



legal education & training group



LETG Newsletter Autumn/Winter 2008

In this edition, we're talking mostly about... well, ourselves actually! As most of you will know, the last few months of the year are always a busy time in the LETG calendar. Therefore, we're devoting this issue to bringing you up to date with LETG news and events and giving you our thoughts and plans for 2009. Usual features will resume in the New Year.

Whatever you're doing over the festive season, we wish you a relaxing and peaceful holiday.



Inside this edition....

LETG News	p 1-2
A Word from the Chair	p 2
Things Past....	p 3-4
Things Future....	p 4-5
LETG events coming up!	p 5
Other News	P 5-7
Publications	p 7
Articles	p 9-end

LETG News

Committee News - All Change!

As those of you at our AGM will know, it's all change on the Committee. We have a new Chair (Peter Carrick), new Vice-Chair (Tracy Clegg) and new Treasurer (Trevor Comyn). The rest of us haven't escaped lightly either...(see Committee Structure below.)

Goodbye... and thank you

(1) Sandy Boyle

Sandy Boyle said goodbye to Committee duties at the AGM. Sandy's steady hand on the finances will be missed, although we know Trevor will be equally as strict with us! Thank you Sandy for balancing the books and the huge contribution you've made to the LETG.

(2) Pauline Holland

As most of you know, Pauline stood down as Chair of the LETG Committee at October's AGM. Pauline isn't going to let a little thing like that stop her contributing to the LETG

though, oh no! We're very happy to report that Pauline has agreed to remain in a Committee role for the next year.

Thank you, Pauline. You were a really fantastic Chair and your efforts and enthusiasm are truly appreciated by us all.

Vacancies

We're currently looking for volunteers to fill Committee vacancies. If you're interested in serving on the Committee, please contact Peter Carrick for more details. We're quite a friendly lot really and would welcome new faces and fresh ideas so please don't be shy...

A Word from the Chair

In our new regular feature "A Word from the Chair", Peter Carrick reveals what the Committee is plotting for 2009.

Following what seems to have been a very successful Annual Conference held a few weeks ago (at least according to the valuable feedback which you gave us), as the new Chair of the organising Committee, I thought this would be a good chance to give you an update on our thinking for activities next year.

Consultation

We would like to make sure that the LETG as a whole is making a significant contribution to important issues in Legal Training. Over the coming year this is likely to involve some commentary on the Legal Services Act 2007, the changes to work-based learning currently being piloted for Trainee Solicitors and more immediately, the SRA's proposal on the new Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme which is planned to replace the Qualified Lawyers Transfer Regulations and Test. Please take time to read the separate item below where I have commented on this in more detail.

Events

We will be organising a range of events and a timetable for these events, which we will distribute by newsflash shortly. We know that these are cost cutting times. We therefore intend to move away from the Annual 2-day conference and have a number of other options up our sleeve which we will be sharing with you, potentially including one or two 1-day conferences and events to complete an

exciting programme. We know that the 2-day Annual Conference has become a tradition and is very popular but feel reluctantly, that for this year at least, these one day events should be non-residential and in London (which is often easier and cheaper for most people to reach) to keep costs down.

Feedback

We will try to get a better understanding of your views this year and one of us will try to open a dialogue with each member firm during the coming year. This will help us respond more quickly to legal education and training developments which occur during the year.

Please let me know if you have any comments on any of this. I wish you all the best for the upcoming holiday period.

Peter Carrick,
Chair of LETG Committee

Committee Structure

As Peter mentions above, we want to ensure we are true to the objectives set out in our Constitution and to this end, we have re-organised the Committee into three separate sub-committees, who will each report back regularly to the full Committee. We believe that this will maximise our efficiency as a Committee, ensure that we can respond quickly to any developing issues and improve our service to our Members.

The sub-committees are:

Events

Tracy Clegg
Victoria Johnston
Kathryn Lippert

Governance

Trevor Comyn
Jenny Hughes-Webb
Pauline Holland

Publicity, Representation and Research

Dorothea Bannerman-Bruce
Liz Bryne
Nigel Spencer

Peter Carrick, as Chair, will sit on all three sub-committees as required.

