

A webinar by The Law Society

Digital transformation in the legal sector

What does good look like?

Join us for a peer-to-peer online panel discussion bringing together judges, lawyers, court reform advocates, and lawtech experts. We ask what successful digital transformation of the legal profession looks like and share experiences from the field.



WHAT

Webinar

90 minutes

WHEN

Thursday, 18 May 2023

2:00-3:30 pm (BST / UK time)

About the webinar

Efforts to digitise the legal profession, including courts and tribunals, have met with mixed success. If we really want to transform how the justice system works, we must address the fundamentals of how courts, practitioners, and clients interact.

Guest speakers will explore challenges such as solicitor shortages, poor court infrastructure, case backlogs, and cuts to legal aid. Solutions are not easy to come by, but asking the right questions could help unlock the necessary changes.

As well as hearing from four advocates who have directly led reform in their own areas of law, we continue the debate with a moderated panel discussion and audience Q&A.



Agenda

WELCOME

Eduardo Reyes, Features Editor, The Law Society Gazette

SCENE SETTING: HOW DO TOMORROW'S LAWYERS THINK?

Darren Weir, Senior Lecturer in Law, Kent Law School

INCORPORATING DIGITAL WORKING IN MENTAL HEALTH TRIBUNALS – HOW FAR CAN WE GO?

His Honour Michael Stokes, Senior Circuit Judge and Deputy Judge of the Upper Tribunal

ACCESSIBLE, PRODUCTIVE FAMILY LAW COURTS

Louise Duckett, Solicitor at Davis Simmonds & Donaghey, Law Society Council member, and Vice President of Kent Law Society

PANEL DISCUSSION AND LIVE Q&A

Moderated by Eduardo Reyes, Features Editor, The Law Society Gazette

01 Incorporating digital working in mental health tribunals – How far can we go?

His Honour Michael Stokes KC, DL

The large-scale digitisation of mental health tribunals during the COVID-19 pandemic showed the potential of remote hearings and taught us valuable lessons about technology in these settings. Michael Stokes presents his vision for the future of mental health hearings and offers guidance for anyone looking to improve virtual communication in complex judicial environments.

02 Accessible, productive family law courts

Louise Duckett,
Solicitor, Davis Simmonds & Donaghey

Family courts have undergone huge change in the past decade with the introduction of CCMS, e-bundles, the HMCTS portal, and CVP. Louise explores the pros and cons of CVP hearings, particularly for vulnerable and unrepresented clients, and asks how the realities of funding, resources, and ability determine our next steps.



Meet the panel



Louise Duckett

Solicitor, Davis Simmonds & Donaghey
PRESENTER

Louise Duckett is a member of the Law Society Children panel and an Accredited Specialist for Public Law and Domestic Abuse with Resolution. She is about to become President of Kent Law Society and is a guest lecturer at a local university, teaching court skills to social work students. She also regularly assists with mock trials and competitions.



Jamie Foote

Principal Product Manager for Case Center, Thomson Reuters
PANELLIST

Jamie Foote is the driving force behind Thomson Reuters Case Center, a digital evidence management system that helps courts, law firms, and local authorities streamline caseflow in a digital era. Following its implementation at the Ministry of Justice – the *Crown Court Digital Case System* – James has led many deployments globally.



Eduardo Reyes

Features Editor, The Law Society Gazette
HOST

Eduardo Reyes has wide experience of covering the legal profession, from the high street to war crimes tribunals and the City. A former editor of In-House Lawyer magazine, he was legal affairs researcher for the Liberal Democrats and read history at Clare College, Cambridge.



His Honour Michael Stokes KC, DL

PRESENTER

His Honour Judge Stokes was first called to the Bar (Gray's Inn) in 1971. He began work as a judge in the late 1990s in metal health tribunals, and later became a Resident Judge. He retired from full-time sittings in the Crown Court in 2016 but continued to sit in metal health tribunals during the COVID pandemic, where he presided over virtual hearings.

Meet the panel – continued



Darren Weir

Senior Lecturer in Law, Kent Law School

PRESENTER

Darren Weir was called to the Bar in 1998. He specialised for 12 years in criminal and regulatory law, before becoming a specialist associate lecturer at Kent Law School. He now convenes the law of evidence, teaches criminal litigation, and is Deputy Director of Kent's SQE encompassing MLaw programme.



Judge Samuel Anderson Thumma

Arizona Court of Appeals, Division One, USA

PANELLIST

Judge Thumma has served on the appellate bench since 2012, after serving as a trial judge for five years. Along with co-chairing Arizona's Plan B Workgroup during the COVID-19 pandemic, he chairs the Arizona Commission on Access to Justice and chaired Arizona's Digital Evidence Task Force. He is a frequent lecturer and author.

Webinar fee

This online event is free of charge for all attendees. But participants must register in advance using the below link, and The Law Society reserves the right to refuse participation for any reason.

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University of
Kent

The University of Kent hosts one of the UK's leading law schools, with a distinctive critical approach that places law within the wider context of society.



THOMSON REUTERS

Thomson Reuters Case Center is cloud-based software that streamlines the way legal practitioners prepare, manage, and present digital evidence.