

Part 1 - Public

Minutes of the Bar Standards Board meeting

Wednesday 25 March 2026 (5.00 pm)

Hybrid Meeting, Rooms 1.4-1.7, BSB Offices & MS Teams

- Present:** Professor Chris Bones (Chair)
Gisela Abbam
Jeff Chapman KC
Emir Feisal JP
Tracey Markham
Andrew Mitchell KC
Ruth Pickering
- By invitation:** Malcolm Cree (Chief Executive, Bar Council - departing)
Jim Morris (Chief Executive, Bar Council -incoming)
Lucinda Orr (Treasurer, Bar Council) – via Teams
Andy Russell (Director, Council of the Inns of Court)
- Press:** Neil Rose (Legal Futures)
- BSB Executive:** Graham Black (Head of Communications) - via Teams
Rebecca Forbes (Head of Governance)
Lyndy Geddes (Chief Operating Officer)
Steve Haines (Acting Director General)
Teresa Haskins (Director of People and Culture)
Saima Hirji (Director of Regulatory Enforcement)
Alex Kuczynski (Director of Legal & Information Management)
Ewen Macleod (Director of Strategy, Policy & Insights)
Mark Neale (Director General - outgoing)
John Picken (Governance Officer)
Debbie Stimpson (Director of Programmes, Planning & Engagement)
- Resource Group:** Richard Cullen (Director of Finance)

Item 1 – Welcome / Announcements

1. The Chair noted this was the last Board meeting attendance for Malcolm Cree and Mark Neale. On behalf of the Board he expressed his sincere thanks for the hard work, support and commitment of both and wished them well for the future.
2. He also welcomed Jim Morris, the newly appointed Chief Executive of the Bar Council and looked forward to forming a positive and productive working relationship with him. He also introduced Lyndy Geddes, the BSB's new Chief Operating Officer.
3. **Item 2 – Apologies**
 - Leslie Thomas KC
 - Kirsty Brimelow KC (Chair, Bar Council)
 - Heidi Stonecliffe KC (Vice Chair, Bar Council)

Note: Ruby Hamid was absent from Part 1 of the meeting but was present for Part 2.

Item 3 – Members’ interests and hospitality

4. The Chair confirmed that the Board will host an evening Dinner for Mark Neale at the Reform Club after the meeting concludes to mark his departure from the BSB.

Item 4 – Approval of Part 1 (public) minutes (Annex A)

5. The Board **approved** the Part 1 (public) minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2026.

Item 5a – Matters arising & Action List

6. The Board **noted** the action list.

Item 5b – Forward agenda

7. The Board **noted** the forward agenda list.

Item 6 – Item for Ratification: Enforcement Regulations – Proposals 27-29

BSB 013 (26)

8. The Board ratified its earlier decision based on a paper circulated on 9 March 2026 about Proposals 27-29 of the executive’s response to the consultation paper on Enforcement Regulations. This followed an earlier discussion by the Task and Finish Group appointed to consider this matter which recommended the following:
- to retain the composition of disciplinary panels as at present ie. a five-person panel will be used for the more serious cases (where disbarment or suspension of more than 12 months may be the appropriate sanction) but that a three-person panel will be used for less serious cases;
 - to retain the qualifying criteria for the panel Chair and, as such, a judge or KC will chair all disciplinary panels;
 - to reduce the panels of the Independent Decision Making Body from five to three (for enforcement cases), retaining a lay majority.

**AK to
note**

Item 7 – Quarter3 2025-26 performance report

BSB 014 (26)

9. Steve Haines highlighted the following:
- the data confirms what we already knew from last year ie that the volume of reports received has increased;
 - productivity continues to improve eg:
 - the Contact and Assessment Team (CAT) processed 693 reports during the quarter (a record figure);
 - the Authorisations Team closed nearly double the number of applications from Transferring Qualified Lawyers during Qs 1-3 than it did in the whole of 2024/25.
 - the BSB’s remediation plan was presented to the Legal Services Board on 29 January 2026 and a progress update on those undertakings will be provided on 1 April 2026;
 - this plan is currently on track for delivery. All Q1 actions are already completed, and our most recent figures (March 2026) show that our KPI target for timeliness should be achieved ahead of schedule in respect of assessments. Performance on timeliness for investigations and enforcement is also on an upward trend.