As ever, if you have any questions, views or ideas to put to the Committee, please do contact us.

Regional Groups

We're delighted to report that our members in the South West region are setting up their own regional group. The LETG Committee is very keen to support this initiative and will be working with the Group to share ideas and training opportunities wherever possible. Pauline Holland will be acting as a liaison officer between the main Committee and the South West Group. For future newsletters, Rose Walker has kindly agreed to provide a short update on behalf of the South West Group, just to let you know how they're getting on.

If any other member firms are interested in starting a group in their region, please let the Committee know.

THINGS PAST....

AGM Report

13th October 2008 at Jones Day

We were delighted to have Martyn Sloman from the CIPD come along to talk to us before this year's AGM. Martyn presented the results of the CIPD research paper, "The Changing World of the Trainer".

We heard how new competitive models demand a different approach to gaining knowledge and skills. We explored the shift from training to learning and discussed the impact of this on the role of the development professional.

If you want to read the full research report, please click on the link below.

http://www.cipd.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E958A441-7085-4BA7-85BD-4753D4COD47F/0/supporting_accelerating_directing_learning.pdf

Moving on to the AGM, we had a recap from Pauline of the highlights of the LETG year. We now have a very healthy 110 member firms, 4 of whom are new to the LETG, and 232 individual members. Sandy then ran through the year's financial report before handing back to Pauline to introduce our new Chair, Peter

Carrick. Peter presented Pauline with theatre vouchers and Sandy with some wine on behalf of the LETG.

With the formal business of the day concluded, we then took full advantage of the hospitality and tucked into the nibbles.

Many thanks to all who took the time to come along to this year's AGM.

Conference Report

**Annual Conference
13th and 14th November 2008**

This year's conference, entitled "Learning and the Legal Ladder - Developing your Lawyers and yourselves", was held in the very grand surroundings of Chesford Grange Hotel in Warwickshire.

Our keynote speaker was Stephen Mayson, who set the scene for the conference by suggesting that firms might like to think about their structure and talent pipeline to maximise profits, the value offered to clients and take advantage of opportunities the Legal Services Act will offer. Stephen talked, in turn, about the over-supply of lawyers but shortage of talent; reconciling lawyer satisfaction with economic reality, the differences between what law firms and their clients think represents "value" and finally, the reality and implications of the Legal Services Act 2007. Themes which were further explored in the following panel discussion.

After the lunch break, there was a choice of workshops ranging from Developing Legal Talent, where the emphasis was very much on integrating legal learning, to Partner Transition, focusing on the the key elements of an effective partner development programme.

We came back together mid-afternoon to hear more about alternative career paths. In this session, Baker & McKenzie told us more about their talent management strategy, from the consultation they initiated with their lawyers to find out what was important to them, to the creation of "career balance" initiatives, and the introduction of the Legal Director role for those senior lawyers not wanting partnership responsibility. We also heard from one of Baker & McKenzie's Professional Support Lawyers on the role they play in development and how they in turn have been developed by the firm.

The final session of Day 1 saw Steps Drama Learning Development put us through our paces with three different scenarios exploring what lawyers can do to enhance their profile, build relationships, better manage and work with others, and show leadership potential - and what L&D professionals can do to help them.

We rounded off the day with dinner and the long-anticipated return of the LETG quiz. Quiz Maestro, Patrick McCann, was ably assisted, and some would say admirably controlled, by the lovely Sarah Hutchinson. Competition was fierce with several teams well in the running. With 2 teams level on points at the end, we saw a tense tie-breaker, only resolved when a third team (realising that neither of the finalists actually knew the answer) grabbed their chance to snatch the glory, and the champagne!

Day 2's focus was on development for the L&D professional so we started with a fun and interactive session on building your brand as an L&D function but also as an individual. We explored ideas to create a buzz around your product and looked at some of the do's and don'ts.

