

# Opening of the Legal Year

News story

Susanna McGibbon, Treasury Solicitor attended the service at Westminster Abbey



Today marked the Opening of the Legal Year with a Service at Westminster Abbey, conducted by the Dean of Westminster.

The ancient tradition dates to the Middle Ages and the religious practice of judges praying for guidance at the start of the legal term. The modern service, which dates to 1897 includes hymns, anthems and a lesson read by the Lord Chancellor, who holds a reception breakfast following the ceremony at the Houses of Parliament. The Lord Chancellor is an ancient office of state, and the office holder heads the Ministry of Justice as the Secretary of State for Justice.

Over 700 guests are invited, including senior members of the judiciary, King's Counsel, overseas judges, and the Law Officers of the Crown.

Susanna McGibbon attended the ceremony in her role as Treasury Solicitor, Permanent Secretary of the Government Legal Department and His Majesty's Procurator General. Susanna reflects:

"I was honoured to attend the Service to mark the Opening of the Legal Year at Westminster Abbey today. It was an opportunity to meet colleagues from across the legal profession and to reflect on the legal year ahead of us."

Published 3 October 2022

---

# An update on Additional Rate tax

News story

The Chancellor confirmed an update to plans for the Additional Rate tax on the morning of 3 October 2022.



From supporting British business to lowering the tax burden for the lowest paid, our Growth Plan sets out a new approach to build a more prosperous economy.

However, it is clear that the abolition of the 45p tax rate has become a distraction from our overriding mission to tackle the challenges facing our country.

As a result, I'm announcing we are not proceeding with the abolition of the 45p tax rate. We get it, and we have listened.

This will allow us to focus on delivering the major parts of our growth package.

First, our Energy Price Guarantee, which will support households and businesses with their energy bills.

Second, cutting taxes to put money back in the pockets of hard-working people and grow our economy.

Third, driving supply side reforms – including accelerating major infrastructure projects – to get Britain moving.

Published 3 October 2022

---

# New Civil Service Commissioners appointed

News story

Elizabeth Walmsley, Stephen Cohen, Christopher Pilgrim and Atul Devani have been appointed as Commissioners as part of the Civil Service Commission.



Together they bring valuable skills and experience from both public and private sector backgrounds.

The Civil Service Commission is an independent statutory body that oversees appointments to the Civil Service, ensuring that they are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. Commissioners also promote and hear appeals brought under the Civil Service Code.

The new Civil Service Commissioners have been appointed after an open competition which took place in 2022.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Nadim Zahawi said:

I would like to congratulate the four new commissioners on their appointments. They bring a variety of expertise that will help ensure that civil servants are recruited on merit and on the basis of fair and open competition, helping safeguard an impartial Civil Service.

Baroness Gisela Stuart, the First Civil Service Commissioner, said:

I am delighted that Atul, Christopher, Elizabeth and Stephen will be joining our board of Civil Service Commissioners. Their extensive experience and expertise from leadership roles and boards in other sectors will enrich the Commission's work both as an independent regulator of recruitment into the Civil Service and in hearing complaints under the Civil Service Code. I look forward to

working with them as Commissioners, helping to ensure we have an effective Civil Service, appointed on merit, to develop and deliver government services across the country.

The new Commissioners announced today join the Commission from 3 October 2022 for a 5 year non-renewable term. Commissioners work part-time, typically between 4 and 8 days a month.

1. Read more [information about the work of the Commission](#).
2. The Civil Service Commission was established as a statutory body in November 2010 under the provisions of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. The Commission is independent of Ministers and the Civil Service. It is responsible for upholding the requirement that recruitment to the Civil Service is on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.
3. Biographies of the new commissioners:
  - Atul Devani is serial entrepreneur who founded and sold several successful software technology ventures in finance, mobile, telecoms, telemedicine and pharmacy. He is currently a Non-Executive Director of a Venture Capital Trust and an investor in a number of private companies. Atul is a mentor of entrepreneurs at the Company of Information Technologists in the City of London, an independent member of Bangor University Council and also serves on the board of M-Sparc, a science park created by the University to help to inspire people and provide support for innovations.
  - Christopher Pilgrim was formerly Chief HR Officer and Board member of the energy supplier Npower. Chris began his career with British Steel before joining ExxonMobil and an Exxon Joint Venture with Shell filling a number of senior positions in the UK and internationally. This was followed by HR Director roles at Royal Numico and Uniq plc, before joining Npower in 2009. Chris has been a member of the Police and National Crime Agency Remuneration Review Body and is now Chair of the Doctors and Dentist Pay Review Body, Board Member of the Civil Nuclear Police Authority, and a Governor of Cardiff Metropolitan University.
  - Stephen Cohen has over 40 years' experience in asset management, in Asia, Europe and the USA. He has worked as a portfolio manager, in business development, operations and in IT. Stephen is a Council member at the Health & Care Professions Council, a Commissioner at the Gambling Commission and Chair of Audit for both the JPMorgan Japan Investment Trust plc and the Schroder UK Public Private Trust plc. Stephen brings a global business perspective, deep experience of finance, corporate strategy and corporate governance.
  - Liz currently divides her time between consultancy, voluntary and community work. During her career she has developed extensive commercial

