

NEWS AND EVENTS

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COVID-19 Response

On 19 March 2020, Charles Clore House, home of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, was closed until further notice due to the coronavirus pandemic. Since then, staff have been working at home and all meetings have been conducted remotely. Although the pandemic has necessitated the cancellation and postponement of numerous events and courses, as well as the closure of the Library, there is a great deal of ongoing activity designed to support the Institute's stakeholders during these difficult times. These initiatives are being advertised via the website and through a very active social media presence. For an excellent discussion of the role of the IALS Library during the pandemic, see the blog written by Alice Tyson, Access Librarian, entitled 'The Library is Closed (or is it?)'.

With respect to the Institute's commitment to its students, a move has been made to remote learning for the remainder of this academic year. The Institute is fortunate in that our primary LLM programme—in Legislative Studies

—is delivered primarily through a distance-learning mode. In addition, Dr Colin King, supported by Lindsey Caffin of IALS Digital, has launched a series of [research training 'masterclass' podcasts](#). A number of these podcasts are now 'live'.

The response from stakeholders to this innovation has been extremely positive.

The Institute's Information Law and Policy Centre (ILPC) has played a proactive role in contributing expertise to both academic discourse with significant policy impact and in responding to calls for evidence from policymakers concerning policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and their impact on human rights law. In May, the Centre's Director, Dr Nóra Ni Loideain, submitted [written evidence](#) to the Joint Committee on Human Rights concerning the NHSX contact-tracing app, which is going to be rolled out by the UK government in order to reduce COVID-19 transmissions.

In April, the ILPC was a co-author on a draft Bill on legislative

safeguards, led by Professor Lilian Edwards (University of Newcastle): the Coronavirus (Safeguards) Bill 2020. This policymaking initiative has since been cited by the Home Office Biometrics Commissioner in his 'Statement on the Use of Symptom Tracing Applications' and the Joint Committee on Human Rights' recent report on 'Human Rights and the Government's Response to COVID-19: Digital Contact Tracing'.

Results of the 2020 IALS Library Reader Satisfaction Survey

The week-long annual reader satisfaction survey took place in early March 2020 and asked 21 questions of our readership. The resulting 'You said, we did' Summary Report and Full Report and appendices have now been published on our [website](#).

IALS is very pleased with these results, particularly the impressive **97.4%** satisfaction rating and very positive comments for the newly transformed library space and new library services following the major two-year refurbishment project and the £11.5 million investment from the University of London. It is very reassuring to have evidence that our detailed plans for the new library space and the new library services are meeting reader

expectations and needs. Here is a brief summary of the results.

IALS Transformation Project—Reader Satisfaction results

Although we were initially concerned that the IALS Transformation Project building works might have a negative impact on this year's survey results (as the works had been ongoing throughout much of the beginning of the 2019/2020 academic year), we are very pleased to report that not only was there no general drop in reader satisfaction ratings, but that almost all the ratings improved.

The improved individual satisfaction ratings are mirrored by the high rating and very positive comments given in response to the new one-off survey questions which asked about the long-term and temporary effects of the major IALS Transformation Project. Readers were asked, firstly, to rate and comment on the permanently transformed library space and new library services and, secondly, to comment on how the temporary building works were handled in terms of keeping the noise and disruption to a minimum and communications. The reader satisfaction rating for the newly transformed library space was 97.4% which is very impressive. Almost all of the comments for the new library space were very positive and

complimentary and can be read in Appendix A of the Full Survey Report. Here are a few examples:

'Very well laid out, and it is a better environment than ever in which to work.'

'I come here to be productive and am always happy with the spaces available.'

'Wonderfully quiet and the computers are excellent.'

'Much more comfortable space, very happy with the improvement.'

'Beautiful space.'

'It is now a modern, extremely well-resourced study centre.'

The comments on the handling of the building works were more mixed with some readers complaining about the inevitable noise. However, a majority seemed to understand the reasons for the noise and disruption and the long-term benefits for readers, and many complimented us on our temporary arrangements to keep the library open throughout the duration of the works. The full list of comments can be read in Appendix B of the Full Survey Report. Here are a few examples:

'Great, I believe. I always knew what was going on, either through Facebook or the info board at the entrance.'

'Could have been worse. Builders always friendly and pleasant.'

'There were a few insignificant noises. I sit mostly at the 3rd floor and it didn't really impact my study experience.'

'Some serious noise issues, but this was inevitable. Otherwise excellent.'

'The result has been worth any inconvenience.'

'Was expecting it to have been much worse.'

Other Reader Satisfaction Survey results

The top rating was for our research skills public training sessions at **98%** (97% in 2019). The overall satisfaction rate increased to **97.5%** (95.5% in 2019).

