monthly
NEWSLETTER

YOUTH BAR ASSOCIATION SEPTEMBER 2025

Message From our Founder

It is with great delight that we bring out our September edition of the newsletter! Over the past month, we've grown from a small circle of keen minds to a global network of over 2000 members in 55 countries — a testament to the ambition and drive that defines this society. This term, we're turning that momentum into action: more debates, deeper research projects, and opportunities for members to shape our direction. Whether you're stepping into your first mock trial, joining a seminar, or helping refine our growing initiatives, your contribution is what makes this organisation thrive. Thank you to everyone involved, and my dedicated team, who make this society the thriving place it is!

Bella Frewin, President and Founder of the Youth Bar Association

Message From the Editor

Welcome to the fourth edition of our newsletter, and what a month it's been. We've experienced a huge wave of growth, with more readers, contributors, and curious minds than ever before. It's a real credit to the energy and commitment of the society and board - thank you for being part of it. This month, we're jumping from employment law to napoleon (yes, really), with sharp insights, fresh perspectives, and a few surprises along the way. You'll also find the answer to last month's puzzle, plus a brand new challenge already causing a stir. We've got exciting things on the horizon, including the launch of a journalism team. If you're interested in writing, you'll have the chance to volunteer and create your own monthly section. Stay tuned – and as always, enjoy the read and good luck cracking this month's puzzle.

Ari Blunt, Director of The Newsletter

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Applications Now Open for Newsletter Columnists

We're excited to announce the launch of a new addition to the Youth Bar Association newsletter: a dedicated team of Newsletter Columnists who will each lead their own section in every monthly issue.

We are now inviting applications for four columnist roles, covering the following topics:

- Politics
- Law
- International Relations & Diplomacy
- Current Events

This is a brilliant opportunity to take ownership of a recurring column, sharpen your writing, and contribute to one of the most rapidly growing platforms for young people interested in law, politics, and public affairs. Whether you're keen to analyse, challenge, explain, or provoke discussion, your voice has a place here.

If you've got something to say, now's the time to say it.

To be considered, or for more info, email info@youthbaruk.org and include

- **Your Full Name**
- **What section you would like to apply for**
- **A short statement of interest**

We can't wait to read your work, and we'll be in touch as soon as possible.

Warm regards,

Ari Blunt
on behalf of the Board
Youth Bar Association

FEATURED CONTENT

Showcasing the top member-submitted articles on current legal events and conceptual insights in law, diplomacy, and politics.

Employment Laws and AI- Where society stands, and where it should

The nature of employment law is historically rooted in maintaining a fair hiring field for all workers. For example, in the Statute of Labourers 1351, the ordinance dictated that labourers would have to work for the same wages they did before the black death struck and aimed to 'control how much people [labourers] were paid and conserve a social structure.' (Oak National Academy). Since this foundational piece of legislation, employment law has aimed to conserve a fair system and to 'control how much people [labourers] were paid and conserve a social structure.' (Oak National Academy). Not giving an unfair advantage to other individuals, who would sooner exploit a system in order to unfairly gain advantages for minimal work, going against the conservation of a social structure as we saw in 1351, of which, 674 years later from this initial Statute, still exists today. Therefore, for this reason, it should be clear that employment law should regulate AI systems that would create unfair hiring practices, and workplace management practices.

Due to AI being such a new technology, there are extremely limited precedents set by cases across the world and no explicit laws regarding AI in the United Kingdom. In theory, this allows AI total authority to be present in any workplace and used in the hiring process. However, as we have already seen in the failed recruitment system of Amazon in 2014, these technologies left unregulated, could be catastrophic. In this scenario, the delivery service Amazon, which currently employs 1,525,000 people, tested a system in which a futuristic hiring system was trained from CVs submitted by those who were then current Amazon employees. The fault of this lay with the fact that Amazon's workforce was unevenly split from males to females in (around) a 6:4 divide of males to females; furthermore, the few CVs chosen to teach the AI what Amazon hirers believed made a successful CV, were mainly taken from male applicants. This transformed in to the unseen outcome of the system favouring male applicants, mimicking an institutionalised misogynistic system that our society is still trying to shed itself of. What is perhaps more concerning is how this bias wasn't officially

But it begs the question, what would have happened if it was not? In what detail do independent bodies scrutinise the gender ratio of accepted applicants? The world benchmarking alliance gives us some indication of the split of men to women in the Amazon workforce. But undeniably, there is a difference between displaying these statistics to the public and holding companies liable for biases that AI enforces.

Amazon may have been incredibly transparent with their failed system, of what went wrong and why it went wrong. But this doesn't guarantee that other companies will. There is the concern that AI hiring systems will turn into a form of 'black boxes'. This can be seen in the case of the 'DWP's use of AI for Disability Assessments'. The 'decision making is kept private and in general they [DWP] are not transparent.' (Big Issue Article). This was the problem a disability activist, a claimant named Ben found with the AI; so did the High Court. There was no evidence to suggest that the AI system directly violated the Equality Act of 2010. Consequently, no injunctions were placed on DWP to stop the use of the AI assessment. The case did create a legal precedent regarding AI in decision making and, importantly, emphasised the right for transparency and accountability.

