



The Law Society

# Local Law Society Guidebook

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# President's welcome

## Welcome to this inaugural edition of the local law society guidebook.

I believe local law societies provide a vital service to practitioners. For over 15 years, I have been joint honorary secretary of Bolton Law Society, where I am also a past president and have represented solicitors in Lancashire and Greater Manchester on the Law Society's Council since 2006.

Throughout this time, I have seen first-hand the significant difference that local law societies make by bringing people together, sharing best practice and promoting the highest professional standards to our members, regardless of their area of practice or years of post-qualification experience.

This guidebook is intended as a practical resource, aiming to provide local law societies with ideas to enhance further the excellent ways in which you already represent, support and promote your members.

Brexit, ongoing reforms to the justice system and technological innovation are challenging the profession but also bring opportunities. Now more than ever, our members need our advice and support. This guidebook is one of our contributions to help local law societies to survive and prosper in an ever changing environment.

The relationship between the Law Society of England and Wales and local societies is also crucial to maintaining a strong, united and cohesive profession. Local members have been vital in helping us build the evidence base needed to present the profession's concerns to government and to bring our policies to life. We hope this resource helps to further enhance this positive engagement and we look forward to working with many of you.

**Joe Egan**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Egan', written in a cursive style.

“

The relationship between the Law Society of England and Wales and local societies is also crucial to maintaining a strong, united and cohesive profession

Joe Egan

”



# Introduction

This guidebook provides practical guidance for organisations looking to build or develop their offering to members.

You will find information about ways to communicate with members and external stakeholders using different channels such as social media and the press. There are also templates that can be used for campaigning and influencing, including best practice tips for writing to your MP and drafting press releases.

In addition, you will find information about the structure of the Law Society of England and Wales and its executive team, as well as case studies sharing best practice from across the country.

## About the Law Society

We are the independent professional body for solicitors in England and Wales.

We are run by our members, for our members. Our role is to be the voice of solicitors, to drive excellence in the profession and to safeguard the rule of law.

# Governance Structure

Below are examples of constitutions and governance structures of law societies at both national and local level.

## The Law Society of England and Wales

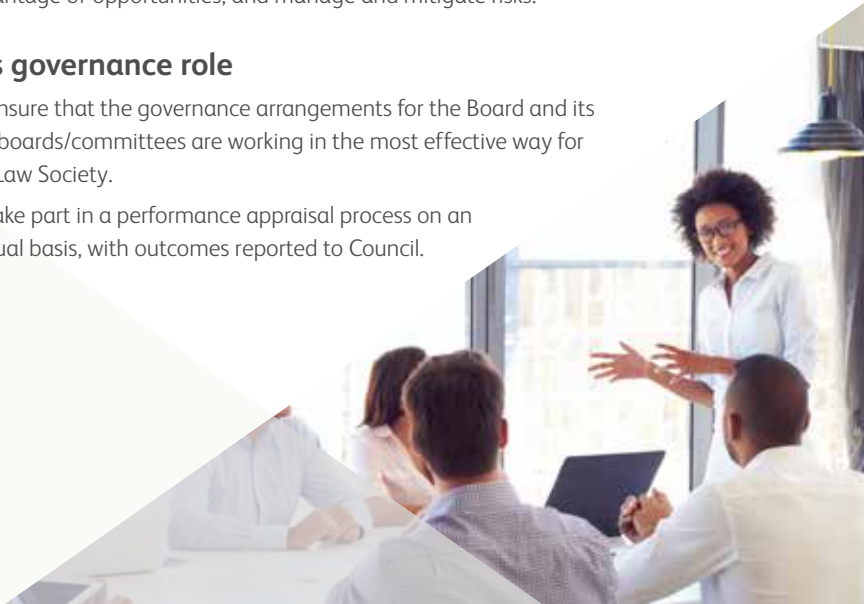
The Law Society Board, through its Chair, reports regularly to Council and is accountable for ensuring the effective oversight of the implementation of the Law Society's strategy and the effective discharge of those functions delegated to it by Council.

### Board responsibilities

- To work to ensure that the Board fulfils its oversight role in relation to Law Society strategy and policy.
- To discharge the responsibilities delegated to the Board by Council, reporting to Council on how those responsibilities have been discharged.
- To ensure the effective governance of the Law Society.
- To ensure that the Board operates within its terms of reference.
- To ensure the sound financial health of the Law Society, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability.
- To review major risks and satisfy itself that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities, and manage and mitigate risks.

### Board's governance role

- To ensure that the governance arrangements for the Board and its sub-boards/committees are working in the most effective way for the Law Society.
- To take part in a performance appraisal process on an annual basis, with outcomes reported to Council.



## **Ensuring efficiency and effectiveness**

- To fully engage in the work of the Board and to ensure that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of the Law Society and its members.
- To foster and maintain constructive working relationships with fellow members of the Board and the executive.
- To work with the executive to give direction to Board decision-making.

## **Board's relationship with Council, the Chief Executive and the wider management team**

- To ensure implementation of Board decisions.
- To build active engagement with Council members and other Board members.
- To develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship with the chief executive.
- To assist the Board Chair in conducting an annual appraisal and remuneration review for the chief executive in consultation with the office-holders.

# Governance Structure

## Council

Represents our members.

Sets the practising certificate (PC) fee and compensation fund contributions.

Approves the annual business plan and budget.

Determines the Society's position on significant policy issues.

Discharges function as approved regulator.

### Committees of the Council

#### Audit Committee

Reviews and advises Council on the Society's accounts, financial statements and accounting policies.

#### Council Members' Conduct Committee

Investigates and reports to Council on complaints regarding conduct.

#### Council Membership Committee

Advises the Council on its representativeness.

#### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Advises the Council, its boards and committees on matters of equality, diversity and inclusion.

