

Reappointment of 3 lay panel members of the Judicial Conduct and Investigations Office

News story

The Lord Chancellor has announced the reappointment of 3 lay panel members of the Judicial Conduct and Investigations Office for a third term of 9 months.



The Lord Chancellor, in consultation with the Lord Chief Justice, has announced the reappointment of 3 lay panel members of the Judicial Conduct and Investigations Office. The members are:

Paul Curtis; Jenni-Douglas Todd; Judith Webb MBE;

The reappointments will run from 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The Judicial Conduct and Investigations Office is an independent office which supports the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice in considering complaints about the personal conduct of judicial office-holders.

Appointments and reappointments are made by the Lord Chancellor and are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The reappointments have been made in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Biographies

Paul Curtis is Tribunal Chair of the Medical Practitioner Tribunal Service. He is a panel Lay Member at the General Optical Council. He is also Lay Chair at the School Admission Appeals Panel and Lay Chair Independent Review Panel (School Exclusions) at the East Sussex County Council

Jenni Douglas-Todd is a Director of Equality and Inclusion at NHS England, Southampton. She is currently Deputy Chairman and Senior Independent Director with University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust. Jenni is a former chief executive of Hampshire Police Authority and the Office of the Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner. She is Independent Chairman of the Dorset

Integrated Care System. Jenni is a member of the English Cricket Board's Regulatory Committee; Non-Executive Director with Hampshire Cricket Board and a Trustee with the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders.

Ms Judith Webb MBE is a board member of the Cairngorms National Park Authority and a member of the Independent Agricultural Appeals Panel. Her previous appointments include: Chair of Defra's Rural Development Service during its transition into Natural England; Deputy Chair of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee; and Commissioner for Forestry Commission in Wales.

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[UK legalises public documents electronically: 2 September 2022](#)

The UK Legalisation Office (part of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) will now be able to receive documents digitally and will issue electronic 'e-Apostille' certificates enabling a quicker, cheaper and more efficient service for thousands of people around the globe.

A [legalised document](#) is needed in many international transactions including overseas working visas and managing property. Currently customers send their physical documents to the UK Legalisation Office by post or courier and receive the documents back several days later with a paper certificate, known as an Apostille, attached.

The first UK e-Apostille was issued on 15 December 2021 as part of a pilot initiative. The option to apply for an e-Apostille will now be opened up to more customers.

Secure digital process

Applicants will be able to quickly upload digital documents instead of posting them. Documents must be signed using either an Advanced Electronic Signature, or a Qualified Electronic Signature, which offer high levels of validation.

The Apostille is issued as an attachment to a PDF, with the document/s the certificate relates to also attached. Both the overarching PDF and the Apostille attachment are digitally signed by the Legalisation Office to ensure integrity. The electronic signature/s of the public official/s within the customer's document/s are also preserved.

Customers will still have the option of a paper Apostille, and a small number

of documents (such as police record documents) will continue to require a paper-based Apostille for specific security reasons.

Chris Ward, Head of Public-facing Services, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, said:

This is an exciting development which will provide a much more efficient user experience.

A digital Apostille solution has been many years in the making, but this new system is capable of providing a fully digital service.

We want to continue to provide the best possible service to our customers and will develop the system further to meet a range of user needs.

Michael Lightowler, Notary Public and Member of the Notaries Society of England and Wales said:

The process is straightforward and efficient.

Obvious benefits are speed of turnaround and lack of need to use paper and post or couriers, all of which also reduces costs.

Record keeping is simpler, with my digital files saved directly to a folder once the e-Apostille is added, instead of a time consuming document scanning step.

The e-Apostille service offers benefits to international trade and commerce in terms of security and convenience. It will also help to reduce the environmental impact of circulating hard copy public documents around the world.

International acceptance

UK e-Apostilles have been accepted by authorities in Italy, the Netherlands, Panama and the Philippines.

Under an international agreement over 100 countries that are signed up to the [Apostille Convention](#) should equally accept e-Apostilles. Users are advised to check the requirements of the organisation or individual that has requested the Apostille before they apply.

Overseas authorities can view an e-Apostille using a PDF reader. They can check all UK Apostilles, including the new e-Apostilles, by entering a reference [online](#).

Fraudulent presidential election in Belarus: Joint statement to the OSCE

Mr Chair,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Albania, Iceland, Moldova, Norway, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and my own country Canada, who wish to add their voices to those marking the two-year anniversary of the deeply flawed and fraudulent presidential election in Belarus. The [Moscow Mechanism report in 2020](#) and UN Special Rapporteur's investigations have found compelling evidence of a campaign of severe repression across all parts of Belarusian society which took place before, during and after the August 2020 Presidential Election.

The 2020 Moscow Mechanism report described "overwhelming evidence that the presidential elections of 9 August 2020 have been falsified and that massive and systematic human rights violations have been committed by the Belarusian security forces in response to peaceful protests and demonstrations."

The report made 65 recommendations to the Belarusian authorities, including new Presidential elections, an immediate end to the violence and release of all those illegally detained, an independent oversight mechanism on detention conditions, and an investigation into all allegations of torture.

However, two years on, civil society has been decimated and independent media quashed. Belarusian people have faced arbitrary arrest and detention – with over 1,300 political prisoners now detained, steadily growing in number since 2020. There are credible reports that some detainees have been subjected to torture. The regime has pursued politically motivated, unfair trials, has extended the use of the death penalty to include 'attempted' acts of terrorism, has prevented Belarusians from leaving the country, has undertaken trials in absentia, and failed to meet international standards when conducting a constitutional referendum.

