



Association of **Council Secretaries** and **Solicitors**

Tony Kilner – Policy & Development Officer
Association of **Council Secretaries** and **Solicitors**

27 Westville Road
Ilkley
West Yorkshire
LS29 9AQ

Telephone: 01943601706
Mobile: 07759117061

E-mail: anthony@kilner.wanadoo.co.uk

18 January 2007

by email to trainingconsultations@lawsociety.org.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

Consultation on Minimum Salary for Trainee Solicitors

I am writing on behalf of the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors in response to the above consultation. The Association comprises some 450 members, most of whom are the legal service heads of local authorities in England and Wales. This response reflects conversations between members of the Association on the consultation.

It is the understanding of many of our members (some of whose experience goes back to the 1970s) that the primary purpose of the minimum salary requirement was to deal with the exploitation of trainees by the more unscrupulous firms, both in terms of pay and training experience.

The minimum salary requirement has generally not caused difficulty to local authority legal heads over the years as local government pay scales for graduates have reflected the national average. It is recognized that market forces and the application of employment law has led to many London and provincial city larger firms paying substantially more than the minimum. There is clearly a healthy competition between such firms to attract the higher caliber trainees.

The consensus of members is that the minimum salary requirement should be retained in the interests of the legal profession. However it should be an integral part of the training requirements applied by the Board to all solicitors employing trainees. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some trainees continue to have poor experience of training opportunity owing to the way they are employed.

This Association therefore urges that the minimum salary requirement for trainees be retained, but as an integral part of the training obligations applied to solicitors employing trainees.

We would see the requirement, as part of a well regulated training scheme for trainee solicitors, as being likely to improve standards in the legal profession and thereby also being likely to improve public confidence in the profession.

We see access to the profession as being broadly determined by personal ambition, tempered by the ability to meet the qualification requirements and the cost of training. The retention of the minimum salary requirement is likely to provide some encouragement to prospective trainee solicitors that the training period will attract, at the very least, the minimum remuneration, enabling some measure of budgeting and financial planning to be applied. We recognize that this does not of itself substantially affect the broader accessibility issue which needs separately addressing.

The removal of the minimum salary requirement is likely to provide an opportunity for less scrupulous firms to reduce the salary paid to trainee solicitors below the average for graduates, thereby giving the profession a bad name in the graduate market place and generally, with the possibility of standards also being affected. I hope you will give these views careful consideration.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Kilner

Policy and Development Officer
ACSeS

To
Training Consultation
The Law Society