Robert Mowbray then followed with a thought-provoking and timely look at how to manage your L&D budget in the current economic climate. Robert gave some very useful tips on minimising costs without sacrificing quality - no doubt a topic we will return to in 2009.

After coffee, we again had a choice of workshop. Des Woods ran a session, Working with and Influencing fee-earning professionals, which explored the culture of law firms and the high need for achievement which most lawyers have. As an L&D professional, it is crucial to know which buttons to press to engage fee-earning staff, but more importantly when to press them.

The alternative sessions looked at how to run successful team building events for lawyers and the benefits of developing a coaching style of working.

We ended the conference on a real high, with a talk from Bill Mitchell on managing work/life balance. Bill explored the links between personality, behaviour and stress and looked at the importance of maintaining a good diet and exercise regime.

This year's conference was a huge success, despite the best attempts of our "noisy

neighbours" on Day 1 to wreck it. Our thanks must go to Jenny Hughes-Webb, Tracy Clegg, Kathryn Lippert and Jane Cochrane for all their hard work in organising such a brilliant event.

THINGS FUTURE...

Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme

The SRA are currently inviting responses on its proposal with a deadline for response of 6 February 2009. Please do look through these proposals, which can be found on the SRA website at <http://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/1454.article>.

We will circulate a draft response to members early in the New Year and would welcome any views so that we can submit a response in good time. On an initial reading, there seem to be three main proposals:

1. A much more rigorous exam and skills assessment process. This inevitably will be more expensive to set up and run but is perhaps justified in terms of protecting the public and the value of the qualification. One costly implication of this proposal would be that, for example, Australians requalifying would have to attend a structured interview. This would be much more expensive than the current regime and with doubtful value. Overall, however, boosting the level of assessment is probably a good thing.
2. There would no longer be any requirement to have any practical experience prior to going through the QLTS process. This seems to be at odds with the current attention being spent on work-based learning pilots for Trainees following the domestic route which are attempting to improve the nature of the way they are trained on the job. However, would training in other countries be equivalent? Would it be a good idea for all QLTS applicants to go through the same regulated training experience which is being piloted for Trainee Solicitors in England and Wales? Should the SRA be concerned with levels of experience or simply that they have the requisite amount of knowledge to practise.
3. An "emergent" process to evaluating which jurisdictions might have similar backgrounds to the one in England and Wales to allow people to go through the process. This would outline principles for determining the applicable jurisdictions but without naming them initially. This also seems reasonable

given that there are bound to be a number of "out of the ordinary" applications to go through the QLTS. However, would it be better to regulate individuals (with all the resources this will take) rather than jurisdictions?

Although these issues seem independent, they are finely balanced and fairly interdependent. For example, less rigorous exams might be offset by some experience requirements or a more ruthless approach to qualifying jurisdictions. On the whole, with some reservations about particular issues, perhaps this package is a reasonable compromise. Is it too expensive? Bear in mind that there is no requirement to go through this process (with the exception of restricted areas of work) in order to practise law in England and Wales. What do you think? Please send Dorothea Bannerman-Bruce or me any views you might have.

Peter Carrick

The City of London Law Society held a meeting on 3 December to discuss their response to the consultation paper. A summary of the issues discussed at this meeting, prepared by LETG Committee members who attended, can be found at the end of this newsletter for those of you keen to know more.

LETG Events

Watch this space...LETG workshop and networking event - 28 January 2009

'Getting your message right? Demonstrating and getting value? - tools & techniques for conversations in the current market...'

Yes, it's almost here - the first of our new events' programme for 2009, kicking off on Wednesday 28 January with a practical skills workshop followed by a membership briefing and drinks:

3.30-5.30 p.m. - Workshop - Delivered by David Willis from CMT

5.45-7.00/7.30 p.m. - Membership briefing and drinks

Indeed, this year the LETG will be continuing to arrange opportunities for our members' professional development and networking - and being mindful of challenging times!

So, this two-hour taster session will focus on developing skills for L&D professionals to handle topical conversations - watching costs and securing value yet showing the investment L&D can make. This may involve tough talking with providers or internally but now is certainly the time to be able to influence, stay calm, be heard and move discussions forward to achieve your agenda.

