage at Exchange Chambers, where I specialised in crime. Whilst in Chambers I was a member of the Equality & Diversity and Wellbeing committees, and I took an active role in social mobility initiatives to widen access to the Bar. I am a proud member of the Northern Circuit, and in 2020 I became Circuit Junior, a position which I held for 18 months. Whilst in post I endeavoured to ensure that Circuit was a welcoming and inclusive institution and acted as a mentor to junior members of the Bar, in addition to working closely with the Circuit executive committee, during what was a highly challenging time for our profession. In March 2024 I moved to the employed Bar and am now a member of the Government Legal Department, where I advise the Department of Culture, Media & Sport – I am based in Manchester but often work in London. I continue to mentor and have participated in social mobility and diversity schemes with aspiring barristers, and I am also a careers advisor for the Inns Court College of Advocacy.

**What can you offer the Bar Council?**

I am dedicated, approachable, and well-equipped to listen to and advocate for the interests of my fellow members of the Bar. My experience at the self-employed and employed fields has given me particular insight into the issues across the profession, and working with colleagues in both Manchester and London means I have a wide professional network with whom I can engage. I have a track record of working successfully on committees with the aim of strengthening and improving the profession, and effectively representing the views of others.

**What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

I want to ensure the Bar is a sustainable profession, both in the interest of my colleagues but also the wider public. I came to the Bar from a state school with no legal connections, but I was guided by barristers who were generous with their time and who are passionate about this job. I am so proud to be a barrister, but I am alive to the external and internal challenges our profession faces. I want to use my skills to build a progressive and resilient Bar, with particular focus on representing employed junior members.

Jordan Pratt

**Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I am currently a Crown Advocate with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). I am based in London and prosecute all manner of hearings in the Crown Court. I have always been a prosecutor having undertaken pupillage with the CPS in 2020. Upon qualification, I worked as a Crown Prosecutor, Senior Crown Prosecutor and then District Crown Prosecutor. The latter role included managing a team of other lawyers as well as busy magistrates' courts. I provided strategic leadership to my team as well as other lawyers in the Unit. My role also included dealing with complaints, stakeholder engagement and delivering training.

When in court, I prosecuted some of the most sensitive and complex cases in the magistrates' and youth courts including a large number of special jurisdiction matters. I am a member of Inner Temple and regularly attend their events, especially their Employed Bar and Junior Bar Association events. I was a recent panellist at an Inner Temple event speaking about "Pathways after Pupillage".

I volunteer with several mentoring schemes and I have previously attended numerous universities speaking about what practice is like and how to access the profession.

### **What can you offer the Bar Council?**

I have extensive experience of chairing and participating in stakeholder meetings in both a professional and voluntary capacity. Until recently, I was a District Crown Prosecutor. My responsibilities included attending Legal Leadership Forums for CPS London North and chairing Local Justice Area meetings. I regularly met with groups of people who all had competing interests and was able to facilitate meaningful discussion to achieve common goals.

I am incredibly approachable and enjoy getting to know and work with others. I have both the time and energy to be able to commit to this role.

### **What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

I believe I have the requisite experience, drive and determination in order to be successful in the position. I am used to vociferously raising concerns on behalf of others. I am incredibly passionate about the future of the Bar and I am particularly dedicated to championing diversity within, and accessibility to, the profession.

### Sam Groom

#### **Tell us something about you, your practice and other professional activities at the Bar with which you are involved?**

I am a very junior barrister practising in planning and environmental law. I represent and advise a mix of private and public bodies across the breadth of this practice area, including the DCO process, PINS appeals, JR, BNG, EIA and HRA. I enjoy the variety of this work and most of all the variety of acronyms and initialisms it offers.

I undertook pupillage in chambers in London and am now employed by a law firm, mainly working in Birmingham and Leeds. I work alongside solicitor-advocates delivering advocacy as well as other legal services.

I have acted as a mentor to aspiring barristers on an informal basis, and am keen to find more structured ways in which I can help to improve access to the bar.

I am a grateful Inner Temple scholar, a former judicial assistant, a fickle language-learner, an itinerant choral singer and a bad tennis-player.

**What can you offer the Bar Council?**

I can bring the perspective of a new practitioner. Being recently out of pupillage and having recently joined the employed bar, I can understand the experience of those at the earliest stages of their career at the bar in these different settings.

I can also offer my time and enthusiasm. I would hope to help on the Young Barristers' Committee, the Employed Barristers' Committee and on other committees if they will have me. I would be receptive to contact from any members whose views I could represent.

**What is your motivation for standing for the Bar Council in these elections?**

I was very lucky to obtain scholarships and a pupillage place to enable me to train as a barrister. I have had excellent mentors, including the judge to whom I was assigned as a judicial assistant, who when in practice was Chair of the Bar. I would like to begin to repay my good fortune and honour the kindness and community spirit of the people who have helped me by serving on the Bar Council. I expect to form a clear intention of exactly how I can best serve once (and if) I start and learn the ropes.