

Reappointment of 7 Commissioners of the Criminal Cases Review Commission

The 7 Commissioners have been reappointed for five-year terms:

- Ian Comfort and Johanna Higgins from 7 May 2022
- David Brown from 16 May 2022
- Rachel Ellis, Jill Gramann and Rob Ward from 29 September 2022
- Linda Lee from 20 November 2022

The Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) was established by the Criminal Appeal Act 1995 (“the Act”) and commenced operation in 1997. The CCRC considers – on application – cases in England, Wales and Northern Ireland where a miscarriage of justice is alleged or suspected. The CCRC decides if there is any new evidence or new argument which raises a real possibility that an appeal court would quash a conviction or reduce a sentence.

The appointment of CCRC Commissioners are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments and recruitment processes comply with the Cabinet Office Governance Code on Public Appointments, as do the proposed reappointments.

Appointments to CCRC are made by Her Majesty the Queen on the recommendation of the Prime Minister who receives advice from the Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State.

Biographies

David Brown is an Associate Inspector with HM Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services. David spent 32 years in the London Fire Brigade and in 2016 he was awarded the Queen’s Fire Service Medal. David is a Lay Panel member on the investigating committee for the Nursing and Midwifery Council and is supporting the Boundary Commission for England in reviewing Parliamentary constituencies. He currently serves as a magistrate in the adult criminal court.

Ian Comfort is a barrister of the Inner Temple and chartered legal executive. He is a legally qualified chair for the Medical Practitioners Tribunal and the Taxation Disciplinary Board and chairs panels for the Health and Care Professions Tribunal. He was appointed as a magistrate in 1984 and is a presiding justice in West London sitting in both adult and youth courts.

Rachel Ellis is an Ombudsman with the Financial Ombudsman Service. Alongside this, she chairs Fitness to Practise Committees for the Nursing and Midwifery Council, is an Independent Panel Member on police misconduct committees and is also a Panel Member for the Independent Betting Adjudication Service. Rachel previously practised as a criminal barrister acting for both the prosecution and defence.

Jill Gramann served on the Sentencing Council as the lay judicial member for

three years, with specific responsibility for the development of sentencing guidelines for domestic abuse, and theft. Until 2017, Jill was also a Non-Executive Director of Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust and has held board positions on both SCOPE and BILD. Previously she founded and led an attitudinal research consultancy for 30 years. She was a magistrate from 1990 until 2017 and has held a number of posts within the magistracy including three years as a bench chairman and chair of the Judicial Issues Group for West Mercia.

Johanna Higgins is a barrister and Bencher of the Inner Temple, London, who has also been called to the Bar in Northern Ireland and the Bar in Dublin. Johanna gained criminal practice experience as a Senior Public Prosecutor in Northern Ireland. She now sits as a member of the Legal Aid Appeal Board NI and is a member of the Independent Expert Panel, appointed by the House of Commons.

Linda Lee is a solicitor specialising in regulatory and disciplinary law at national law firm Radcliffes Le Brasseur. She is a Past President of the Law Society of England and Wales and has held various key roles at the Law Society. She is currently Chair of the Law Society's Professional Indemnity Insurance Committee and is a longstanding member of the Access to Justice Committee. A former President of the Medico-Legal Society, she remains an active member of its Council. She lectures and writes on legal and regulatory issues and is a director of the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting. Linda holds a number of quasi-judicial roles, predominantly for regulators, and also sits as a Deputy District Judge (Civil).

Rob Ward QC (Hon) is a barrister who has had an extensive career as a Government lawyer specialising in national security law, including counter-terrorism. Rob led the legal branch at the Ministry of Defence during a period of substantial change and expansion. He is the co-author of leading textbooks on sexual offences law and national security law.