



Guidance on the Writing of Papers for the Law Reform Committee

The function of the Law Reform Committee (LRC) is to consider proposals for law reform and to submit views to the Government or other bodies where appropriate. Accordingly, you may wish to bear in mind that your response will go to the LRC for approval. It may also be referred to the General Management Committee (GMC) of the Bar Council if the subject of the consultation is such that it would be more appropriate for the response to be made on behalf of the Bar Council rather than the LRC alone. It may be that it will go to the Home Office, Government Department or Law Commission with few, if any, changes.

Papers and responses to consultations prepared for the Law Reform Committee of the Bar Council cover wide areas of the law and are prepared on an apolitical basis. However, some of the papers and responses prepared cover areas which the Bar Council generally may wish to support or oppose under its remit as the body representing the Bar. Other papers and consultations may cover areas which the Bar Council may wish particularly to draw to public attention for support or opposition. As authors of the paper or response prepared for the Law Reform Committee, would you please set down briefly in a covering note your views upon whether the whole or any part of your paper or response should be drawn to the particular attention of the Bar Council under either or both of the above heads.

House style

We advocate a certain house style for two reasons. First, if the style of your paper is correct it is very much easier for the LRC or the GMC to make minor amendments to content. Second, we are trying to achieve a uniform standard of excellence which is distinctive, attractive and easy to read. We think that a recognisable house style is a prerequisite.

With these factors in mind we invite you to bear the following in mind on style:

- (i) The title should be in bold type and centred. Type Face: Palatino Linotype. Font Size 20 **Response of the Law Reform Committee to the Home Office Consultation Paper on...**
- (ii) The text. Type Face: Palatino Linotype. Font size: 11 and left aligned.
- (iii) Paragraphs should be numbered and should include subheadings where helpful.
- (iv) The first paragraph should start 'The Law Reform Committee of the Bar Council of England and Wales welcomes the opportunity to comment...'

- (v) The first paragraph should identify the consultation document by its full title. It should state shortly the main thrust of the consultation paper and identify the deadlines for submissions.
- (vi) The second paragraph should be headed “**Conclusions**” (in bold). Please avoid the phrase “executive summary”. This paragraph should set out our conclusions succinctly.
- (vii) Your papers should identify the main proposals for reform and identify the counter arguments.
- (viii) It may be best to move on to deal with an analysis of the arguments.
- (ix) Sometimes Government Departments and the Law Commission supply a list of questions in the consultation paper. It is not always necessary to answer all or any of the questions. However, should you choose to do so we suggest that the questions and the answers are set out in the body of the paper rather than in an annexe.
- (x) It is desirable that the reader of your paper should be able to appreciate all the relevant issues without having to cross refer to any other document. In other words, we need a one stop guide to the consultation paper.
- (xi) Your paper should conclude with the name and professional address of the author(s) followed by the words:

For and on behalf of the Law Reform Committee

and the date
- (xii) The Bar Council Secretariat will add the Bar Council logo to all responses.
- (xiii) Page numbers should be aligned with the right hand margin and in Palatino Linotype 11
- (xiv) If you would find it helpful to see the form of earlier LRC responses, these can be found on the Bar Council website www.BarCouncil.org.uk (Consultation Papers).

Deadlines

If you agree to write a paper for the LRC we stress the need to meet deadlines. The deadline you should work to is not the deadline named in the consultation document but a month in advance. This reflects the fact that the Committee and the GMC need time to read the paper and make amendments.

If your professional commitments cause you difficulty in meeting a deadline then you should return the consultation paper at once. You will not be criticised.

Please do not sit on the paperwork. It is our experience that this causes inconvenience to the administrative staff and difficulties finding someone to write a paper at short notice. In the final analysis delays of this kind compromise the quality of our submissions.

Experience has shown that it is necessary to identify a few do's and don'ts.

1 We emphasise that the LRC's reputation rests on the production of responses of a high quality. Your response will go to the Government Department or Law Commission, it may be quoted in the press or in Parliament.

2 The LRC is looking for a measured style that incorporates a balanced, measured approach, that may be critical but is also constructive. It is therefore important that you do not signify dissent by the use of uppercase, exclamation marks or intemperate language, neither should your response denigrate the motives or competence of the authors of the consultation papers. Sometimes the consultation papers are very good and it is no more than courteous to acknowledge this.

3 Please avoid using phrases such as "I think" or "I believe." The paper is not your paper. It is intended to be a formal response on behalf of the LRC and therefore you may wish to use phraseology such as "we suggest" or "we submit."

4 Your response should be sent by email to Jan Bye at the Bar Council (JanBye@BarCouncil.org.uk), so that it goes through established channels. Please do not send your response direct to the Government Department or GMC.

5 If you decide to answer questions set by the consultation paper do so in the body of the response rather than in an annexe and incorporate the questions and answers in full.

6 If your response is a full one, then your answers may be very short: e.g. "We agree for the reasons set out in paragraph 5 of our response."

June 2008