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Post July 7 reaction dominates press coverage of the legal profession over the last year

∞ TeGenero 'Elephant Man' drugs trial lawyer in Top 5 most cited solicitors

Controversy over the reaction by the Government and the police to the July 7 terrorist attacks has dominated press coverage of the legal profession over the last year, reveals research by Sweet & Maxwell, the legal and business information provider.

Sweet & Maxwell's analysis of national and regional newspapers shows that human rights lawyer Gareth Peirce, acting on behalf of Jean Charles de Menezes' family and representing the suspects in the Forest Gate terror raid, emerges as the UK's most high profile solicitor for the second year running (**full tables below**).

Gareth Peirce was more recently appointed to represent some of the alleged trans-Atlantic plane bombers.

However, the research also reveals human rights lawyers are no longer monopolising press attention to the extent they once were. Kevin Martin, President of the Law Society, takes the number two spot. Kevin Martin has been quoted on issues ranging from the proposed 90 day detention laws, to the deregulation of the legal profession, known as 'Tesco Law'.

Other new entries in the Top 10, in third and fourth place respectively, are Nick Freeman and Ann Alexander. Nick Freeman, dubbed 'Mr Loophole', specialises in representing celebrities arrested for driving offences. Ann Alexander, a leading personal injury solicitor, represents the families of the victims of the so-called TeGenero 'Elephant Man' drugs trial, and the families of the victims of Dr Harold Shipman.

Whilst Cherie Booth QC remains the most frequently cited barrister (338 articles), that may have more to do with her role as wife to the Prime Minister than her expertise on employment and human rights law. The second most high profile barrister, Michael Mansfield QC, acted for the family of Tom Hurndall, the British peace activist killed by an Israeli soldier in Gaza.

Outside the field of human rights, barristers specialising in criminal prosecutions, were the focus of growing media attention over the past year. In third place, Richard Horwell QC, prosecuting barrister in the John Monckton case, gained 139 citations, while Keith Rowley QC, prosecuting former Transport Secretary Stephen Byers on behalf of 49,000 Railtrack shareholders, took fifth place with 74 mentions.

Once again the work by lawyers from the Top 20 biggest commercial law firms for corporate clients received far less attention from the media than legal work undertaken for private individuals. Anthony Salz, the recently retired Managing Partner of Freshfields who joined the BBC as a Governor came 13th and David Childs, Managing Partner, of Clifford Chance, the world's largest law firm, came 15th in the list of most high profile solicitors.

Judiciary

The Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer, who is also the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, is UK's most frequently cited member of the judiciary (1492 articles). Proposed legal aid reforms, aimed at curbing the '1 million pounds-a-year' barrister, is an issue on which he has frequently commented over the past year.

The analysis by Legal Online at Sweet & Maxwell, a Thomson Business (NYSE: TOC; TSX: TOC), also shows that the judiciary, with its role in shaping and announcing major legal decisions and on Boards of Enquiries, get far higher press coverage (average of 426 articles within the Top 10) than barristers (average of 110 articles within the Top 10) and solicitors (average of 90 articles within the Top 10).

Alina Lourie, Director of Sweet & Maxwell's Legal Online Business Unit, comments: "The amount of media attention lawyers receive is a useful barometer of the issues which are focusing public attention throughout the course of a year. When you look at the range of issues it is also a reflection of the important role of the legal profession in society."

*Coverage based on mentions in Sweet & Maxwell's Westlaw UK's online UK news database. Westlaw UK (www.westlaw.co.uk) is the authoritative and comprehensive online legal information service that delivers unparalleled, citable case law back to 1865, legislation back to 1267 and journal and news archives.

Most frequently cited solicitors in UK newspapers

	Press coverage June 2005- July 2006	Recent Area of Expertise**
1. Gareth Peirce	196	Forest Gate, Jean Charles de Menezes
2. Kevin Martin	148	President of the Law Society
3. Nick Freeman	125	"Mr Loophole" specializing in driving offences
4. Ann Alexander	77	Represented families of victims of Shipman, TeGenero Victims
5. Louise Christian	75	Human rights, acting for family of cameraman killed by Israeli soldier in Gaza
6. Mark Stephens	69	Human rights & media specialist
7. Martyn Day	54	Personal Injury Specialist, TeGenero
8. Kate Roxburgh	54	Forest Gate
9. Phil Shiner	50	Human rights, acting for residents of Edge Lane - compulsory purchase orders
10. Mudassar Arani	47	Acted for Abu Hamza
Average	80	

Most frequently cited barristers in UK newspapers

	Press coverage June 2005- July 2006	Recent Area of Expertise**
1. Cherie Booth QC	338	Human Rights
2. Michael Mansfield QC	140	Human Rights
3. Richard Horwell QC	139	Criminal Justice
4. Edward Fitzgerald QC	82	Human Rights
5. Keith Rowley QC	74	Railtrack
6. David Pannick QC	73	Human Rights
7. Lord Lester QC	70	Human Rights
8. Lord Grabiner QC	67	Apple v The Beatles
9. Jonathan Laidlaw	61	Criminal Justice
10 Jonathan Sumption QC	53	Railtrack
Average	110	

	Press coverage June 2005- July 2006	Title
1. Lord Falconer	1492	Lord Chancellor
2. Lord Goldsmith	1203	Attorney General
3. Lord Woolf	306	
4. Lord Mackay	292	
5. Lord Bingham	213	
6. Lord Hoffmann	167	
7. Lord Phillips of Worth Maltravers	157	Lord Chief Justice
8. Lord Irvine	151	Former Lord Chancellor
9. Ken MacDonald QC	144	Director of Public Prosecutions
10 Justice Eady	137	Senior Libel Judge
Average	426	

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Legal areas and job titles bracketed are a guide to the press coverage rather than an attempt to sum up that lawyer's overall workload or areas of expertise.

Sweet & Maxwell would welcome suggestions of lawyers who should be included in future reviews - please email to nm@mattison.co.uk

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