



JUDICIARY OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

HER HONOUR JUDGE USHA KARU
RESIDENT JUDGE, INNER LONDON CROWN COURT
HONORARY RECORDER OF SOUTHWARK

Chris Henley QC
Chairman of the Criminal Bar Association

8 April 2019

Dear Mr. Henley,

Thank you for your letter (undated) appended to a letter dated 2 April 2019 from Miss Braun in respect of the “facilities” at Inner London Crown Court (ILCC). I received both together by email on 2 April 2019 from the CBA and I note the contents.

The issues appear to be (i) the apparently separate male and female Advocates Rooms and (ii) the available facilities to the advocates.

It is not our intention, at ILCC, to deliberately segregate the robing rooms by gender but a historical practice which has survived over the years. Nor do we wish to offend.

As you rightly acknowledge, ILCC is an “ageing court centre”. The reality is, unlike the more modern courts, you have identified in your letter (Wood Green, Isleworth and Croydon all of which are modern purpose-built Crown Courts), and Southwark mentioned in Miss Braun’s letter, the original ILCC building is a listed building which, sadly, is showing the signs of the lack of maintenance from which it has suffered for some considerable time.

It may be of significance to note that the Robing Room on the second floor, which is said to be well lit and comfortable and used by male advocates, does not specify it is for male advocates only on the entrance door plaque. It simply states, ‘Advocates Room’. Whether, over time, the fact that a robing room specifically allocated for female advocates was provided on the ground floor, has unwittingly resulted in segregation I cannot say. Indeed, there is also a third robing room on the second floor in the Annexe which is used by both male and female advocates. That, too, says ‘Advocates Room’ on the door.

Notwithstanding that, it would be advisable to also bear in mind that in these days of diversity some advocates, male or female, may not wish to share the robing room with the opposite sex. From my days at the Bar I certainly remember, when sharing a robing room, being subjected to male barristers in various forms of undress as they were robing up for court – not a pleasant sight!

The Advocates Lounge (as we call it) is not confined to male advocates, either. It is regrettable that Miss Braun was unaware of its existence. I have taken steps, however, to ensure that notices are put up in the robing rooms informing the advocates about it.

If there is an issue with the one lavatory in the female advocates room may I draw yours and Miss Braun's attention to the fact of lavatories outside the female advocates robing room which are available for use by all advocates. However, concerns such as the provision of further lavatories might be better directed at HMCTS or the MOJ.

I am unable to comment as regards discussions with other counsel in Miss Braun's trial.

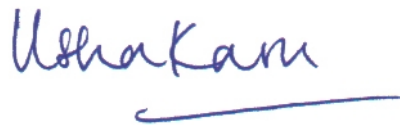
Be that as it may, I am making enquiries as to how best to address the concerns raised.

A visit by you to ILCC would be very welcome, indeed. As the Easter break is fast approaching may I suggest a mutually convenient date after the first Bank holiday in May? I know all the judges here would be keen to meet with you and I hope you would be able to join us for lunch, although I must warn you, we do not have on-site catering. That is a discussion for another day!

I would be grateful if a copy of this letter could be forwarded to Miss Braun.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



HHJ Usha Karu

cc: Minka Braun