10. **AGREED**
to note the report.

Item 8 – Tax Guidance Update

BSB 015 (26)

11. *This item was added to the public agenda in error and was therefore moved to the private session of the March 2026 meeting.*

Item 9 – Governance documents including Terms of Reference for the Education and Training Committee

BSB 016 (26)

12. Rebecca Forbes commented as follows:
- the paper collates a number of recommendations for improvements to governance procedures though none are considered controversial;
 - the paper also sets out:
 - the draft Terms of Reference for the Education and Training Committee, which the Board agreed to re-establish at its meeting in January 2026;
 - proposed updates to the Terms of Reference for Joint Bar Council / BSB Committees (Audit Committee and Finance Committee).
13. She also referred to proposals to extend eligibility for barrister membership of the Independent Decision Making Body (IDB) as described in the paper. She confirmed that:
- discussions took place with IDB Office Holders in the light of the Board's out of cycle decision to reduce panel size (cf. min 8);
 - though welcome, the Office Holders agreed that this was not sufficient in itself to mitigate the risk of under-recruitment and that extending eligibility to barristers who had held practising certificates for three years would increase numbers, availability to sit on panels and diversity.
14. The Board unanimously agreed the recommendations set out in the paper.
15. **AGREED** to approve:
- | | |
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| a) the Terms of Reference for the Education and Training Committee, and the consequential amendments to the <i>Governance Manual</i> and the Terms of Reference for the Centralised Examinations Board; | RF to note |
| b) the introduction of criteria which the BSB can consider when assessing whether a Board member is or remains independent; | Action - RF |
| c) the amendment to the <i>Appointments Policy</i> to be effective from 1 January 2027 so that a person may only serve nine years in total as a Board member and the Chair or as a Board member and the Vice Chair; | Action - RF |
| d) amendment to the list of matters reserved to the Board (within the <i>Governance Manual</i>) and the Terms of Reference for the Remuneration Committee, so that setting the remuneration for the Director General and the Senior Leadership Team is delegated to that committee (rather than reserved to the Board); | Action - RF |

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| e) | the amendment to the <i>Appointments Policy</i> to be effective immediately so that it is for the Chair or the Vice Chair of the Board to reappoint the Chair and Vice Chair(s) of the Independent Decision-making Body; | Action -
RF |
| f) | amendment to extend the eligibility for barrister members of the Independent Decision-making Body to include those recently retired (within three years); and | Action -
RF |
| g) | the revisions to the Standing Orders for joint Committees of the General Council of the Bar and the Bar Standards Board. | Action -
RF |

Item 10 – Director General’s Report – Public Session

16. BSB 017 (26).
The Board **noted** the report.

Item 11 – Chair’s Report on Visits and External Meetings

17. The Board **noted** the report.

Item 12 – Any other business

18. None.

Item 13 – Date of next meeting

19. Thursday 23 April 2026 (5.00 pm)
Thursday 21 May 2026 (5.00 pm)

Item 14 – Private Session

20. The Board resolved to consider the following items in private session:
- (1) Approval of Part 2 (private) minutes – 29 January 2026.
 - (2) Matters arising and action points – Part 2.
 - (3) Feedback from the GRA / PSP Committees
 - (4) Item for Ratification: Recommendations from the Remuneration Committee
 - (5) Tax Guidance Update
 - (6) Final Strategy approval
 - (7) BSB Performance Measurement – proposals for change
 - (8) BSB 2026/27 Business Plan
 - (9) Corporate (strategic) risk report to the Board
 - (10) Culture in the profession – Developing our Data and Intelligence Approach
 - (11) Governance arrangements
 - (12) Director General’s Report – Private Session.
 - (13) Any other private business.
21. The meeting finished at 5.15 pm.