#### Remuneration Committee

Approves remuneration arrangements for the Law Society. Determines compensation to office holders, chairs and members of boards, committees and Council.

#### Scrutiny and Performance Review Committee

Reviews decisions or actions taken under delegated powers and reviews board performance.

## Board

Oversight body managing the effective implementation of the Society's strategy and annual business plan as set by Council, recommending the Society's budget to Council, and overseeing the Society's governance on behalf of Council.

### Policy and Regulatory Affairs Committee (PRAC)

Deals with policy issues relevant to the profession and the Society's public interest role, including the work of our specialist policy and regulatory committees.

#### Specialist Committees

There are 25 specialist committees that report into PRAC and advise on a wide range of specialist areas of law.

### Membership and Operations Committee (MOC)

Deals with the development of the services provided to members and operational matters.

#### Community Committees

The 12 community committees (divisions and sections) work with the Society to grow the knowledge, awareness, networks, education and reach of their communities to enhance members' professional practice and careers.

### Business and Oversight Board (BOB)

Advises the Council on oversight of the SRA.

### SRA Board

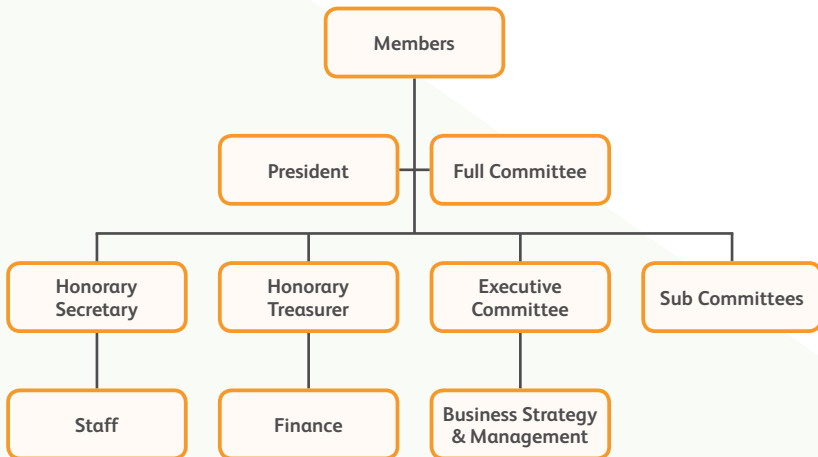
Exercises the regulatory functions of the Law Society, deals with compliance, deals with solicitors' disciplinary proceedings and oversees the operations of the SRA itself.



## Devon and Somerset Law Society

The Devon and Somerset Law Society (DASLS) is a professional forum for lawyers in the Devon and Somerset area (except Plymouth). It assists members who are in difficulty in their practice and facilitates communication with the central regulating body, if appropriate. DASLS also organises social functions such as the annual dinner and president's lunch, and professional services for its members. These include cost effective continuing professional development (CPD) courses, an employment register, annual inter-firm surveys for practice management, an international lawyer network as well as mediation promotion and training.

The diagram below shows the basic reporting structure for Devon and Somerset Law Society.



### The presidency

Each president serves for one year and candidates are selected on a rotating regional basis. The final duty of the immediate past-president is to call and chair the College of Past Presidents, whose job it is to consider appropriate candidates to be proposed as deputy vice-president at the next annual general meeting (AGM).

The vice president and deputy vice president succeed year on year through to the presidency, subject to the democratic process. The deputy vice president has no specific duties.

## The committee

The committee acts as the Board of Directors and the president is its Chair. The committee is responsible for all the Society's business and safeguards its strategic direction.

The committee meets four times a year and its members are:

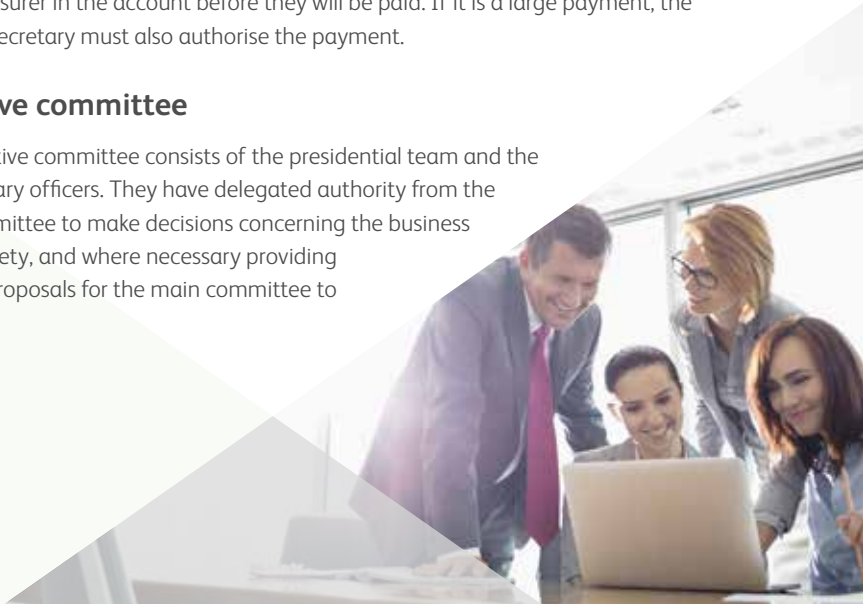
- President
- Vice president
- Deputy vice president
- Honorary secretary
- Honorary treasurer and membership secretary
- The immediate past president
- The Law Society council members
- Crown prosecution service representative
- Local government representative.

## Officers

There are two officers responsible for overseeing the financial recording and reporting for the Society. The honorary secretary, elected annually at the AGM, and the honorary treasurer and membership secretary. The recording is done by the DASLS office using SAGE accounting software. The office also has an online banking facility to post payments and monitor the account. All payments must be authorised by the treasurer in the account before they will be paid. If it is a large payment, the honorary secretary must also authorise the payment.

