

News story: Apply to the Attorney General's Civil Counsel: Regional panel

Applications are invited from advocates interested in joining the Regional panel to undertake civil and EU work for government departments.

The Attorney General is establishing three separate panels in the Regions:

- A panel for senior juniors
- B panel for middle juniors
- C panel for junior juniors

Members of the Regional panel will be expected to have at least 2 years' experience in actual practice by 30 November 2017 (starting from end of second 6 months' pupillage for barristers or end of training contract for solicitors).

Appointments will be for 5 years. Those appointed to the Regional C panel will often provide (but not exclusively) the Regional A and B panel members of the future and so should have the potential to join the A panel.

There are vacancies on the panel in all areas of public and private law. The Attorney General is particularly looking to deepen capacity in:

- admiralty/shipping
- aviation
- road and rail
- benefits
- social security & right to reside
- construction
- contract/commercial

- corporate
- costs
- education
- data protection
- directors' disqualification
- energy/utilities
- general tax work – direct and indirect
- human rights

Application

To obtain details about the eligibility requirements and the application process, we recommend reading our [Regional Panel Information Sheet](#) (PDF, 79.9KB, 9 pages) .

To apply, you must first email PanelCounsel@governmentlegal.gov.uk to register an interest. Please note that registering an interest does not commit you to making an application if you later decide not to do so.

Once you have registered, you will be given a link to access our online portal and download the application pack.

Completed applications must be submitted by midday on Thursday 30 November 2017.

Further information and mentoring

If you have any queries, contact the Government Legal Department Panel Counsel team via email panelcounsel@governmentlegal.gov.uk or on 020 7210 1506.

We encourage applications from a wide range of those eligible to apply. Therefore we will put advocates who want to discuss the application process for the C Panel in touch with an established Panel member as a mentor. The mentor will discuss the application process, the eligibility criteria and the presentation of relevant information on the application form either by telephone or in person.

If you are considering applying and want a mentor, please contact the

[News story: Track worker near miss, Egmonton](#)

Around 11:22 hrs on 5 October 2017, a group of track workers narrowly avoided being struck by train reporting number 1D09, the 10:03 hrs passenger train service from London Kings Cross to Leeds. The incident took place close to Egmonton level crossing, which is situated between Newark North Gate and Retford on the East Coast Main Line.

The train was approaching the crossing on the down main line at near to the maximum permitted line speed of 125 mph (200 km/h), when the driver saw a group of track workers in the distance. The driver sounded the train's warning horn, but could see no response from the group. The driver sounded the horn again a few seconds later. He could still see no response, so he initiated an emergency brake application, while continuing to sound the horn.

As the train approached, the group of track workers became aware of the train's warning horn and started to move into the cess. However, the last member of the group got clear of the track very shortly before the train passed them. The train was still travelling close to 125 mph (200 km/h) as it passed the point where the group had been working. It subsequently came to a stand around 0.9 miles (1.4 km) after the emergency brake application was made.

There were no injuries. However, the driver, who believed that the train had struck members of the group, was distressed by the incident.

Our investigation will determine the sequence of events. It will also include consideration of:

- how the system of work the team was using was planned and authorised, including the availability of protection and warning systems
- the way in which the system of work the team were using was implemented on site, including how this may have been affected by the layout of the track, the proximity of the crossing and the work being undertaken
- the competence management of those involved in the planning, authorisation and implementation of the system of work
- the non-technical skills of the site team and any issues associated with workload and fatigue
- any relevant underlying cultural or management factors

Our investigation is independent of any investigation by the railway industry, the [British Transport Police](#) or by the industry's regulator, the

[Office of Rail and Road](#).

We will publish our findings, including any recommendations to improve safety, at the conclusion of our investigation. This report will be available on our website.

You can [subscribe](#) to automated emails notifying you when we publish our reports.

[News story: Those suffering from problem debt to get vital 'Breathing Space'](#)

The government is [seeking views](#) as it develops a way to provide individuals in debt with up to six weeks free from further interest, charges and enforcement action. This period would give those affected time to take action by seeking financial advice about how to manage and relieve their debt burden.

