



Ms Amanda Pinto QC  
Chair  
Bar Council

11 February 2020

Dear Amanda

### **The Times coverage of Recorders**

Reports over the weekend - firstly in The Times and then repeated on Twitter - that Recorders may lose their authority to sit as a result of reduced Crown Court sitting days are simply untrue. When the journalist presented his hypothesis to us last week, we were clear in our response, as was Judicial Office. The resultant headline, however, did not reflect the reality.

Recorders (part-time, fee-paid judges) are being offered at least the minimum number of days required to continue in their role and there is no question of any Recorders losing their authorisation to sit in Crime as a result of the allocation of Crown Court sitting days.

As you already know, the number of Crown Court sitting days has increased this year and will be set at a minimum of 87,000 days next year. All of us involved in the complex process of forecasting, setting and resourcing sitting days are cognisant of the impact that sitting day allocations have on those who work in and use the justice system. The allocation, which is approved through a Concordat Agreement between the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of the Tribunals, will continue to be regularly reviewed.

I felt it was important to write to you directly to clarify the position.

Yours sincerely

Susan Acland-Hood  
Chief Executive, HM Courts & Tribunals Service