## Executive committee

The executive committee consists of the presidential team and the two honorary officers. They have delegated authority from the main committee to make decisions concerning the business of the Society, and where necessary providing strategic proposals for the main committee to consider.



## **Sub-committees**

Much of the Society's work, especially responding to consultations and the decision-making process, is conducted through the sub-committees and then taken to the full main committee, where any relevant decisions are considered. Generally, they meet between three and five times per year.

Working groups are formed from time to time as the need arises; for example, for the awards dinner.

# Sample job description – Board member

## Job description

The Board, through its Chair, will report regularly to Council and be accountable for ensuring the effective oversight of the implementation of the Society's strategy and the discharge of those functions delegated to it by Council.

## Principal responsibilities

### Board responsibilities

- To ensure that the Board fulfils its oversight role in relation to Law Society strategy and policy.
- To discharge the responsibilities delegated to the Board by Council, reporting to Council on how those responsibilities have been discharged.
- To ensure the effective governance of the Society.
- To ensure that the Board operates within its terms of reference.
- To ensure the sound financial health of the Society, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability.
- To review major risks and satisfy itself that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities and manage and mitigate risks.

### Governance

- To ensure that the governance arrangements for the Board and its sub-boards / committees are working in the most effective way for the Society.
- To take part in a performance appraisal process on an annual basis, with outcomes reported to Council.



### **Efficiency and effectiveness**

- To fully engage in the work of the Board and to ensure that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of the Society and its members.
- To foster and maintain constructive working relationships with fellow members of the Board and the executive.
- To work with the executive to give direction to Board decision-making.
- To ensure implementation of Board decisions.

### **Relationship with Council, the chief executive and the wider management team**

- To build active engagement with Council members and other Board members.
- To develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship with the chief executive.
- To assist the Board Chair in conducting an annual appraisal and remuneration review for the chief executive in consultation with the office-holders.

# Organising a local law society dinner

Below are some tips to consider when planning a local law society dinner based on the experiences of Law Society president, Joe Egan.

## Venue

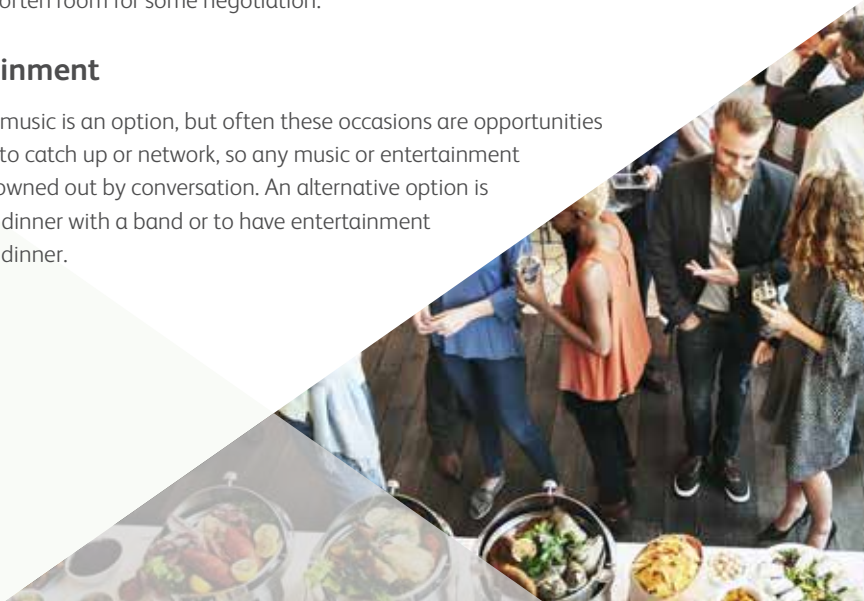
The choice of venue can be important and if it has a distinct selling point, such as being new or with an added attraction like a gallery, then this can help attract greater numbers of people. Local town halls and hotels are also worth considering, especially if they are centrally located so that they are easy to reach. Naturally, the choice of venue will depend on the budget that is available, but key things to consider are catering, location, and price.

## Budget

Typically, tickets will be sold to offset the costs of the dinner and to generate some revenue. It may be worth offering free tickets to key or VIP guests, such as local judiciary or business groups, as this will increase stakeholder engagement and can add to the prestige of an event. These complementary tickets will need to be factored into budgetary calculations. Most venues will be happy to discuss your specific requirements and the associated costs with a view to getting your business, so there is often room for some negotiation.

## Entertainment

Pre-dinner music is an option, but often these occasions are opportunities for people to catch up or network, so any music or entertainment may be drowned out by conversation. An alternative option is to end the dinner with a band or to have entertainment during the dinner.



## Speeches

These can happen either before or after the dinner, but often a welcome is given at the start to attendees even if speeches are to follow later. It can often be easier to get the audience's attention earlier in the evening. There is often a key or guest note speaker, this can be a local luminary or dignitary or, if the budget allows for it, a professional after dinner speaker. An office holder from the national law society will often be happy to come and speak at the dinner and the approach can be made either directly or through the local relationship manager in your area.

## Sponsors

This topic is dealt with elsewhere in the handbook, but it is always worth seeking sponsorship as this can bring down the cost of the tickets, provide more catering options, afford the cost of a speaker and/or allow you to invite additional guests.

## Relationship managers

The Law Society's relationship managers for your area will be happy to offer advice about attracting sponsors or other organisations that may want to get involved. Many societies traditionally invite the presidents of their neighbouring societies, which can be a good way of building relationships with neighbouring societies

## Toastmaster

It is very useful to have someone who specifically keeps the event to time otherwise it can be very easy for it to overrun. In addition, it is often helpful for guests and hosts to have someone who is clearly announcing each stage in the proceedings such as when guests are to be seated, when speeches are to begin etc. As a professional toastmaster raises costs significantly, a member can be approached who is happy to do the task.