Debt advice is key in helping people access a range of solutions, including informal repayment plans and debt write-off options, in order to help people get back on their feet.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Stephen Barclay, said:

For many people in the UK problem debt seems impossible to escape. Its effects can be far-reaching, impacting all aspects of a person's life and leaving them feeling helpless.

That is why we are working to give people who are overwhelmed by debt more time to seek advice, find a workable solution, and help get their lives back on track.

Although many people can and do use credit successfully to manage their personal finances, for the minority who get into difficulties this government wants to offer more support.

The new scheme could include legal protections that would shield individuals from further creditor action once a plan to repay their debts is in place.

Problem debt, where people are falling behind on their financial repayments or see their debt as a heavy burden, affects millions of people in the UK. Causes can range from the sudden loss of employment to a more gradual dependence on debt to make ends meet, with many people waiting 12 months or

more before seeking help.

A six weeks' grace period, where those suffering are safe from enforcement action and interest charges, could help give people the time and opportunity to seek debt advice.

The government is committed to getting this right and over the next twelve weeks will be meeting with key industry representatives from charities, debt advice organisations, lenders and creditors. Members of the wider public who wish to contribute, particularly those affected by this issue, are encouraged to [share their views](#).

[Speech: PM's speech at emergency services reception](#)

Good evening everybody and it is a great pleasure to welcome you all to Downing Street today.

I host a number of these receptions, and when I host events here it is normally to celebrate an anniversary or to recognise the success of a good cause.

And of course today is different. Because the events that have brought us together are some of the most tragic our country has had to face in recent times.

Four dreadful acts of terrorism and a catastrophic fire, which all occurred over a 3 month period this year; they united, I think, the whole country in both shock and in grief.

Just to recap, on 22 March, the Westminster Bridge attack killed 5 innocent people, including PC Keith Palmer, and injured 49.

On that day, Metropolitan Police officers responded immediately to neutralise the terrorist and the London Fire Brigade rescued a person from the River Thames.

On 22 May, in the attack at the Manchester Arena, 22 people were killed and at least 250 were injured.

Officers from the British Transport Police and Greater Manchester Police and the North West Ambulance Service were on the scene within minutes, entering the arena without hesitation to help survivors.

On 3 June, on London Bridge and at Borough Market, eight people were killed and nearly 50 were injured. Armed police arrived and shot the attackers dead within just 8 minutes of being called.

Officers from the British Transport Police, the Metropolitan Police and the City of London Police worked together at the scene administering first aid and comforting the injured, evacuating the area, and gathering evidence.

On 14 June, at the Lancaster West Estate in Kensington, the devastating Grenfell Tower fire killed whole families – adults and children – and made hundreds of people homeless.

The first fire crews were on site in less than 6 minutes. Over 200 firefighters and officers attended, working in extremely difficult conditions to bring the fire under control and rescue scores of people.

Officers from the Metropolitan Police secured the scene, while the London Ambulance Service treated the victims.

And then in the early hours of 19 June, a man was killed and ten people were injured in a cowardly attack outside Finsbury Park mosque.

The alleged attacker was detained by members of the public until police officers, including an armed officer, arrived at the scene, again within just a few minutes.

Firefighters and the Ambulance Service supported the police and treated casualties.

What linked all these terrible events was not simply the loss of life and the suffering inflicted, but also the inspiring responses of the people in this room today – our emergency services.

You see the worst of us, but represent the best of us.

You are the ones who run towards devastation, while others run as fast as they can the other way.

And every day you go to work knowing you could be called on to face things which most of us would never want to confront.

On each of those five days this year, and again at times like the Parson's Green bombing, that's exactly what you had to do.

To bear witness to horrific and heart-breaking scenes.

To do your jobs, in the most difficult of circumstances, with professionalism and courage.

And to risk your own lives to protect others and to serve your country.

And then, when your shift was over, to go back home to your families, to try to put what you've experienced into perspective, and to get on with your lives.