Further session details, more information on the provider and booking forms will be circulated shortly - so watch out for a Newsflash coming your way. In the meantime, you can register your early interest, particularly in the workshop, with Jane Cochrane.

Finally if you have any comments and/or requests for other events this year - please do shout as the Events Committee (Tracy Clegg, Kathryn Lippert and Victoria Johnston) would be very pleased to hear from you. We are keen to continue to showcase quality providers during the year - so again, please pass on your recommendations, particularly if they are new to the LETG.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible very soon!

Other news...

Training & Development boosts staff engagement

Research by the Institute for Employment Studies has shown that there is a "strong link" between an individual's perception of their professional development and their level of engagement with their firm. Although not important to everybody, for many development opportunities may make the difference between staying with their current firm or looking for a new job.

Children, Skills and Learning Bill

The Children, Skills and Learning Bill will be put before Parliament next year and includes provisions to give workers the right to request time off work for training. The CBI Deputy Director General says "the proposals must ensure employers only accept requests for

business-relevant training, to help build a stronger skills base and a more competitive economy." Whilst the Chartered Management Institute said it was "delighted the Government has responded to the need to encourage investment in skills. Clearly there is an urgent need to increase levels of skills training, particularly those associated with leadership and management, and we believe the Bill will have a positive effect."

L&D specialists look set to support the Bill with 67% of those polled at the World of Learning exhibition saying they welcomed the right to time off for learning.

2009 Training Spend

A report by Cegos, the e-learning specialist, predicts that training spend in 2009 will hold steady, developing middle managers will be a main focus, and coaching will suffer.

44% of 254 L&D professionals polled said they expected their training budgets to remain much the same in 2009 as in 2008, while 24% expect them to rise and 17% to fall.

44% said developing middle managers would be the top priority for skills development in 2009, while 24% said their organisations would focus on upskilling senior executives.

22% of those polled said their employers will spend less on coaching next year, especially for senior staff. And 25% said spending on developing trainers will fall in 2009.

Cegos UK managing director Francis Marshall said: "It's reassuring to see that many companies are recognising it is even more important to develop talent in these hard times. Companies that invest in developing core professional skills for example will win through when the economy recovers."

The survey found that the use of e-learning will rise next year with 36% of respondents saying their organisations will increase the use of that medium. However face-to-face learning will still be the most widely-used learning medium.

Also, said the poll, serious training games will be used by 27% of respondents' organisations next year.

The survey was based on responses by 254 L&D managers who completed questionnaires at last month's World of Learning exhibition or online at Cegos's website.

Other training budget surveys have come up with widely differing forecasts.

Skills Revolution: What Skills Revolution?

Personnel Today reports that the government's promised skills revolution did not materialise in 2008.

Key targets have been missed, with the British Chambers of Commerce insisting the training system is as complicated as it was 12 months ago.

On 1 January 2008, skills secretary John Denham promised to work with employers and training providers to bring about a "culture change" by making it easier for firms to access skills funding.

So far, just 291,000 staff have achieved a Level 2 qualification through Train to Gain, falling short of the 350,000 target for 2008.

6,000 out of a possible 2.2 million employers have signed the skills pledge to give staff Level 2 training.

BCC skills policy adviser John Lucas said the funding system still baffled employers. Confirmation in the Queen's Speech that the Learning and Skills Council would be replaced by a new Skills Funding Agency showed the confusion that remained. He said, "the constant moving of the deckchairs is not constructive. The government should work with the existing skills system - there have been up to five reincarnations of the system over the past 11 years. Undoubtedly, the number of agencies involved is confusing still."

He stressed that most employers were committed to training staff, but said many were put off using the state system and opted to work with private sector providers instead.

Train to Gain is crucial to the government's bid to meet its Leitch Review target of increasing the proportion of adults holding Level 2 qualifications to 90% by 2020.