## Awards

If your local law society does not host a separate awards ceremony then awards can be a nice addition to an annual dinner, for example, honouring a promising law student at the local university or recognising a trainee from a local firm. This can also have a positive impact on the number of attendees as those on the short lists and associated firms may choose to attend to support their nominee.

# Running an awards ceremony

Awards are a good way of recognising the achievements of your members. If you are thinking about setting up a local law society awards event below are some things you may want to consider.

## Award categories

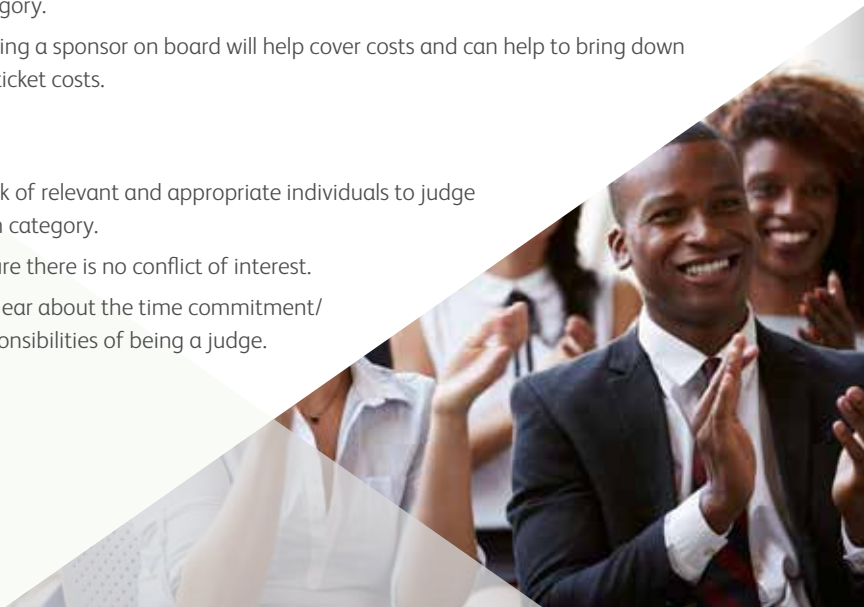
- Think about what is relevant for your members – different practice areas/ career stages/firm size and in-house.
- Ask for input from colleagues and members to help shape the award categories.
- Make sure you set a limit on the number of categories – you need to make sure you have enough time on the night to go through them all.
- When deciding the awards make sure the criteria are clear and measurable.

## Sponsorship

- Think about appropriate companies to approach, it may be that you have a sponsor for the whole event or a sponsor for individual elements, such as the drinks reception. You can also invite companies to sponsor an individual award category.
- Getting a sponsor on board will help cover costs and can help to bring down the ticket costs.

## Judges

- Think of relevant and appropriate individuals to judge each category.
- Ensure there is no conflict of interest.
- Be clear about the time commitment/ responsibilities of being a judge.





## Marketing

- Think about how you will promote the categories/awards – e.g. via social media or direct mail.
- Make sure you have a marketing plan that will reach your target audience.
- Consider using social media, which is a free and effective way to promote your event.
- Highlight the benefits of winning an award, such as increasing the profile of a firm, to encourage nominations.

## Administration

- You will need to consider how you will receive and collate nominations. The most common options are through an online system or a registration form.
- Ensure the process is user friendly and consistent for each award category.

## Budgeting

- Ensure ticket price and sponsorship cover all costs – not just of the award ceremony, but also the administrative costs of running the awards.

## Ceremony

- Find a suitable venue and secure a date.
- Design and order trophies. Trophies can vary hugely in price so it is a good idea to shop around to keep costs down, or to use certificates as an alternative.
- Think about the running order of the ceremony. Consider whether there will be a keynote speech, when the awards will be given out and whether you will have any entertainment.
- Have a photographer taking images of the winners for publicity and marketing purposes.

# Speeches

To raise the profile of local law societies, it is useful for presidents and office holders to speak at local and national events. These are a few tips to build your speech:

## Identification of requirements

Ask the organisers details about the type of event (e.g. after dinner speech, pre-dinner speech, panel event, keynote), the main themes that the organisers would like the speaker to cover, the length and any technical requirements.

## Researching the audience

Find out more about who will be in attendance – for instance, in after dinner speeches it is customary to acknowledge the presence of members of the judiciary, politicians and other presidents. If it is a policy speech, this will also help to assess the level of knowledge of the audience on a topic.

## Crafting your speech

You can follow this three-step process:

### Invention

Select an overall theme for your speech. This could a vision ('the supremacy of the rule of law'), a conviction ('access to justice for all') or a single word ('accountability').<sup>1</sup>

### Arrangement

Your speech should take the audience on a journey:

- It could be structured with a beginning, a middle, and an end, such as narrating how access to justice has been eroded since 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> Simon Lancaster. *Winning Minds: Secrets from the Language of Leadership*



- Proving points made up of statistics, data or references to the law, reinforce the main theme, strengthen the message and give the speaker credibility.
- Stories bring policy lines to life and help the message stick. These, however, should be authentic. For instance, lawyers often make reference to anonymised client stories.
- Humour, if appropriate, is also a good way of breaking the ice with the audience and helps connect with them.

## Style

Your speech should match the length given by the organisers, therefore editing is often an essential part. After 10 minutes the concentration of the audience tends to falter, so be brief, be bright, be gone! Rhetorical devices are also popular in speeches, such as the use of metaphors, comparisons and rule of three (trio of events or characters – education, education, education!).

## Delivery

Speed and rhythm vary from speaker to speaker. It is helpful to print out the speech, read it out loud and time yourself.

