

News story: Appointment of 6 Commissioners of the Criminal Cases Review Commission

Cindy Butts, Ian Comfort, Johanna Higgins and Christine Anne Smith have been appointed for 3 years beginning 7 May 2019. The 3 year appointments of David Brown and Sukhvinder Kaur began on 16 May 2019.

Appointments to CCRC are made by Her Majesty the Queen on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

Appointments and re-appointments to CCRC are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. This appointment has been made in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Biographies

David Brown QFSM

David Brown is a magistrate in the criminal court and an Associate Inspector for Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire & Rescue Services. David previously served as Assistant Commissioner and Director of Operations in the London Fire Brigade.

Cindy Butts

Cindy has over 20 years of experience improving access to justice and tackling inequality. She currently has a portfolio career which includes being a Lay Member of the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, a Lay Member of the Press Recognition Panel's Nominations Committee and appoints judges on behalf of the Judicial Appointments Commission. Cindy previously served as a Commissioner at the Independent Police Complaints Commission. Prior to this she was the Deputy Chair of the Metropolitan Police Authority where she had responsibility for setting the strategic direction of the Metropolitan Police Service.

Ian Comfort

Ian Comfort has worked at a senior level in education for many years. As a magistrate he has extensive experience as a presiding justice in adult and youth courts. His experience of a 'portfolio' career spans membership of the Investigating Committee of the Institute of Chartered Accountants for England and Wales, legal adviser and legal chair for the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service and panel chair for the Health and Care Professions Council Tribunal Service. As a charity trustee he chairs the Ebony Steelband Trust and Notting Hill Carnival.

Johanna Higgins

Johanna Higgins is a barrister of the Inner Temple, London and has also been called to the Bar in Northern Ireland and the Bar in Dublin. In private practice she dealt with a range of cases in all court tiers. She is a former Senior Public Prosecutor (Northern Ireland). She is now an Independent Adjudicator on several legal adjudication panels for the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution, London. Johanna sits as a Member of the Civil Legal Services Appeal Panel, under the Department of Justice NI and is also a Board Member of the Historic Buildings Committee NI. She was elected as a member of the Royal Historical Society, London in 2018.

Sukhvinder Kaur

Sukhvinder Kaur is a currently Legally Qualified Chair of Police Misconduct Hearings for the MOD, BTP as well as the Metropolitan and City of London Forces. She is also employed as a government lawyer for over 20 years, working extensively in criminal law. In that capacity, she was also appointed as one of the first national Legal Registrars to the First Tier Mental Health Tribunal. Also facilitates training and mentors.

Christine Anne Smith QC

Christine Smith is a member of the Bar of Northern Ireland with substantial experience of criminal practice. She was Senior Counsel to the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse 1922 to 1995. She is currently a member of the Senior Civil Panel of the Government Legal Service for Northern Ireland and of the Coroners' Service for Northern Ireland counsel panel.

All the appointees have declared that they have not been involved in any political activity.