The Belarusian authorities have had ample opportunity to end their attacks on the freedoms of their citizens, to release those detained on spurious political charges, and to undertake the fresh elections needed to enable the Belarusian people to decide their own leaders and their own future. Recommendations and evidence of wrongdoing from the UN Special Rapporteur, from the OSCE Moscow Mechanism, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Commission of Inquiry have been consistently ignored by the regime.

Instead, two years on from the fraudulent elections, the regime now seeks to curtail the freedoms of the people of neighbouring Ukraine through facilitating Russia's illegal invasion of their country. This support to Russia's provided by the Lukashenko regime has served as an excuse to racket

up repression on those Belarusians standing up against the war.

We will continue to hold the Lukashenko regime to account for their human rights violations and continued support to Russia's illegal war. This includes through targeted sanctions packages and support for accountability measures. It is a false narrative that sanctions are provoking a global food crisis. It is, in fact, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine that impacts upon global food security. Firm action must be taken to deter the Lukashenko regime from their violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Belarusian people, and its reckless support of Russia's illegal invasion.

We continue to stand in solidarity with the Belarusian people, condemn the regime's continued human rights violations, and strongly urge the Belarusian authorities to release all political prisoners, immediately and unconditionally.

In conclusion, Mr Chair, we again urge decision-makers in Belarus to reconsider their current course of action, to cease their support of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, and to seek to proactively address the recommendations made in the Moscow Mechanism report.

We stand committed and ready to support the democratic rights of the Belarusian people – genuine and inclusive dialogue is the bedrock to democracy – and we invite Belarusian authorities to engage with the Belarusian people.

[Bella report published](#)

News story

Flooding and sinking of the survey workboat Bella in the approaches to Lynmouth, England.



Today, we have published our accident investigation report into the flooding and sinking of the modified small open boat Bella while carrying out

hydrographic survey operations on 6 July 2021.

The report contains details of what happened, subsequent actions taken and recommendations: [read more](#).

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Regulators urge safe giving to support Pakistan flood relief

The Charity Commission and Fundraising Regulator have urged the public to 'give safely' to registered charities as people make generous donations to causes helping to support people affected by the floods in Pakistan.

This follows the launch of the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Pakistan Floods Appeal. The DEC brings together 15 leading UK aid charities to raise funds quickly and efficiently at times of crisis.

The Appeal, launched by the DEC on 1 September 2022, aims to help millions across Pakistan who are in need of immediate help to survive after devastating floods hit the country.

Many registered charities are also helping to provide vital life-saving services, like water, food and healthcare, to those affected by the floods.

By supporting registered charities, including through the DEC, the public can be assured that their donations will be regulated in line with the charity law framework.

Established charities with experience of responding to disasters are usually best placed to reach people on the ground. Giving financial aid through humanitarian aid organisations, rather than sending donated goods directly to regions, is also often more practical and sustainable.

Helen Stephenson, Chief Executive of the Charity Commission said:

We've all watched in horror as the crisis has unfolded in Pakistan and we know that many people in the UK will want to help the international aid effort. We encourage everyone to follow our simple steps to check that their money gets to its intended cause. Donating to a registered charity is a good way to feel confident of that.

Gerald Oppenheim, Chief Executive of the Fundraising Regulator said:

The ongoing crisis in Pakistan is devastating. Naturally, the goodwill of the British public means many will be eager to support those affected where they can. Before donating goods or money, it is important that people carry out our recommended checks to make sure they are giving to a legitimate cause and that their donations are used for the purpose they were fundraised for.

While most fundraising is genuine, the Charity Commission and Fundraising Regulator warn that fraudsters and criminals sometimes take advantage of public generosity at times of increased giving. This includes using various methods such as fake appeal websites, email appeals that falsely use the name of genuine charities, or appeals from groups claiming to be charities.

They therefore encourage people to ensure they support genuine relief efforts by following a few simple steps before giving:

- check the charity's name and registration number on the Charity Register at gov.uk/checkcharity – most charities with an annual income of £5,000 or more must be registered.
- make sure the charity is genuine before giving any financial information.
- be careful when responding to emails or clicking on links within them.
- look out for the [Fundraising Badge](#) – the logo that says 'registered with Fundraising Regulator' – and check the Fundraising Regulator's [Directory](#) of organisations which have committed to fundraise in line with the Code of Fundraising Practice.

There are over 1900 charities on the Charity Commission's charity register that list Pakistan as an area they work in overseas.

After making these checks:

- If you think that a collection or appeal is not legitimate, report it to the police. If you think the collection is fraudulent report it to Action Fraud over the phone at 0300 123 2040 or online.
- If you think a collector does not have a licence – report it to the relevant Local Authority Licensing Team or the Metropolitan Police (if in Greater London). Also let the charity know if you can.

You can also [complain about a charity to the Charity Commission if you have concerns about its governance and the Fundraising Regulator](#) if you have concerns about its fundraising.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Press office

1. Further tips on [giving safely to registered charities](#) are available on GOV.UK
2. The [Charity Commission](#) is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.
3. The [Fundraising Regulator](#) is the independent regulator of charitable fundraising in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Further [guidance on giving safely to charity](#) is available on the Fundraising Regulator's website. It can be reached on FR@pagefield.co.uk