Templates for speeches can be found in the law society website:

<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/news/#pressoffice>

If you are stuck, please do contact our public affairs team and we will be able to help you with samples. You can email Alexandra Cardenas, Head of Public Affairs and Campaigns, [Alexandra.Cardenas@lawsociety.org.uk](mailto:Alexandra.Cardenas@lawsociety.org.uk)

# Media relations

The media is a key channel of communication - you can reach hundreds, thousands or even tens of thousands of people within a relatively short time and for free.

## Identify your stakeholders

Stakeholder mapping ensures you have a good understanding of who they are, it helps you identify their priorities, and enables you to be targeted in your messaging. Mapping involves listing relevant organisations, groups and people who have an interest in your current and future objectives.

## Press releases

Building up personal contacts with local media will help ensure you get coverage. Press releases, if properly executed, can also capture the attention of multiple local media outlets, securing coverage.

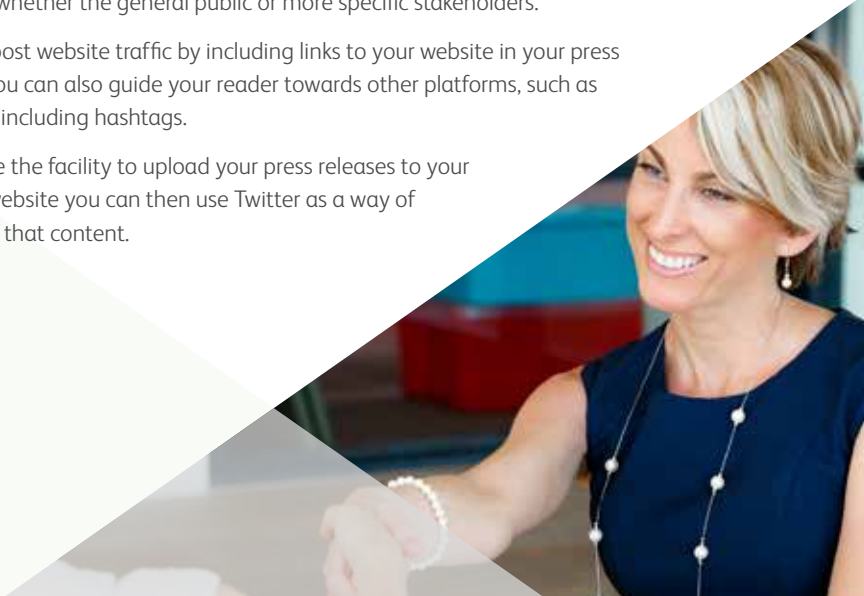
By adopting a simple and effective press release distribution strategy, you can let stakeholders know who you are, what you do, and why they need you.

Many large media outlets get a significant percentage of their stories from regional and local media outlets so by targeting small local media outlets there is a possibility the content will spread from a small publication to a larger one.

An engaging and compelling narrative is one that emotionally connects with the audience, whether the general public or more specific stakeholders.

You can boost website traffic by including links to your website in your press releases. You can also guide your reader towards other platforms, such as Twitter, by including hashtags.

If you have the facility to upload your press releases to your society's website you can then use Twitter as a way of promoting that content.



## The importance of key messages

Key messages can help you:

- Prioritise and crystallise information
- Ensure consistency, continuity and accuracy
- Stay focused when speaking with media or stakeholders.

Information delivered in 'threes' is easiest to remember. Ideally prepare three key messages; each one only one to three sentences in length or under 30 seconds when spoken. Ensure they are easy to recall and repeat and avoid run-on sentences.

Use active, rather than passive language and ensure the messages are clear, simple and readily understood by the audience. The audiences should not have to work to process the information so avoid jargon and acronyms. Balance what you need to communicate with what your audience needs to know.

Review your key messages regularly. When reviewing, consider if your messages are still relevant, if they properly mirror where your business is in its life cycle, if they are easy to recall and if they are meaningful.

## Tips for dealing with local media

- 1. Invest your time in PR.** Advertising requires money and skill to be effective. PR costs only your time.
- 2. Build relationships.** A local or regional reporter who has met you face-to-face, or who speaks to you frequently, is more likely to approach you for a quote or run your story. Spend time reading all your local papers and identify the name of the editor and the reporters. Often a business reporter will cover legal news stories.
- 3. Plan.** News is what happens today and tomorrow. What happened yesterday is history. A reporter will often be glad to be forewarned about a potential local story.
- 4. Assume your press release will be edited from the bottom.** The first sentence should summarise the entire story. Don't save the most interesting aspect for the fourth or fifth paragraph. Does your first sentence include the words 'new' or 'today' or (for a weekly publication), 'this week'?

- 5. Headlines and quotes.** Your headline will rarely be used, so don't waste valuable time crafting a cheesy pun. Instead, focus on the quote. Use colourful metaphors or similes to get your point across and your quote used. If you send a story to a local radio station, decide beforehand who will be interviewed. Rehearse a 20 to 40 second soundbite.
- 6. Write journalese.** Journalists are not lawyers, neither are their readers. Imitate the style of a typical story in the local paper or on their radio news bulletin. Sentences need to be short, clear and use every day English.
- 7. Empathise with the local reader and with the journalist.** What aspect of your story will make the reader interested?
- 8. Nothing you say to a journalist is 'off the record'.** If you say it, it is likely to be used. You can make things 'unattributable' in which case most reporters will not put what you have said in quotes.
- 9. Under-promise and overdeliver.** Journalists are often working to non-negotiable deadlines. Either get back to them in time or warn them that you may not be able.



## Press release templates

We have created 3 press release templates, which you can adapt and use to promote your local law society.

### Template press release no. 1

#### INSERT DATE HERE

Top **(INSERT TOWN/REGION NAME)** solicitors recognised at local legal awards.