No matter the research that an individual can conduct into hiring and management practices, most of the real-world cases that appear (both those that went to trial and those that did not) appear to be about the automation of sorting through CVs. But what if we were to look further afield at other AI concerns that could apply to employment law? For example, the infamous case of Microsoft's failed chatbot Tay, back in 2016, which learned the worst of human behaviour and turned into a 'holocaust denying racist', as the BBC so elegantly phrased. This and many other failed AI practices demonstrate how, despite intensive research and programming, AI can go wrong. Considering this, and considering how AI is increasing in the field of workplace management practices, where do employees stand?

It could be argued that if a team of highly skilled and expert Microsoft engineers cannot create an AI that does not, within twenty four hours of its initial launch, condone genocide, promote conspiracy theories and make highly sexist comments, that it is highly unlikely that AI within the workplace, used to manage real people, would be safe. For example, if an AI management system were to give an absurd order to an employee to do something irresponsible, negligent or potentially illegal, who would be responsible? If an employee was acting on orders, then through vicarious liability, it would be the management who was responsible. The management, in this scenario, the AI, could have potentially ordered the employee to do something so far removed from the business activities that the company who created the AI would not be responsible for. However, the AI itself could not be liable as it is only a technology, so who would liability lie with? The creator of the technology who did so without the intention of the system to produce such an order, or would it be the tortfeasor, the innocent employee, who was only acting on the orders of their manager? It does not seem moral to hold the tortfeasor liable in this scenario, yet using Lady Hale's guidance of the CBC five criteria, confirmed in the Barclays Bank case of 2020, none of the three most important criteria (2, 3 and 4) are met. This confusion, this grey area is why employment law regulating the use of AI in the workplace is necessary. So that employees and employers alike can understand what their responsibilities are and how to guard against these risks so as not to commit torts.

The common theme that seems to run through each case and scenario is the distinct lack of AI specific legislation, and the reliance on equality acts or other employment laws. If these real-world cases still observe fair outcomes, then is there a need for specific legislation? What would be the benefit of creating specific legislation and arguably wasting Parliament's time by creating more unnecessary laws? Law is the guardian of civil society. In our society that is constantly evolving and changing, where AI impacts every life in the Western world every hour, specific legislation is a foundational key to managing the equality of individuals and creating easy-to-understand precedents.

This can be a particular issue when the UK government states that AI laws are 'not right for today.' The public policy expert Mark Ferguson summarises the government's stance and states that they are aiming to avoid, 'placing undue burden on business and innovation.' At a time of a slowly recovering domestic economy, the importance of employment has been increasingly stressed since the national cost of living crisis. In times when individuals prioritise job security, how can any position feel secure with the threat of AI looming over our society? It is human nature to be cautious or nervous in the face of the unknown, with the shrouded black cloak that AI seems to constantly find itself in, how can anyone be sure of anything? Legislation restricting and confining AI is not a cosmetic accessory that the public calls on so heavily. This legislation is not a pretty pearl necklace to the breathing body of our uncodified constitution. But rather, it is an imperative blood transfusion. It is sections and paragraphs urgently needed to rectify the public hysteria that has, over the past few years, increased at an alarming rate. Perhaps our donor will be the European Commission, which proposed their Artificial Intelligence Act in April 2021, looking at a full adoption of the bill by 2025, depending on the speed of negotiations between the European Parliament and the European Council.

There is one thing every person, body and company seem to agree on: that AI law is 'inevitable' as the government described. But looking at the growing frequency of artificial intelligence cases that appear in our courts, it is fundamental that employment law clearly regulates the bounds of AI in the automation of hiring and workplace management practices to conserve our social structure and equal opportunities, for all individuals in all workplaces.

Written by Erin Davidson
contains external references

FEATURED CONTENT

Showcasing the top member-submitted articles on current legal events and conceptual insights in law, diplomacy, and politics.

The Napoleonic Code: A Legal Landmark that Shaped Western Europe's Civil Law Tradition

The Napoleonic Code, which was adopted in 1804 as the Code civil des Français, is one of the most influential legal documents of the modern period. The first of the modern codified systems of civil law, it established a systematic and readable body of law that transcended the patchwork, feudal, and often arbitrary codes that had dominated France and most of Europe. Its legal structure was copied in many Western European codes of civil law, marking a watershed break from rational, centralizing, and secular legal systems.

Essentially, the Napoleonic Code was designed to instill legal consistency and uniformity on revolutionary France, codifying significant aspects of private law—i.e., persons, property, and obligations-in a rational scheme that could be interpreted and enforced uniformly by judges. The Code abolished birth privileges and established the foundation of legal equality among citizens. This was a basic shift in civil law philosophy from feudal status-based norms to an individual autonomy and private property-based legal system founded on rights.