I have to say I know from my experience, and also as Home Secretary, one of the most inspiring things when I meet members of the emergency services, both

in general, but particularly those who have been responding to incidents like this, is the way everybody says they 'were just doing their job'. But as I say that is a job that most people wouldn't want to do and it is a job that matters and is so important to all of us.

And I know that doing that and then returning to, if you like, normality, with your families and life generally can be enormously difficult.

And you will of course be supported and sustained by the camaraderie and mutual support of your colleagues. By the love and affection of your families and friends.

And by your own sense of duty and public service.

But the country you have served has a responsibility to support you and your families too and the government takes that responsibility seriously.

We have a responsibility to ensure that you have access to the right occupational health services, with proper mental health support.

And we announced over the summer that we are making available a further £1.5 million to support the delivery of Mind's Blue Light Programme, which provides mental health support for all emergency service staff and volunteers.

And we are also supporting Chris Bryant's private members' Bill, which will double the maximum sentence for common assault from six months to a year if committed against an emergency worker while they are on duty. Now it is my privilege to host you here today; to be able to invite you here to Downing Street. And I want to thank you, on behalf of the whole county, for your bravery, for your professionalism and for your dedication.

At all times, you command the respect and admiration of the British people.

And you represent the values and qualities which we all look up to.

You are truly an example to us all.

Thank you for being here today, thank you for everything that you did in relation to these incidents, and for some of you are continuing to do in relation to these incidents.

Thank you for what you do every day when you go to work.

Thank you for being here and enjoy the rest of the evening.

News story: Exercise Cambrian Patrol testing the best from around the world

Taking place over some of the harshest yet most picturesque terrain in Mid Wales, Exercise Cambrian Patrol is a unique event and the largest of its kind anywhere in the world. It is rightly regarded as the premier patrolling exercise in NATO.

It is mentally and physically demanding and examines all the basic skills of a modern-day soldier, enhancing leadership skills and levels of endurance and determination. On average only five per cent of patrols gain the top Gold award while about a third fail to finish.

Defence Minister Mark Lancaster said:

Exercise Cambrian Patrol is the premier examination of patrolling abilities in NATO. It is arduous and testing and regarded as the proving ground for Armed Forces from all around the world.

With so many allies coming together, this is a further opportunity to strengthen bonds and comradeship, paving the way for a safer future for us all.

Brigadier Alan Richmond OBE, Commander 160th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters and head of the Army in Wales, is the Exercise Director.

He said:

Exercise Cambrian Patrol is becoming more popular every year and this year we've had more international patrols take part than ever before.

That means people really understand the value of this as an exercise. It's also a great opportunity for us in the British Army to work alongside a lot of our international partners and develop our solid relationships. This year has been a great success.

First Lieutenant Pavel Popovici of the Moldovian Army was one of the first time patrol commanders.

1st Lieutenant Pavel Popovici of the Moldovian Army. Crown copyright

He said:

We are representing our country for the first time and it is important to do well. We have had a lot of help from our friends

2nd Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment, and we are very thankful for it.

Major Steve Keir, Officer Commanding Exercise Cambrian Patrol, said the event had achieved all of its objectives in testing the basic military skills of soldiers over the harshest terrain in Wales.

He said:

This year was especially testing in that we had three serious weather fronts to deal with – two named (Hurricane Ophelia and Storm Brian) and one unnamed. That means the dynamic of the exercise changed completely and we had more patrols fail to complete than ever before.

Additionally, those who dug in with real grit and determination and who upped their game gained higher awards than normal. Our normal Gold medal award allocations increased by about 50 per cent to nine awards and the number of Silvers were also up significantly with 33 being awarded.

The feedback from those who had completed the exercise before was that this year was definitely much tougher due to the inclement weather thrown in.

Cambrian Patrol 2017 is the biggest so far – 126 patrols took part. We've also had a number of countries ask us how they could replicate a similar exercise in their own countries.

To us, that's a good statement because it means they see this as world class.