**(XXX)** law firms and individual solicitors were recognised as being among best in **(INSERT TOWN/REGION NAME)** at the **(INSERT LOCAL LAW SOCIETY)** awards at a dinner in **XXX** last night.

The awards reward outstanding achievement in areas such as **(INSERT AWARD CATEGORIES)**. There were **XXX** winners in the group categories and **XXX** winners in the individual categories.

**(LOCAL LAW SOCIETY SPOKESPERSON'S NAME AND ROLE)** said:

“Last night was a celebration of the remarkable work of individual solicitors as well as the successes and innovations of practices and firms from **(INSERT TOWN/REGION NAME)**. It was a triumph.

“It was a tough call for the judging panel, who had to pick winners from a really exceptional bunch of people across **(INSERT TOWN/REGION NAME)**.”

The Awards were hosted by **XXX** and the keynote address was delivered by **XXX**.

Notes to editors:

**(INSERT LAW SOCIETY CONTACT DETAILS)**

## Template press release no. 2

**INSERT DATE HERE**

**(INSERT LOCAL LAW SOCIETY NAME)** hails first **(INSERT REGION)** solicitor to preside over **XXX**.

**(LOCAL LAW SOCIETY NAME)** today celebrated the appointment of **XXX** as the first **(INSERT REGION)** solicitor to be appointed **(INSERT ROLE)**.

**(LOCAL LAW SOCIETY SPOKESPERSON'S NAME AND ROLE)** commented: "I am delighted to congratulate **XXX** on their appointment to **XXX**."

Not only does **XXX** have an outstanding legal mind, **XXX** has also campaigned for **XXX** for many years.

"We need **XXX** who have demonstrated legal excellence throughout their careers as **XXX** has.

"With **XXX** as their inspiration, I hope more **XXX** - and others from **XXX** - will feel that the legal profession is one in which they can realise their ambitions."

Notes to editors

**(INSERT LAW SOCIETY CONTACT DETAILS)**





## Template press release no. 3

### INSERT DATE HERE

All are equal under the law: **(INSERT LOCAL LAW SOCIETY NAME)** at Pride in London.

**(INSERT LOCAL LAW SOCIETY NAME)** will be joining legal sector representatives in the Pride in London parade on **(INSERT DATE)**.

The legal profession will be celebrating lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) diversity under the banner ‘All are equal under the law’.

**(INSERT LOCAL LAW SOCIETY NAME)** president **(INSERT NAME)** said: “Just **XXX** years ago parliament voted for the first time to legalise homosexuality in the UK. Since then legal developments have shaped and advanced the freedoms we enjoy today.

“We march in celebration of the significant progress that has been achieved towards a truly diverse and inclusive society and of our progress as a sector.

“We also march in solidarity with the global LGBT community. By marching together on the streets of London, we demonstrate our determination as a profession to do all we can to achieve full equality.”

London Pride rejects hate and says, proudly, Love Happens Here, expressed on social media with the hashtag #LoveHappensHere. The legal profession is echoing the theme with our message: #AllAreEqualUnderTheLaw.

Notes to editors

**(INSERT LAW SOCIETY CONTACT DETAILS)**

# Writing to your MP

A good way for local law societies to influence policy is to write to, or email, your local MP.

## How to find out who your local MP is

You can call the House of Commons Information Office on **020 7219 4272** or visit <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/>.

Any MP can be contacted by writing to House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

## What to write to your MP about

You can contact your MP about any issue that concerns you, but it is always best if you can connect your views with an action for the MP, such as: reading a recent report, attending an upcoming event or writing to the relevant Minister on the issue.

As a local law society, you will be ideally placed to provide views from the local legal profession, and legal expertise. You may choose to write in relation to one of our national campaigns (further information on this is below) or about another legal issue, either local or national.

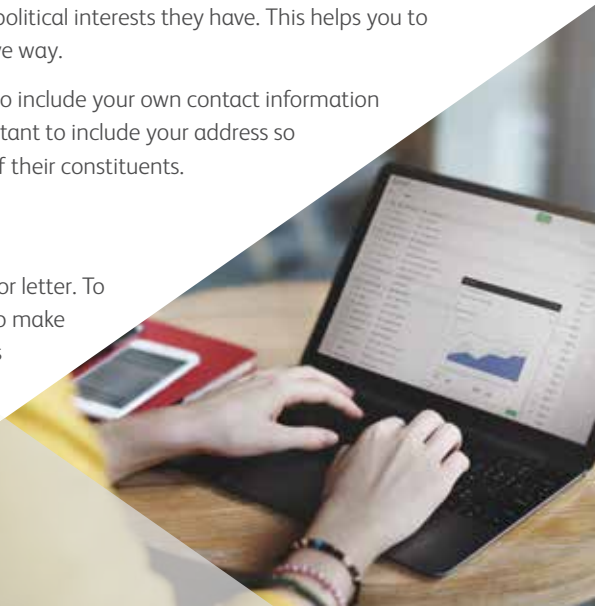
## How to write your letter

Before you contact your MP, it is helpful to know a bit about them, including which party they represent and what sort of political interests they have. This helps you to tailor what you say in the most effective way.

When writing to an MP, do not forget to include your own contact information so they can get back to you. It is important to include your address so that they can verify that you are one of their constituents.

## Receiving a response

Your MP should respond to your email or letter. To help ensure this happens, it is helpful to make sure that whatever you send to them is concise and clearly sets out what you are asking them to do.



Even if you email, you may receive your response by post. If your MP's response does not fully answer your questions, then following up with another email or asking to meet your MP is a good idea. Any response from your MP is useful as it means that you have successfully put the issue on their radar. If you are unsure of what to do next, we can offer advice on what your next steps could be.