experience in science, engineering, new technology, finance and third sector. This included senior positions in ICI plc, 3i plc and Praesta Partners LLP and a range of non-executive and governance roles. She has worked globally and in the UK in public, private and voluntary sectors. Throughout her career she has actively promoted increased inclusion and equality of opportunity. She is currently a Trustee of the Woodsmith Foundation, whose activity covers the North York Moors National Park and its coastal towns. Other community activities include Rotary and her local Village Hall in rural North Yorkshire.

Published 3 October 2022

---

## [Submitting a planning appeal has changed in some local authority areas – find out where](#)

News story

We have launched a 'beta' planning appeal submission process for more than 30 local planning authority (LPA) areas, marking a step forward in our new service roll-out.



We are designing a new planning appeals service to be easier, faster and more cost effective. The first part of these improvements focuses on the appeal submission form, and we have now introduced a new form for submitting full planning (s78) and householder appeals in some local authority areas of England. This builds on the [smaller pilot we ran earlier this year](#).

In the coming months we will be adding additional LPAs and new features to the service.

## What's changed?

For now, people submitting appeals for [householder](#) or [full planning decisions \(s78\)](#) in the regions mentioned below are eligible to use the new submission form.

The main difference will be a simpler, more intuitive appeal submission process, using standardised government formats, which are familiar across government services. Eligible users will be able to start their appeal on GOV.UK instead of the [Appeals Casework Portal \(ACP\)](#).

The submission form includes built in guidance as well as validation to ensure appeals are submitted with all the correct information.

Over the coming weeks we will make a change so that eligible appeals are redirected from the ACP to the correct start page on GOV.UK. We have also asked LPAs in the participating regions to update hyperlinks in their planning decision notices where permission is refused.

## Which regions are included?

### London

- London Borough of Barnet
- London Borough of Brent
- London Borough of Bromley
- London Borough of Camden
- London Borough of Hillingdon
- London Borough of Islington
- London Borough of Lambeth
- Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

### Midlands

### North East

- City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
- Darlington Borough Council
- Durham County Council
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- Gateshead Council
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- Leeds City Council
- Middlesbrough Council
- Newcastle City Council
- North Tyneside Council
- Northumberland County Council
- Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
- South Tyneside Council
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- Sunderland City Council

- Wakefield Council

## North West

- Cheshire East Council
- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Kirklees Council

## South East

## South West

- Bristol City Council
- Cornwall Council
- Wiltshire Council

## What's coming up next?

We will soon be releasing the final comments submission process for cases submitted via the new service. We continue to work on the design and development of other case types, such as appeals for listed building consent and enforcement. We are also improving the design of the LPA questionnaire and statement submission process.

Published 3 October 2022

---

## [Civil/crime news: online form service to submit a complaint](#)

News story

We are introducing a new online form service to submit a complaint to the Legal Aid Agency (LAA).



A new online form service is available for users of legal aid to submit a complaint.

If you have a Client and Cost Management System (CCMS) account, you will still be able to submit a complaint by using our online system.

### **Why are you doing this now?**

We want to ensure that if you are not satisfied with the service we provide, you are able to contact us about this.

### **Complaint response times**

Our complaint response times have not changed and are outlined on our complaint procedure page. This explains how the complaints process works.

We have only changed how you submit your complaint to us, making it accessible for all.

### **What if I want to complain by post?**

If you would like to submit your complaint by post, you can still do this. Details can be found on our complaint procedure page.

### **Further information**

[Complain to the LAA](#) – online form service

[Complaints procedure](#) – how the complaints process works

Published 3 October 2022