Among the Code's most significant legal innovations was how it treated property and contractual liberty. It supported absolute rights of property and freedom of contract, giving definitive rules on possession, inheritance, and obligation. This promoted economic liberalism and established the basis for modern commercial law. Besides, its procedural rules codified mitigated judicial arbitrariness, anchoring legal interpretation in the text of the law rather than in customary law or royal decrees.

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The export of the Napoleonic Code across Europe was a legal revolution and not merely political hegemony. Either the Code itself or the broader legal philosophy that lay behind it was taken over in Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, and parts of Germany and Switzerland. Even when adaptations were made to accommodate national customs, the Napoleonic model held on to dominance: hierarchical ordering of norms, strong legislative control, and limited judicial freedom. These traits evolved into hallmarks of the tradition of civil law and eventually found their way into the broader continental legal framework.

Italy's own 1865 Codice Civile and 1942 revision there from were themselves directly derived from the Napoleonic model. The Netherlands' 1838 Civil Code also contained much of the Code's fundamental principles, not least in its triple separation of persons, property, and obligations. Germany's 1900 Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (BGB), although more influenced by Roman law scholarship, took the same systematic codification approach and many of the Napoleonic principles again in both form and doctrinal clarity.

The legacy of the Napoleonic Code is not only substantive but also methodological: it emphasized codification, legal certainty, textual interpretation, and control by legislation. These are now part and parcel of Western European civil law systems. The Code established a tradition of viewing law as a systematic, written system to be logically complete and applied systematically—a lasting feature of continental legal systems.

Written by Shourya Singh
contains external references

SOCIETY UPDATES

What has happened this month in the YBA?

MOCK TRIAL - KATELYN HALE V. NEW COLLEGE ACADEMY SIXTH FORM

This month, the Youth Bar Association hosted a mock trial centred on a fictional civil claim: Katelyn Hale v. New College Academy Sixth Form. The claimant, Ms Hale, alleged she suffered a concussion and further injuries after slipping in a restricted maintenance corridor during school hours. She claimed the school had failed in its duty of care by not properly securing or signposting the area, and sought £25,000 in damages.

The Court ruled in favour of the claimant, finding that the school had indeed breached its duty of care by exposing students to a foreseeable risk of harm. However, it also found Ms Hale partially responsible, as she knowingly entered the prohibited area despite being warned. As a result, the Court applied a 40% reduction to the damages and awarded her £15,000.

The trial was an excellent opportunity for members to develop their advocacy, legal reasoning, and courtroom skills in a realistic and engaging setting.

DEBATES, DISCUSSIONS, AND MORE

Alongside our courtroom activities, the Youth Bar Association has hosted a packed calendar of debates and discussions – from legal ethics to constitutional reform, international politics to criminal justice. These events have sparked sharp questions, bold arguments, and plenty of food for thought.
If you've been waiting to get involved, there's never been a better time. Whether you're interested in making your voice heard, learning from others, or challenging your own views, there's a space for you here. Come join the conversation.

UPCOMING EVENTS!

DEBATE: 7TH OF SEPTEMBER
Participants full

MODEL UNITED NATIONS - GENERAL ASSEMBLY: 28TH OF SEPTEMBER (TENTATIVE)
Apply on our website!

Tom's Tumble - Answer

Legal Claim:
Tom could make a negligence claim against the park.

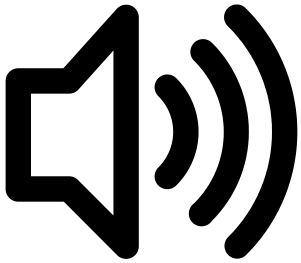
What Tom Must Prove:

1. Duty of Care – The park owed a duty to keep visitors reasonably safe.
2. Breach – The park breached this duty (e.g., by lacking fencing).
3. Causation – The lack of fencing directly caused his injury.
4. Damage – He suffered a physical injury (the ankle).

Is the Park Responsible?
Unlikely. The park fulfilled its duty by posting leash requirement signs. Since Tom failed to leash Max, his own negligence caused the incident, breaking the chain of causation. The park is therefore not liable.

MINI LEGAL CHALLENGE

Test your legal knowledge here!



The Noisy Neighbour

Scenario:

Jay rents a flat in a quiet residential building. A month after moving in, the flat above is let to a new tenant who plays loud music every night until 2am. Jay complains to the landlord, who says, “It's not my problem—sort it out with them.” Jay’s sleep is severely disrupted, affecting his work and wellbeing.

🔍 **Questions to Answer:**

1. What legal claim could Jay pursue?
2. What must Jay prove to succeed? (Hint: Think nuisance or tenancy law)
3. Could the landlord be held responsible? Why or why not?

DISCLAIMER

All articles are written by members and reflect their personal political, economic, and social views. The Youth Bar Association does not restrict or censor submitted content but evaluates it solely based on quality, critical analysis, and adherence to publication standards.