

Appointment of 3 Commissioners and the reappointment of 5 Commissioners to the Judicial Appointments Commission

The appointment of the three Commissioners and reappointment of five Commissioners to the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC), are each for a term of 3 years. Details of the appointees and their start dates are below.

Appointments:

- Judge Greg Sinfield as a Senior Judicial Commissioner whose appointment commenced on 9 June 2020;
- Rt. Rev. Dr Barry Morgan as the Lay Commissioner with responsibility for Welsh matters; and
- Christa Christensen as the Judicial (Tribunal Judge) Commissioner.

Both Dr Morgan and Judge Christensen commenced their roles on 6 July 2020

The following Commissioners have been reappointment whose tenures will commence on 1 September 2020:

- Mathangi Asokan (District Judge), Judicial Commissioner;
- Emir Feisal (non-legal judicial), Judicial Commissioner;
- Jane Furniss, Lay Commissioner;
- Andrew Kennon, Lay Commissioner; and
- Sir Simon Wessely, Lay Commissioner.

JAC is an independent body that selects candidates for judicial office in courts and tribunals in England and Wales, and for some tribunals with UK-wide jurisdiction. Candidates are selected on merit, through fair and open competition.

JAC Commissioners are appointed, under Schedule 12(1) of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, by Her Majesty the Queen on the recommendation of the Lord Chancellor.

Commissioner appointments and re-appointments to the JAC comply with the Governance Code on Public Appointments and are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Senior Judicial Commissioners are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments in accordance with Regulation 10 and 11 of the Judicial Appointments Regulations 2013.

Biographies

New Appointments

Greg Sinfield – Senior Judicial Commissioner:

Greg was appointed as President of the First-tier Tribunal (Tax Chamber) in October 2017.

Greg was called to the Bar in 1981. Between 1983 and 1987, Greg worked in the Solicitor's Office of HM Customs and Excise. He returned to private practice in 1988 with a firm of solicitors now known as Hogan Lovells International. He was admitted as a solicitor in 1989 and became a partner in the tax group of the firm in 1993.

Greg was appointed as a salaried Judge of the Upper Tribunal, assigned to the Tax and Chancery Chamber, in February 2012 and regularly sat in the First-tier Tribunal as well.

Christa Christensen – Judicial (Tribunal Judge) Commissioner:

Christa was appointed as a fee paid Employment Judge in 1995. She became a salaried Employment Judge in 2003, assigned to sit in the Employment Tribunal in Exeter and then Bristol. She was Director of Training for Tribunals for the Judicial College, Editor of the Tribunals Journal between 2016 and 2020 and Deputy Director of Training for the Employment Tribunals (E&W) between 2009 and 2016.

Christa continues to sit as an Employment Judge and was also assigned to sit in the Mental Health Tribunal in the Health, Education and Social Care Chamber in 2020.

Christa qualified as a solicitor in 1984 and specialised in company and commercial work. She combined work in private practice and as a lecturer at the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England until her appointment as a salaried judge in 2003.

Rt. Rev. Dr Barry Morgan – Lay Commissioner with responsibility for Welsh matters:

Barry is a Welsh Anglican Bishop and academic from Neath in Wales. He held both parish and university posts before becoming Bishop of Bangor in 1993, Llandaff in 1999 and was Archbishop of Wales from 2003 – 2017. During his time in office it became possible for women to be ordained as priests and bishops, and for prayers to be offered for same sex couples in public services in the Church in Wales

As well as being Pro Chancellor of the University of Wales, Barry is a Fellow of five Welsh Universities, a Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales and a Knight of the Order of St. John. He has published a number of articles in books and journals, as well as a book on the poetry of R S Thomas. Barry also chaired a Commission on Homelessness in Wales in 2007 on behalf of Shelter Cymru.

Reappointments

Mathangi Asokan – Judicial (District Judge) Commissioner:

Mathu started her career as a solicitor, progressing quickly to partner and to head the defendant insurance department at her firm. She was appointed a Deputy District Judge in 1999 and combined sitting days with a busy practice until her appointment to the Bench in 2002. Mathu sits full-time at Birmingham Civil Justice Centre and deals with children and Court of Protection cases. Her roles have included Diversity and Community Relations Judge for the West Midlands area and Family and Children Tutor Judge for the Judicial College. Mathu was also a committee member of the UK Association of Women Judges since its inception and remained so for a period of 12 years.

Emir Khan Feisal – Judicial (non-legal) Commissioner:

Emir is a chartered accountant, specialising in transformational change and has been a magistrate since 2005. Most of his career was spent at The Sunday Times as Associate Managing Editor, where he was responsible for the organisation's finances.

Emir is a board member of the Serious Fraud Office, Audit Chair of the Lambeth Clinical Commissioning Group, the Honours Committee, The Queen's Award for Voluntary Services, and is a Trustee of The Henry Smith Charity. He sits on appeals at the Crown Court, and was previously a lay member of the Council of the Inns of Court and of the Bar Tribunal Adjudication Service.

Jane Furniss CBE – Lay Commissioner:

Jane is a Trustee of the leadership college, Cumberland Lodge, and provides mentoring support and advice to chairs and senior executives through Critical Eye. Jane also chairs the Capital Appeal Board for Overgate Hospice in West Yorkshire. She was a non-executive director on the Board of the National Crime Agency until March 2019, and was Senior Independent Director of the Solicitors Regulation Authority until December 2017.

Until 2013, Jane was Chief Executive of the Independent Police Complaints Commission. She was Deputy Chair of homelessness charity Crisis from 2005 to 2016. Earlier in her career, she held senior roles in HM Inspectorate of Probation and the probation service and as a Director-General at the Home Office where she led a strategic change programme to reform the way the criminal justice system works.

Andrew Kennon – Lay Commissioner:

Andrew worked for 39 years as a Clerk in the House of Commons, retiring in 2017 after five years as Clerk of Committees. He has advised on governance and constitutional law, and has written and lectured on parliamentary and constitutional issues throughout his career. He has worked on all aspects of parliamentary reform and was closely involved in the internal governance of the House of Commons.

Sir Simon Wessely – Lay Commissioner:

Sir Simon is Regius Professor of Psychiatry at the Institute of Psychiatry

and Neuroscience at King's College London. He is an honorary consultant Psychiatrist at King's College Hospital and the Maudsley Hospital, a civilian consultant advisor in psychiatry to the British Army and Director of the King's Centre for Military Health Research. He is President of the Royal Society of Medicine and a former President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Simon is also a Trustee of Combat Stress and has campaigned to improve the understanding and image of mental health. He was awarded a knighthood for services to military healthcare and to psychological medicine.