

**Bar Strike?
Here's everything
that you need to
know**

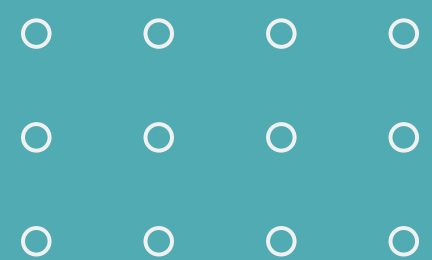


Who is striking?

Members of the Criminal Bar Association of England and Wales are carrying out indefinite strike action, starting on the 5th of September 2022, escalating the intermittent strikes that have been taking place since June 2022 after the Government refused to negotiate with their demands.

Nearly 80% of the roughly 2,000 members of the Criminal Bar Association taking part in the ballot, voted to move to an uninterrupted strike.

Dominic Raab, the Justice Secretary, has refused to negotiate with Barristers at all, although he did briefly break his summer holiday to write a few tendentious paragraphs in the Daily Mail, accusing Barristers of holding 'justice to ransom'.



Why are the strikes happening?

Although issues of underfunding in the legal aid system go back decades, the renewed strike action has been prompted by the recent independent review of criminal legal aid, which recommended that fees be increased by a minimum of 15% without delay.

The pay of junior Barristers is below the national minimum wage - as little as £77 for some hearings but that's before deducting travel, office and other vital costs. In fact, some Barristers in their first three years, who are self-employed, can take home as little as £12,000 a year according to the CBA.

While criminal Barristers still hold a sense of power and tradition, a quarter has decided to leave the profession in the last five years.



What will be impacted?

As well as the huge backlog of cases, more than 6,000 court hearings have been missed since the strikes started earlier this summer. The system is reported to be behind by almost 60,000 trials - close to an all-time high.

Defendants' and victims' lives will be put on hold as cases involving some of the most serious violent and sexual crimes are delayed over and over.

Criminals may be released early to avoid prison overcrowding as a result of court cases being delayed by an indefinite strike by Barristers, a legal expert has warned.

What can we expect to happen next?

The strike is said to continue until there are signs from the Government of a real commitment to change in terms of meeting the requested higher rates of pay.

There is only so much strain that can be handled by a system based on collective goodwill. Without fair remuneration for its workers, our world-renowned criminal justice system risks collapse.

