



Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers

ONE DAY STRIKE: NAME THE DAY NOW

The half-day strike on 6 January 2014 led by the Criminal Bar Association (CBA) was a huge success. When the profession takes action, we can achieve positive publicity and public support. Over 14,000 members of the public have signed the Justice Alliance's on-line petition "*Save legal aid to protect access to justice for all*".

Still, the government shows no sign of backing down. Grayling can only be persuaded by escalation of direct action by the profession, in unity with court staff and others to **close down the court system**.

The Haldane Society strongly supports the Justice Alliance. We also welcome the formation of the National Justice Committee, bringing together the representative organisations of the whole of the profession. One organisation, representing a united profession, is a major step forward.

We support the calls by the Criminal Lawyers' Solicitors Association (CLSA) and the London Criminal Courts Solicitors Association (LCCSA) for a further day of action. We believe that this step is necessary in order to maintain the pressure on Grayling.

The CBA already has a mandate – from the rally in November 2013 – to organise further action. We call on the CBA, and all the organisations represented in the National Justice Committee, to name a day or days for further strike action NOW.

Strike action should be called to "save legal aid". The focus of the action should not just be the rates of legal aid pay, important though that issue is. The government's plans to cut legal aid threaten access to justice for all but the very rich. Our campaign must make that clear.

www.haldane.org

Next step: a one-day strike

What We Call For:

- A **24-hour strike**, followed by a stepped programme of **increasingly intense strike action**;
- The **Bar Council and Law Society** to support withdrawal of labour and facilitate united action through the *Justice Alliance* and National Justice Council;
- **Collaboration** with Napo, Unite the Union, the PCS, and others working in the justice system;
- Recognition that our campaign **depends on** the support of the **wider public** and encouraging their involvement;
- Recognition of the place of **legal aid in the welfare state**, to be defended along with other public services; and
- A campaign which is **not simply defensive**, but which fights to undo previous cuts.

The Haldane Society asks its members to **support the *Justice Alliance***, the united organisation established to fight the government's cuts to legal aid.

Why We Are Fighting:

1. **Funding cuts** to criminal legal aid will put many firms out of business, particularly community-based BME firms.
2. **Contracts for police station and court duty work** represent price competitive tendering (PCT) by the back door.
3. The £37,500 **disposable income threshold** for legal aid in the Crown Court will lead to many defendants being unrepresented.
4. The **one year residence test** will mean that those who suffer injustice at the hands of the state will be unable to seek redress.
5. The **civil merits test** means legal aid will no longer be available for borderline cases. These often include points of the greatest public interest.
6. The **judicial review proposals** seek to insulate government from being held to account. Lawyers will not be paid for the initial work done on JRs unless a judge gives permission for the case to continue. Good cases will not be taken on if lawyers cannot afford the risk of later not being paid for the work undertaken.
7. The **government's campaign is based on misrepresentation**: of the UK's spending on justice, on our levels of pay, and on the public's views.