



## NEW CRIMINAL BAR ASSOCIATION CHAIR:

### **“JUSTICE CUTS MUST NOT LEAVE THE VULNERABLE BEHIND”**

Christopher Kinch QC, who takes over today as Chairman of the Criminal Bar Association ('CBA'), the specialist body for criminal barristers warned that vulnerable members of society must not be unprotected as the Coalition Government plans to slash £2bn from the Ministry of Justice's budget and said that the previous Government had already squeezed and cut the fees of publicly funded advocates.

Christopher Kinch QC, who succeeds Paul Mendelle QC as CBA Chair, has said that the Government must explore rational ways of saving costs that do not harm the administration of justice.

Christopher Kinch QC, said:

“We are deeply concerned that the planned cuts are so extensive that they will inevitably deny representation and choice to some of society's most vulnerable members, who rely on legal aid to ensure adequate representation.

“Publicly funded advocates have already suffered cuts to their fees, rushed through by the last Government in vindictive fashion. The Coalition has to understand the danger of further cuts driving down quality as good advocates seek other areas in which to practise. The Government has to take incredibly tough decisions to save public money in an unprecedented period of fiscal austerity. However, the severe cuts planned by the Ministry of Justice must not leave the most vulnerable members of society unprotected or damage the quality of advocacy provided under legal aid.

“The required savings from the Justice budget present an opportunity to take a more rational approach to policy areas that are not fulfilling their objectives, such as our costly prison system, where recidivism rates remain too high. The Bar wants to work constructively with Government to tackle the savings it has to make. We understand that difficult decisions need to be made but the Government must give proper consideration to the impact that cuts will have.”

He went on to say:

“Ken Clarke has said that Britain spends more per head on legal aid system than many European countries, but when legal aid expenditure is added to the costs of

courts and prosecution costs, the total costs are broadly comparable. This is because many other countries have an inquisitorial system, where much of the work, which in England and Wales is done by solicitors and barristers under legal aid, is done by the judiciary and their assistants at public expense.”

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

1. For further information or interview requests, please contact the Bar Council Press Office on 020 7222 2525.
2. Christopher Kinch QC was called to the Bar in 1976 and took silk in 1999. His practice covers general crime, fraud and financial crime and regulatory and disciplinary proceedings. He practises at 23 Essex Street Chambers, where he was Head of Chambers between 2005 and 2009. He is described by leading legal directory, Legal 500, as, *'brilliant, with a calm presence which re-assures defendants'*. He is also a trustee of the Citizenship Foundation and has worked for many years on the Mock Trial Competition for Schools.
3. The Criminal Bar Association exists to represent the views of the practising members of the criminal bar in England and Wales. The objectives of the Association include:
  - promoting and representing the professional interests of its members and of the legal profession as a whole;
  - assisting with consultation undertaken in connection with the criminal law or the legal profession;
  - providing professional education and training and assisting with continuing professional development; and
  - promoting and maintaining the highest professional standards in the practice of law.