

Speech: Judges annual pay review

2018/19: David Gauke blog

Our judiciary is recognised and respected both at home and around the world for its integrity and independence.

Every day, in courts and tribunals across the country, judges deliver justice without fear or favour and, in doing so, uphold the rule of law on which our society is founded.

Beyond their fundamental role, the quality and dependability of our judiciary is also critical to maintaining the UK's thriving legal services sector, worth around £24 billion to our economy and attracting international business to the UK.

I believe that in order to continue to have a world-class judiciary, we need to be able to retain and recruit high-calibre and highly experienced judges.

With that in mind, and following recommendations made by the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB) in their annual report, I am pleased today to announce a 2% pay increase for members of the judiciary for 2018/19 – the biggest pay rise for judges in nearly 10 years.

This is in line with the pay awards announced recently for other vital public servants – such as the police and doctors – and strikes the right balance between reward and affordability.

It has been reported that judges could be awarded significantly higher pay increases – some as high as 32%. This recommendation, along with many others, was made by the SSRB as part of a major review of judges pay, quite separate to the annual pay increase I am announcing today. No decisions have yet been made, but we are giving careful consideration to the recommendations put forward.

This major review, published in full today, has considered in depth the total reward package for judges – including the impact of recent pensions changes – and our ability to continue to recruit and retain the brilliant legal minds required to carry out this role.

This Government is acutely aware of the recruitment challenges we face at senior levels of the judiciary. That is precisely why my Department asked for this review to be carried out.

We are grateful for the work that has been undertaken and will give careful consideration to the issues that have been raised. I recognise the importance of ensuring the reward package for judges is sufficiently attractive to enable us to attract excellent candidates to judicial office.

I will make a further announcement when I am in position to set out in full the government's response to the major review.