

Signatories update 4 November 2019

Welcome to our new signatories - Just to remind you, the organisations that signed up (whether anew or as confirmation of their existing commitment) on 10 October 2019 were the following: BCLP, Burness Paull, Coats, Coventry Building Society, DAC Beachcroft, Dentons, FSCS, HFW, Irwin Mitchell, Morton Fraser, Nationwide, Network Rail, Paul Hastings, Radiant Law, RPC, Squire Patton Boggs and TLT.

May 2020 signing event - We've had positive conversations with various organisations who expect to come on board at the next signing event and I am confident many more will emerge over the coming months (not least because of your efforts to spread the word about the Charter more widely!). A suggested date is **Thursday 14 May**, which would garner momentum from Mental Health Awareness week (18-24 May 2020) but avoid clashes with any internal events organised to promote that campaign. Please let me know if there are any obvious difficulties with that date. We will of course need a venue, so any ideas or offers to host would be most welcome. Aside from supporting the Charter generally, it is great PR opportunity and a chance to reinforce to your people internally the commitment to the Charter. It might also be a chance to show off any fancy new building you may have recently moved into! What we need is space for around 200 people to gather seated, plus catering and space for networking as well as the usual reception and cloakroom facilities.

Profile raising at events/conferences – A mention that at their Autumn Legal Update event last month Simmons & Simmons included a Mindful Business Charter stand to raise awareness of the initiative. Other organisations might want to consider doing something similar? Our freestanding banner is visually effective albeit best suited for larger scale events as it is bulky to transport. CMS and Morton Fraser are organising client events to showcase the Charter as well over the coming months.

Connections with regulatory and supervisory bodies – Over the last weeks we have spoken to the Bar Council who are considering the adoption of the Charter for the Bar. As with all organisations there are internal issues within chambers as well as issues with how they work with third parties, be they courts and judges, lay clients or solicitors (including of course your litigation and other teams!) We have also spoken to the SRA, the IBA and the Scots Law Society.

International reach – two aspects of the Charter's international reach have arisen in the last few weeks: firstly, launching the MBC in international offices of current signatories and secondly, the adoption of the Charter by non-UK firms and other organisations. In respect of the first, Pinsent Masons have reported that they are now launching the MBC in Hong Kong and Australia. Their people are keen to reach out to others in their regions to create networks and build momentum. If you haven't spoken to Kate Dodd directly, and have offices in these regions, please do explore the potential for linking up. Or indeed for creating networks in other countries that organisations are

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thinking of rolling the Charter out to. In respect of the second aspect, Addleshaw Goddard were approached by a New Zealand law firm who, having heard about their involvement, were interested in signing up to Charter. A question arises as to whether, if different regions are adopting the Charter, are we looking to create one overarching global movement or are we better off encouraging individual jurisdictions to run their own initiatives and if so what influence do we want to retain and what support can they expect to have from us. These are questions for the Working Group (see below) to consider. I suspect this issue will come up more and more as the Charter gains attention more globally.

MBC Working Group update

The working group, by way of explanation for new signatories, consists of a small group of signatory representatives. It is tasked with generating ideas and proposals around purpose, governance, structure and related issues which can then be shared with the wider group. Two notable issues which emerged from the September meeting were measuring impact and future structure.

Measuring impact –The Charter does not provide a prescriptive set of tools and solutions. Its purpose is to effect change. Member organisations will necessarily apply the MBC principles in distinctive ways and will generate their own internal momentum. In doing so, what are the demonstrable KPIs? How do we measure year on year impact? It is suggested that taking part in a benchmark survey with common questions would be a valuable exercise to generate data. The purpose, content and mechanism for this survey have yet to be fully refined but it is certainly not intended to be onerous, or to add unnecessarily to survey fatigue. We would be mindful of ease of participation, flexibility, and anonymity where appropriate. Our hope would be that the data would be useful for the Charter movement more generally, as well as providing individual signatories with useful information internally. We will report back once thoughts are further refined but if anyone has serious concerns at this stage then please let me know.

Structure – should the MBC adopt a formal structure? The consensus to date has been that, at this stage, ease of adoption of the Charter and maintaining momentum are priorities. However, the initial 18 months supported by byrne-dean’s consultancy with funding from the founding members will come to an end in August 2020. Looking ahead, we are therefore exploring whether the future progress of Charter, with its growing cohort, might be best supported by the adoption of a structure to regulate its membership. The working group has discussed what form such a structure might take. This may, for example, take the form of adopting charitable status, or being adopted by an existing charitable organisation with reach and credibility in the field. Thoughts and discussion in this regard continue.

In tandem with the question of structure we will need to address how best to sustain the MBC financially beyond the initial funded period. At present new signatories are not asked to give a financial commitment. Again, the priority is to make the process of joining as accessible as possible so as to support the Charter’s growth. What is proposed here will (a) depend on proposals as to structure and the like and (b) (like everything else) be put to you all for consideration.

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Byrne-dean's role - As you all know, we were appointed (and funded) by the original signatories to help promote and develop the Charter for an initial 18 month period to August 2020. Our role under that arrangement extends to:

- Promoting the Charter through public events
- Onboarding new signatories
- Coordinating events
- Coordinating collaboration
- Coordinating thoughts for the future

We are very happy to work with individual organisations to help them think about implementation of the Charter (and more besides of course) and to participate in internal and client events they may be holding. Such activity does, however, fall outside the ambit of our appointed role. While we have been very happy to help with such things in the past, and the Charter is of course core to our values and purpose as an organisation, the ever growing number of signatories and potential signatories means that our time is increasingly stretched. We do therefore need to be clear that, going forward, we will need to be charging for such activity.

MBC toolkit – we intend to make minor changes to the wording of the MBC toolkit in line with changes made to the wording of the Charter itself to reflect its reach beyond the legal profession.

Stories for the website - It is really helpful for existing and new signatories to be able to read what you have been doing to implement and embed the Charter. We have a dedicated page for these on the website but only you are able to create them! As discussed previously, each anniversary of your signing feels like a great deadline/milestone to mark by giving a brief update on your activity which we can all learn from. Without naming names, or in any way seeking to shame, we have 12 original signatories who are past their first anniversary and we do not have 12 stories! Your help with this would be much appreciated.

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