

Full Name	Party	Answers to Questions
Sevenoaks		
Sir Michael Fallon	Conservative	<p>Q1: We will continue to support Legal Aid in this country, but we will restrict legal aid for unscrupulous law firms that issue vexatious legal claims against our armed forces.</p> <p>Q2: We want to maximise our access to the single market and secure a good free-trading relationship with Europe. I will work to protect the interests of businesses in my constituency and feed any concerns they have into the Brexit negotiating process.</p> <p>Q3: We will ensure that the high quality of the legal sector in this country – revered around the world – is protected along with the integrity of our justice system.</p> <p>Q4: I would welcome hearing from Kent Law Society on legal and justice issues and would be happy to meet with KLS representatives in the future.</p>
Graham Cushway	UKIP	<p>1. I have scoured the UK Independence Party's otherwise excellent manifesto for references to the legal profession, and am sorry to say have drawn a blank in general terms. Despite the manifest importance of the legal industry in terms of both revenue accrued to the country and its ubiquitous nature in business, the plight of the legal professional appears for some reason to lack the emotive appeal of, say, nurses or soldiers and appears to have received unduly scant attention from our political masters. I am therefore forced to rely on my own devices. My knowledge of the legal market is too minimal to give an informed answer on this subject, and in general I can only offer holistic views.</p> <p>If the question is meant to refer to the impact of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (2013), then I believe that any cuts were due and in the national interest.</p> <p>One of the key driving factors behind Brexit was of course immigration, which is currently at unsustainable levels. In delivering a vote to leave the EU, the electorate's will can surely be interpreted as having a number of implications, one of which is the conclusion that uncontrolled immigration has been deemed to be contrary to the interests and desires of Britain and British people. If in the future legal aid is extended to large numbers of immigrants whose entry to the country has been deemed illegal or undesirable, then for legal aid to be extended to these people has by extension also been deemed to be not in the national interest and should not occur.</p>

	<p>Other countries may well be increasing spending on legal aid, but to what extent is this due to the freedom of movement demanded by the EU which has been rejected in the UK, and any consequent increase in crime?</p> <p>While my sympathy for the impact of any such cuts to legal aid on the legal profession is (with respect) limited, I would stress that this is partly because I foresee an increase in demand for legal services in other aspects of the law, which will occur as a direct result of Brexit. The British legal system maintains the advantages that you mentioned in your initial letter, as well as the use of the English language. As EU-made legislation inevitably begins to be replaced by laws created by our newly sovereign parliament, these will require interpretation for EU companies and other entities seeking to do business in the UK. As we in Kent are closest to the Continent the demand for legal advice on how to do business in our county can be expected to increase to what I predict will in fact result in a Brexit boom for the industry.</p> <p>2. As stated in the question above, I see Brexit as a time of opportunity for the legal profession. Brexit will of necessity result in an avalanche of legislation derived from Parliament on one hand and a bonfire (forgive the metaphors) of redundant or unhelpful EU legislation on the other. This will require fast interpretation and members of the profession in Kent will need to be on their toes in the years ahead to keep up with and try to anticipate the sudden and numerous changes ahead. It should be a very interesting and volatile time, which will suit some and frustrate others. However it will at least be interesting.</p> <p>While I can understand that some legal firms feel trepidation as a result of Brexit and the (likely) future loss of access to the Single Market, this is false. Even if no agreement is reached with the EU, firms will continue to trade on WTO terms or something similar. This is after all how the UK trades with some of our biggest markets such as the US and China. The idea that German car manufacturers (for instance) would cease to sell vehicles to the UK is implausible. Punishment tariffs or anything else would be self-defeating as the UK would respond in like kind or lower corporation tax to out-compete EU markets, which would not be in their interests. While the EU is by nature autocratic, illogical and quite capable of acting contrary to its own interests, the competing interests of 27 member states mean that it will ultimately be prevented from inflicting severe harm on itself or the UK.</p> <p>In terms of how I would protect the business interests of lawyers, the answer is simple. The business interests of lawyers are not under threat. Trade will continue whatever games the politicians play in the forthcoming talks. The best thing I can do as a local MP to help lawyers is to attract more companies and foreign businesses to trade in Kent.</p> <p>3. I agree entirely that the legal profession needs to be regulated to the highest degree possible. A political system which relies so heavily on</p>
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	<p>legality and the rule of law cannot be subject to the vagaries of a poorly regulated profession.</p> <p>Perhaps more importantly, as the question implies, members of the public with no knowledge of the legal profession would be put at risk by reducing the safeguards currently in place against unscrupulous professionals.</p> <p>As such I would heed the advice implied here and resist any measures to reduced standards or water down regulation of the legal profession.</p> <p>4. It is in fact Parliament that is sovereign in the United Kingdom, not the legal profession.</p> <p>I am a soldier, and spent six years in Iraq. I worked with both British forces and with American soldiers including the US Marine Corps and surged twice with them. Of course the Iraq War was a Tony Blair war and Blair was himself a lawyer. The influence of the legal profession on the ground in Iraq was pernicious and damaging. British soldiers were rendered incapable of fighting due to continual interference by lawyers whose influence was so great that the soldiers carried insufficient ammunition and were afraid to fire a shot. Friends and colleagues of mine were mine were persecuted in spurious and baseless enquiries that have continued to this day and are still continuing. Along with continual political micro-management this was one of the key factors that led to our defeat, and I must stress this word – defeat - in Basrah. By contrast, working with the USMC who suffered no such constraints I saw how victory could be achieved. This is an example of how undue influence by lawyers on policy can thwart political objectives.</p> <p>As a historian I would argue that government in the UK has been emasculated over the last twenty years in particular by the fact that key decisions were increasingly be expected to be taken at European levels. This has meant UK politics increasingly becoming the realm of complacent time-servers obsessing over minutiae – seagulls and the like, which probably explains the low grade of party leader in this election. This has also meant that the legal profession, who were in the best position to interpret directives from Brussels, emerged to gain what I consider to be an undue influence over political leaders. As time goes on and Parliament re-asserts its authority I anticipate that this situation will be reversed with politicians once again legislating and lawyers working to interpret their demands, which is as it should be. We will be able to (for example) win military campaigns again, as lawyers will be acting as directed by politicians rather than themselves driving events.</p> <p>Having said all that I would of course expect to engage with lawyers in Kent on legal and justice issues, and cannot imagine a scenario where this would not occur. For one thing I would need legal input in relation to the matters mentioned in the other questions. I would no more think to tell a lawyer how to interpret the law than a nurse how to tend to a</p>
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Chris Clark	Labour	
Alan Bullion	Lib Dem	
Philip Dodd	Green	