This year we had **10** satisfaction ratings above **90%** which were for helpfulness of library staff at 96.6%, range of print journals at 96.6%, study facilities at 95.1%, range of electronic journals and databases at 94.7%, availability of PCs at 91.5%, range of books at 91.4%, ease of use of the library catalogue at 91.3% and closing times at 90.4% (as well as for our research skills public training sessions and for overall satisfaction). In 2019 we received eight satisfaction ratings above 90%.

We had **seven** satisfaction ratings above **80%**. These included opening times at 89.7%, quality of computing facilities at 88.9%, ease of access to

e-resources at 88.4%, availability of photocopiers at 86.6%, study environment—noise at 86.1%, availability of printing at 83.9% and sufficient copies of LLM textbooks at 83.7%.

We continued to have one satisfaction rating above 70%, this was for study environment—heating at 76.5%. Even though this is the second highest mark we have ever received on this question, IALS Library is disappointed to note that the rating for heating has dropped slightly from last year's record high mark. Part of the recent refurbishment project included the installation of a sophisticated new library heating and cooling system with onsite temperature controls, which we hoped would assist in our control over local temperatures in the reading rooms. Despite its introduction, the comments section shows that we do not always seem to have achieved a comfortable temperature over all floors of the library. However, this is counterbalanced by some respondents praising the heating levels within the library. Library staff will continue to monitor temperatures in the reading rooms as part of their regular patrols and will ask the supplier to review the working of the new system.

We continued to have one satisfaction rating above 60%, this was for the cost of copying,

scanning and printing at 64.4%. This rating is higher than the 62.9% 2019 rating. Indeed, this rating has been improving steadily for a number of years.

Some positive comments made several times:

'Wonderful, quiet place to conduct research – I always have a productive day at IALS.' (x 16)

'Superb range of resources, the library has everything I need.' (x 15)

'The helpful and polite staff are second to none!' (x 11)

'Quite simply, an excellent library.' (x 8)

Launch of New Research Centre

In March, the Institute Management Committee approved the launch of a new research centre, the Centre for Financial Law, Regulation and Compliance (FinReg) under the leadership of Dr Colin King.

This is an important development in the research capacity of IALS, and it builds upon its historical strength in this field. The purpose of the centre is to promote knowledge and understanding of financial law/regulation/compliance, broadly construed. For example, the centre embraces the study of traditional aspects of financial

law, regulation theory and processes, economic/financial crime, development of white-collar crime, compliance and procedural justice, the psychology of regulation, and financial sanctions.

The centre acts as a national and international hub for promotion and facilitation of research in these areas.

Building Transformation Project Update

The first (and major) stage of the IALS Transformation Project was brought to successful completion in the spring. The new fifth floor was handed over to the university on Friday 6 March 2020, and new furniture was installed during the following week.

The Institute Director and the Academic and Administrative teams had been based at Dilke House in Malet Street since May 2018. Unfortunately, due to the rapidly escalating COVID-19 situation it has not proved possible for them to take up residence on the fifth floor as planned.

The Project Team is continuing to explore options and costs for limited, further works on the lower floors of the Institute.

Events, podcasts and short courses

Due to the closure of the building many events are being rescheduled. Please check the IALS website, Twitter and Facebook pages for further updates or contact ials.events@sas.ac.uk for more information.

Podcast series: Judicial Ways of Working

The global pandemic has had a profound impact upon the ways in which people live and work across the globe. The coronavirus has created particular challenges for the judicial system, which has relied to a large extent on doing its business in a live forum, to ensure both fairness to the parties and access of the public. This [podcast series](#) explores the ways in which judges are working in the midst of the pandemic. Hosted by Professor Carl Stychin, IALS Director, the series engages members of the judiciary in discussions on the use of technology to enable courts and tribunals, as well as the potential long-term implications of new ways of working even when we return to a 'new normal'. Guests in the series include: The Honourable Richard Humphreys, High Court of Ireland; The Honourable Lorne Sossin, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Canada; The Honourable Kristine Eidsvik and the Honourable

Charlene Anderson, Alberta Court of Queen's Bench, Canada; Upper Tribunal Judge Elizabeth Cooke, Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber), Royal Court of Justice.

Short course for professionals

The Institute is pleased to be launching its first ever entirely remote course on Finance, Law and Security: An Analysis of Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing, Sanctions and Corruption.

This course is based in our new Centre for Financial Law, Regulation and Compliance. We are hopeful that the course structure will provide a template

which can be used for the delivery of other short courses in the future.

Advanced Certified Course on Post-Legislative Scrutiny

The IALS and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy are joining forces to offer a second certified course on [Post-Legislative Scrutiny](#). The one-week professional course will take place from 5 July to 9 July 2021.

The curriculum is being prepared by a multidisciplinary and international team of academics and parliamentary development specialists.