Work Based Learning Pilot

The SRA have approved Oxford Institute of Legal Practice and LawNet for work based learning. To read the SRA Press Release, visit <http://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/1447.article>.

Life Coaching for Prospective Lawyers

Legal Week has reported on the Government initiative to provide "life coaching" for those considering entering the legal profession. Read more at

<http://www.legalweek.com/Navigation/91/Articles/1174661/Govt+to+offer+'life+coaching'+for+law+students.html>.



News from the CIPD website

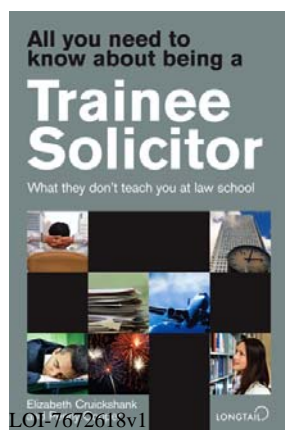
The CIPD has called on employers to encourage and support *learning* at work and not just organised, structured training, if skills learned on the job are really to be embedded.

In a survey of 2000 adults conducted by the Learning & Skills Council, 51% admitted they would be focusing on training and learning new skills to boost their career prospects and job security in the current downturn.

Publications

PLEASE NOTE: The LETG does not endorse or recommend any particular publication. This is by way of information only and editorial is lifted directly from the publisher's website.

Two new publications to draw your attention to...



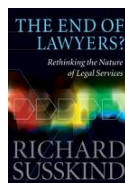
Longtail Publishing have produced another in their "All You Need to Know" series...

"Designed for students considering a career in law, law-firm interns, LPC

students, trainees, trainee supervisors and many more.

All you need to know about being a trainee solicitor will make you better prepared for the realities of a career in law.

Written accurately and without exaggeration, our book focuses on the human and practical elements of the training contract, covering all aspects in great detail."



The End of Lawyers? Rethinking the Nature of Legal Services by Richard E Susskind

"In this much anticipated sequel to the legal bestseller, *The Future of Law*, Susskind lays down a challenge to all lawyers to ask themselves, with their hands on their hearts, what elements of their current workload could be undertaken differently - more quickly, cheaply, efficiently, or to a higher quality - using alternative methods of working. The challenge for legal readers is to identify their distinctive skills and talents, the capabilities that they possess that cannot, crudely, be replaced by advanced systems or by less costly workers supported by technology or standard processes, or by lay people armed with online self-help tools. It is argued that the market is increasingly unlikely to tolerate expensive lawyers for tasks (guiding, advising, drafting, researching, problem-solving, and more) that can equally or better be discharged, directly or indirectly, by smart systems and processes. It follows, the book claims, that the jobs of many traditional lawyers will be substantially eroded and often eliminated. This is where the legal profession will be taken, it is argued, by two forces: by a market pull towards commoditisation and by pervasive development and uptake of information technology. At the same time, the book foresees new law jobs emerging which may be highly rewarding, even if very different from those of today."

LETG Member sharing

Don't forget to check out the LETG website to see the really useful answers to LETG member newflash queries - there's a wealth of helpful hints and recommendations from other members there!

Want more from **this newsletter?**

If you'd like to see a particular L&D theme covered, would like to be a "Member in the Spotlight" or have any other contributions to offer for future editions, please let us know.

Contact Liz Bryne
lbryne@jonesday.com

Your LETG committee

Current Committee Members are:

Dorothea Bannerman-Bruce
Liz Bryne
Peter Carrick
Tracy Clegg
Trevor Comyn
Margaret Dunmore
Pauline Holland
Jenny Hughes-Webb
Victoria Johnston
Nigel Spencer
Karen Aubrey, Maternity Leave

Jane Cochrane, LETG Administrator

Remember, you can email any of us via the
"contact us" feature on the website.

www.letg.org.uk

Article 1

A summary of the issues discussed at the City of London Law Society meeting on the Qualified Lawyer Transfer Scheme Consultation Paper (prepared by the LETG Committee members attending)

QLTS CONSULTATION MEETING

3 December 2008

Panel: Tony King - Clifford Chance
Louise Stoker – Slaughter & May
Jonathan Spencer – SRA Board

The City of London Law Society (CLLS) will be submitting a formal response to the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) consultation paper dated 11 November 2008, The aim of the meeting was to discuss elements of the consultation paper in order to incorporate views from those at the meeting.

