



Ms Baljit Ubhey OBE,
Chief Crown Prosecutor,
CPS London

28th February 2014

Dear Baljit,

Re: Criminal Bar Association Planned Action

Thank you for your letter of yesterday and for setting out the position of the Service. You invite confirmation in writing covering the position of 5, King's Bench Walk by today.

As you know, your letter coincides with the announcement by the Minister of State of the response of the Government to the further consultation on Transforming Legal Aid. It heralds considerable further reductions in the fees paid to advocates in criminal cases. Both the manner and the outcome of the consultation exercise has left the practising Bar with a settled conviction that the changes will be hugely detrimental to the proper administration of criminal justice. That conclusion is shared by those who appear on both sides of the court (see, for example, the reasoned view of Treasury Counsel in crime at www.barcouncil.org.uk/media/236218/next_steps_treasury_counsel_consultation_response31.10.13.pdf). You will know that the dedication, skill and expertise of those on whom the Service so heavily relies is built in part on the practice and experience of defending. We are confident that all practitioners are determined to continue to highlight and resist such changes.

We too value the close and effective working relationship that exists between the Service and the independent Bar on this Circuit. We also expect that the Service shares our profound concern as to the effect of the changes now to be introduced.

As to 7th March, there is no settled policy in Chambers or wish to dictate. Each member of this set will act according to his or her conscience for the good of all in the criminal justice system, present and future. We will draw the content of your letter to the attention of all. In this set, however, there is unanimity of opposition to these changes. This is no surprise to us, given the dedicated, professional people that they are.



We do not expect any member of Chambers to fail to take returned cases for the Service after 7th March for reasons connected with the announcement, as the CBA protocol makes clear.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Forshaw Q.C.
Mark Heywood Q.C.

Heads of Chambers