We also find it useful when local law societies share response letters from MPs with them, as this helps to influence their own lobbying and campaigning work. You can share with them directly by contacting [campaigns@lawsociety.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@lawsociety.org.uk) or you can post a copy to us at: Public Affairs Team, The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1PL.

## Meeting your MP

If you have more time, meeting your MP in person will have a greater impact. Most MPs hold regular advice surgeries for constituents, some operate on a first-come, first served basis and others on an appointment-only basis. You will need to contact your MP's office to find out when they will next be available to meet with you in the constituency.

When meeting your MP, it is important to be clear about what you want them to do following the meeting. For example, if you want them to ask a cabinet member to take action on your behalf or if you want them to make their support for an issue public, then make sure you let them know this at the meeting.

If you have a meeting with your MP, it is helpful for us to hear the outcome. We are also happy to offer advice on how to follow up after your meeting, especially if you are not sure about what to do next.

## Law Society campaigns

You may want to contact your local MP in support of one of our national campaigns. You can access your MP easily via the Law Society's website by visiting [www.lawsociety.org.uk/policy-campaigns/campaigns/](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/policy-campaigns/campaigns/), where you can find the latest campaign action we have developed, including a template email which you can edit before sending to your MP. The more you personalise these templates, by adding in your own experience and views, the more impact it will have when your MP reads it. But, you can also just add your name and address and send your MP a useful email in just a couple of minutes.

## Template letter

Your Name  
Your Address  
Your Postcode

MP/Councillor Name  
Address  
Address  
Postcode

Date

Dear MP

### **Introduction**

Briefly explain to them why it is that you are writing to them, and that you are a local constituent. This might just be a sentence or two to make it clear from the beginning what the letter is about.

### **What is your situation?**

In this section you should explain to them what the problem or issue is in a bit more detail. This will depend on what you are writing to them about, for example a letter about a specific campaign will be different to one about a local or personal problem.

### **What do you want to change?**

This is an opportunity for you to tell them why you want things to change, and why this is important. This section does not need to be too long.

### **What do you want them to do?**

This section is where you ask them to help and include a call to action. This might be asking them to support a specific campaign, write to the Lord Chancellor, or promote a particular policy recommendation.

Yours sincerely,

Your Name

# Best practice tips for social media

Social media, whether it is LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, or another platform, enables you to do more than simply get your messages out. When used effectively, it can help position you as a reputable organisation and help build a supportive community that is interested in what you do.

Successful social media takes time and resources, but it can be a positive asset to any organisation. There are a few things to consider that will help you make the most of these platforms.

Ask yourself:

- Why am I sharing this?
- What action do I want people to take?
- Who is my audience?

## **Why am I sharing this?**

Before sharing, it is important to think about the bigger picture. Your message needs to be relevant, concise and focused on a specific goal that you want to achieve.

Are you trying to raise awareness of an issue? Promote an event, campaign or service? Or are you supporting a relevant and/or partner organisation? Or raising awareness of your section, community, or services?

## **What do you want people to do?**

The 'call to action' is the thing you want people to do after reading your update. It could be anything, but it is important to clearly define that action before writing a message.

Are you trying to get someone to click a link to find out more or share something to their followers? Sign up for something? Sign something such as a campaign or petition?



## Who is my audience?

Focus on the people that matter, using the language they use and covering the topics they care about. If you try to appeal to everyone then you may interest no one.

For example, are you targeting all solicitors or a specific area of law, or a geographical region? Or, perhaps, law students or city firms?

## Using social media to market an event

Below is a list of the information to include when using social media to market an event:

- Date
- Price if applicable
- Event name
- Speaker information
- Links to further information about the event and how to register or book a place. Note that shortened URLs are treated the same by Twitter regarding word count
- Relevant hashtags – if using Twitter always check any hashtag you intend to use by searching it on Twitter to see the results. Use the advanced Twitter search
- Image/video/gif. Be aware of copyright restrictions.

## Using images on Twitter

Images can also be tagged with up to 10 other Twitter accounts, which is a good way of spreading your message further (for example, @becomeajudge or @LSHumanRights).

To do this:

- click the camera icon and find the image you wish to attach
- then click on the 'Who's in this photo' link that appears below the image
- Up to 10 Twitter handles can be pasted in (one by one) or type them in. This does not affect the overall character count of the tweet.

## Further information

You can visit the Twitter website for helpful tips on setting up an account and how best to use the platform at <https://help.twitter.com/en/twitter-guide>

# Local law society magazines and newsletters

Many of the larger local law societies use magazines or newsletters as a means of communicating with their members. Two of the longest established publications are *The Messenger*, the monthly publication of Manchester Law Society, and Liverpool Law Society's *Liverpool Law*.

The publications provide a platform for the law societies to engage with their members and as a forum for discussion and debate. Both Manchester and Liverpool law societies use the magazines to inform members of their activities and events and to offer members the opportunity to share their news and information with their peers.

Each magazine is headed up by an editor, with the support of the publisher and an editorial committee, which meets on a monthly basis. The editorial committees are comprised of local practitioners from a broad range of firms and specialisms. The meetings discuss forthcoming issues and decide on content and dividing the tasks between the committee members.

The 'backbone' of the magazines are the numerous features, which run month to month and include:

## ***Liverpool Law***

- News from the president
- Editorial
- Helix Highlights – news from the Liverpool Law Society office
- Regulation update
- Technology and the law
- Council member's update
- Updates from the Merseyside Junior Lawyers Division and the Women Lawyers Division



- News and updates from the various sub-committees of Liverpool Law Society
- Charity and CSR
- Education and training
- Book, film, theatre or music reviews.