The assessment process was the first area covered and this sparked a very lengthy debate. According to the SRA, those who qualify through the current Qualified Lawyers Transfer Route (QLTR) route are statistically more likely to be the subject of regulatory procedures and one possible explanation is that the current arrangements do not adequately assess applicants' knowledge, skills and understanding of law and legal practice in England and Wales. Under the consultation paper, the proposal is that under the new Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme (QLTS) there will be no requirement of experience in English and Welsh law from lawyers qualified in other jurisdictions but that this will be replaced with a rigorous form of assessment.

The assessment will be centred around the knowledge and skills necessary to practise as a solicitor in England and Wales and the new one day outcomes will be used as a starting point. The assessment will therefore be designed to assume some knowledge of English and Welsh law. It will therefore be difficult to pass the assessment without any experience.

It is assumed that all eligible applicants will have demonstrated they have the intellectual, analytical and problem-solving skills required as they will need to have a qualification at the level of an honours degree or higher. It is also expected that they will have already demonstrated the skills of personal development and work management that solicitors of England and Wales are expected to demonstrate at the point of admission.

The intention is to ensure the outcomes people are expected to demonstrate are equal to the outcomes expected by qualification under the domestic route. The intention behind this is to recognise that as there is a wide audience to cater for, the one route will be able to cover all relevant jurisdictions and levels of qualification - e.g, we could be discussing a newly qualified lawyer who has qualified through the New York Bar or a New Zealand lawyer qualified for 20 years.

Any practice recruiting lawyers qualified via the domestic route, would expect them to have gained experience in English and Welsh law in three areas, together with a mix of contentious and non-contentious. The question was asked whether it would be a problem to have qualified solicitors with no practical English and Welsh experience?

The proposed assessment regime sets out three categories of qualified lawyers:

- 1 International lawyers:-those qualified and entitled to practice in a jurisdiction in which the role and regulation of the legal profession of which they are a member is sufficiently similar to that of a solicitor to make it unnecessary for the applicant to follow the full domestic route to qualification in England and Wales
- 2 EU lawyers:-those entitled to have their professional legal qualification recognised in accordance with the EU Directive 2005/36/EC

3 UK lawyers:- those qualified and entitled to practise as a solicitor, advocate or barrister in the UK.

So – what assessments will they have to take to requalify?

Category 1: there will be three limbs to the assessment process for International lawyers which will be as follows:

- Written assessment (up to six written assessments including Tort and English Legal System)
- Practical assessment (clinical assessment)
- Structured interview

Category 2: EU lawyers will be assessed on a case by case basis

Category 3: There will be similar provisions to Category 1, but with exemption from Tort and the English legal system

Under this new regime, BVC qualifieds would still need to complete the litigation paper. It was recognised that this can lead to some strange results as “one size does not fit all”. This was deemed to be a categorisation issue, as perhaps barristers fall outside the “UK Lawyers” category. Perhaps further thought needs to be given to the categories.

The discussion then moved on to some of the possible problems which could arise:

Would candidates be allowed the necessary time to study?

Would candidates view the studying of areas outside of their area of interest a waste of time?

What would the impact be on recruitment? Cost of taking a candidate through the new scheme, given the increase in exams.

Will the SRA be able to devise an objective method of assessment.

Will the QLTS still be attractive once the Legal Services Act come into effect and law firms convert to become Multi-Disciplinary Practices (MDPs).

The prediction is that fewer people will undertake the process and there will simply be an increase in the number of Registered Foreign Lawyers (RFLs) practising. It may be that only certain levels of lawyers will be permitted to take the exam, particularly where it is necessary if they wish to progress to partnership for example which raised the question as to whether non UK qualified solicitors can become a partner in a UK practice? Clifford Chance currently only require their partners to be UK qualified.

