

19 October 2016

## **RSS and ICCA law guide to be launched tomorrow for European Statistics Day**

The Inns of Court College of Advocacy (ICCA) and the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) have created a joint guide on statistics and probability for advocates to aid their understanding in the use of statistical evidence in courts and tribunals.

ICCA sought the expertise of the RSS as part of the College's project: 'Promoting Reliability in the Submission and Handling of Expert Evidence'. The RSS' work on Statistics and the Law provided a very fitting frame for collaboration.

Statistical evidence and probabilistic reasoning form part of expert witnesses' testimony in an increasingly wide range of litigation. The guide aims to identify the main traps and pitfalls advocates that are likely to meet when handling expert evidence.

Although the booklet doesn't claim to hold all the answers, it's hoped that it will encourage advocates to investigate further opportunities for professional development in the understanding, interpretation and presentation of statistical and probabilistic evidence. It should also help practitioners to consult more effectively with appropriate expert witnesses in the preparation of their cases, and know how to effectively deploy and challenge expert evidence and opinion.

These knowledge and skills are necessary to avoid miscarriages of justice, which may have occurred in the past due to the inappropriate use of, and understanding of, statistics and probability by judges, expert witnesses and advocates.

The guide is available to download, free, both from ICCA's and RSS' websites tomorrow:

Its online release has been chosen to coincide with 2017's [European Statistics Day](#) (Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October), which is themed around *The Value of Official Statistics as a Public Good*.

Printed copies will be available from both organisations following a launch event in late November.

### **Commenting on the guide, Lord Hughes of the Supreme Court said:**

*"Advocates (and judges) very often encounter experts who use statistics in their reports. An understanding of the terminology which they use is an essential baseline from which to start in following and evaluating what they say. More importantly, statistical propositions are sometimes beguiling, and at other times counter-intuitive. All court users will benefit from a very basic guide to the kinds of question where statistical analysis can be useful, and, as importantly, to the kinds of question where it cannot. This guide has been prepared with these aims in mind, and by experts who have set out to explain themselves to lawyers. It will, I hope, be a valuable companion to those who are asked to digest, to apply, and to test, expert opinion relying on statistics."*



**Also commenting on the guide, RSS President, Sir David Spiegelhalter said:**

“The RSS welcomes the Inns of Court College of Advocacy’s programme to improve the reliability of expert evidence, and we hope this guide will ensure that evidence which includes statistics and data is used more effectively, for everyone’s benefit.”

**Derek Wood CBE QC, ICCA’s Board of Governors Chair, said:**

*“The Inns of Court College of Advocacy is proud to have collaborated with the Royal Statistical Society over the production of this booklet. Experts in every type of discipline, appearing in every type of court and tribunal, habitually base their evidence on statistical data. A proper understanding of the way in which statistics can be used – and abused – is an essential tool for every advocate.*

ENDS

**Notes for editors**

1. For more information, contact Mags Wiley, RSS Press & Policy Officer, on 020 7614 3920 or at [m.wiley@rss.org.uk](mailto:m.wiley@rss.org.uk).

2. The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) founded in 1834 is one of the world's most distinguished and renowned statistical societies. It is a learned society for statistics, a professional body for statisticians and a charity which promotes statistics, data and evidence for the public good. Today the Society has over 8000 members around the world. [www.rss.org.uk](http://www.rss.org.uk) @RoyalStatSoc

3. The new Inns of Court College of Advocacy (ICCA) was launched in 2016 by The Council of the Inns of Court (COIC).

- The College provides leadership, expertise and guidance in the pursuit of excellence in advocacy and professional ethics and will build on the success of the Advocacy Training Council (ATC) which is internationally recognised for its development of education and training for the Bar and the wider profession.
- The profession regards the College as the resource of choice for education and training materials of the highest quality. The materials will be delivered online and through the Inns and Circuits.
- The College’s mission is to promote the rule of law through excellent advocacy.