## ***The Messenger***

- News from the president
- News from Bridge Street – news from the Manchester Law Society office
- Regulation update
- Management matters
- Going Green – advice and information from the Legal Sustainability Alliance
- Updates from CILEX, Manchester trainee solicitors, Manchester young solicitors and the Black Solicitors Network
- My route to the law
- Mental wellness
- Healthy lifestyle
- Wine column.

The magazines also include contributions from members. This can be new appointments, promotions and deals. Members are also encouraged to submit articles on legal cases they have achieved a successful outcome for their clients.

Both magazines also welcome and encourage contributions from the wider business community. *Liverpool Law* has featured the International Business Festival, which was launched in 2014 and are currently informing and updating readers on the plans and programme for the 2018 Festival, which takes place in June. *The Messenger* has recently included interviews with the chair of Pro Manchester and the head of MIDAS, the Manchester inward investment agency.

The aim of the magazines is to provide a lively and interesting read for members. The membership of both societies is diverse; from trainee solicitors to senior practitioners, paralegals, legal executives and barristers – all from a wide range of practices and the magazines attempt to reflect this diversity.

Both *The Messenger* and *Liverpool Law*, like the legal profession they serve, are constantly changing and evolving. The magazines were launched in a printed format in 1994, and at the start of 2018 became online publications for some of the following reasons:



- The magazines are funded through advertising and many advertisers are looking to digital publications where readers can 'click' through to their websites.
- Several firms have become paperless and wanted a digital publication.
- Younger members of the profession wanted to be able to read the magazines on their phones or tablets.
- Environmental considerations.
- No limit to the number of pages.

Another benefit of the online publication is the reduction in time from deadline to publication. The print process took over a week and very often would be 'old news' by the time the magazine was delivered.

So far, the response to the change has been excellent. Both magazines have seen an increase in editorial submissions and are now averaging between 44-48 pages per edition.

Both magazines are available on 'Flickread', a digital platform for magazines and publications.

The key to a successful publication is to offer something that is interesting, lively and diverse with a regional focus, which generates debate and discussion.



# Attracting and retaining members

At a previous annual meeting of local law society president and secretaries, the following were identified as key points for consideration when seeking to attract new members and retain existing members.

## Membership attraction

Tailoring your membership to specific sections of the profession has become increasingly important due to increasing diversity.

However, attracting particular segments of the legal sector, such as the in-house community or local authority solicitors, can be a challenge.

The in-house legal sector was identified as an increasingly important section of the membership and the in-house community is projected to form a third of all solicitors by 2020.

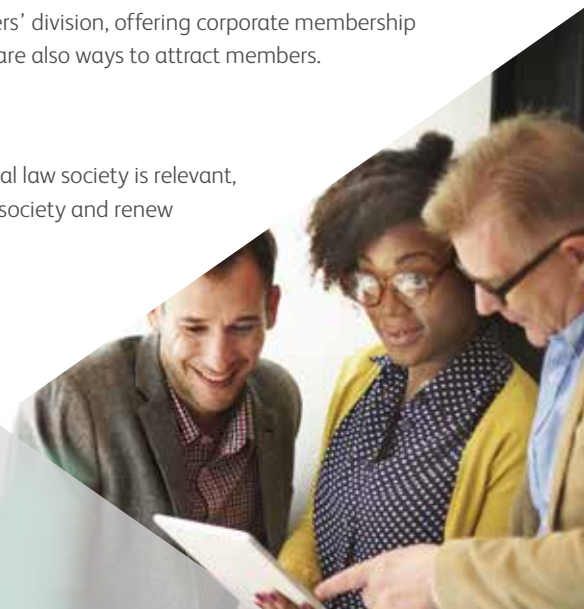
A possible solution is to contact, and potentially collaborate with, the local commerce and industry group/s to create links with the in-house sector.

It is important for local law societies to diversify the type of activities organised in order to attract a wider membership.

Creating links with the local junior lawyers' division, offering corporate membership with reduced rates and creating events are also ways to attract members.

## Membership retention

If prospective members believe their local law society is relevant, they are more likely to engage with the society and renew their membership.



For local law societies, some of the key factors which influence member engagement are; effective engagement with the legal sector, organisation of relevant activities, and initiatives and promotion/protection of the solicitor brand.

For most local law societies, the key activities and events are the annual general meeting, the annual dinner and an awards dinner.

Other more ad hoc and informal social events, such as sports days, book club meetings and networking events, can help engage a broader audience.

Opportunities for professional development courses/seminars and training events are important for professional development purposes. Developing skills such as negotiation and technological expertise is useful in attracting a wide audience, particularly junior lawyers who are important for the future success of all local law societies.

The national law society can provide resources for local law societies through the regional managers and resources on the website.

# Raising income

Membership fees are a key source of income for local law societies and subscription rates can vary to take into account the different positions of members.

Below is an example of how one local law society tiers its subscription rates:

## Individual subscriptions for solicitors

There are two rates depending on your position. One rate applies to principals, partners, members of an LLP, directors of limited companies or other owners of a practice. There is a second rate for assistant solicitors, associates or other admitted members of a firm (including consultants) and in-house lawyers. Honorary and lifetime members do not pay subscriptions.

## Associate and affiliate members

The Devon and Somerset Law Society (DASLS) also accepts associate and affiliate members. Associate membership is available to any trainee solicitor in DASLS's area. Affiliate members are non-solicitors who nevertheless have a stake in the legal profession. Affiliate and associate members do not currently pay any subscription.

## Optional corporate subscription for firms with 20 or more solicitors

The DASLS has introduced a corporate subscription scheme for firms and legal departments with 20 or more solicitors.

The scheme is available to those organisations who undertake to subscribe all their solicitors operating in the DASLS geographical area to membership.

The scheme is optional and members may continue to pay their subscriptions on an individual basis as shown above if they prefer.

Membership will continue to rest with each individual solicitor as per the DASLS constitution.

There is a tiered corporate scheme rate depending on the size of the member firm.