One question asked who would undertake these assessments. It was confirmed that to undertake these assessments, there will be one assessment organisation – they will not run the courses, only set the assessments and external providers will undertake the actual assessment process.

The next area for discussion was jurisdictions (refers to p12 of the consultation paper)

There were two trains of thought here:

- 1 Should this requalification be open to everyone?
- 2 Any applicants would need to come from recognised jurisdictions – i.e. would be accessible only to regulated lawyers with a professional role broadly similar to that of a solicitor and from a jurisdiction where that professional was regulated in a similar way to the UK. The consultation paper sets out the specific criteria required to meet this condition. This would exclude countries such as China and some emerging countries.

This could result in some countries/practices being more attractive from a recruitment point of view and may result in a form of discrimination.

Should there be a right to appeal? An example might be a Burmese lawyer currently would have to undertake a full qualification process to qualify as a UK lawyer, or be registered as a foreign lawyer. Should they have the opportunity to appeal this and be able to demonstrate skills against the set criteria?

The Working Party discussed this at length and came to the conclusion that there would be no appeal process.

Jonathan Spencer spoke in his role as SRA Public Interest Regulator – the role of which was to protect the public first and foremost. The main objective for him was to ensure that any English and Welsh lawyer could be relied upon to know the English and Welsh law. The SRA are committed to the regulatory objectives set out in the Legal Services Act 2007 which include the commitment "to protect and promote the public interest".

The present scheme has been in place since 1990. The marketplace has changed but so has the underlying domestic scheme so this is being brought up to date in line with the domestic qualification.

A question was asked as to how the SRA would ensure that transferring lawyers were qualified to an equivalent of an English or Welsh solicitor. The challenge that the SRA faces is how to assess them?

Jonathan Spencer responded by saying that the three part approach was designed to cover all elements. The assessment was designed to replace the experience requirement. It is not possible to guarantee the quality of experience by the time served in the same way there are varied outcomes of the current training contract. The assessment process will therefore be intended to test a variety of skills.

Another comment suggested that perhaps if lawyers were over a certain qualification age in their own jurisdictions, that they should be exempt from certain elements? Some lawyers will be forced to take a number of examinations in areas of law which are irrelevant to them.

Should we also be putting everyone through? Should it just be at a certain level? This does raise difficulties in terms of promotion prospects – can they be a partner if they are non-UK qualified?

It is important to ensure the outcomes are achievable for all jurisdictions and that they are non-discriminatory. The SRA are carrying out full investigations of all jurisdictions to ensure they have as robust a training/qualification process as the Law Society of England & Wales.

The discussion then turned back to the point of costs. It was noted that the proposals looked as though they would be more expensive than the current costs attached to the QLTT.

Jonathan Spencer noted that the Working Party had planned that the cost of undertaking the new QLTS would still be less than the cost of the GDL, LPC followed by the training contract and the subsequent time out of the office.

It was also noted by the group that the new procedures could well result in more people practising at Registered European Lawyers (RELs) and RFLs and thus would not be regulated and would still be able to practise in the UK. This was thought to be a worry both from the public point of view and from a risk perspective for the practices employing them.

It was thought that this would all change in any event in light of the Legal Services Act – when we would see MDPs.

A short discussion was then held on the value of the structured interview which would form part of the QLTS procedure. Some commented it would be too subjective and the idea of having one panel overseeing all those providing the course and regulating the qualifiers caused some worry in terms of both subjectivity and consistency and that it would be subject to the same variations in quality of newly qualifieds as the current training contract did.

What if foreign lawyers could just do an exam in their area of law and specialise only in that area? The SRA have decided that, as there should be one generic qualification for domestic qualifieds, they were keen to do the same with the QLTS.

Jonathan Spencer finished the discussion by reminding the group that the title of British Solicitor was highly valued and if a foreign lawyer is practising in the UK as a UK lawyer, the expectation of the client is that the advice they give will be considered and that they will be able to adequately provide the British view. This would only be achieved by a rigorous process.