



News Release

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OFFICE FOR JUDICIAL COMPLAINTS PUBLISHES 2007 – 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

The body responsible for investigating complaints about the conduct of the judiciary in England and Wales has published its annual report for the period April 2007 - March 2008.

The Office for Judicial Complaints (OJC) was set up in April 2006, to consider and investigate complaints against judicial office holders. They report to the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice jointly, under the arrangement established by the Constitutional Reform Act 2005.

Over the period April 2007-March 2008, the OJC received 1, 437 separate complaints against judicial office holders. 61% of which related to judicial decisions, which are outside the scope of the OJC – its brief is to consider complaints against judicial conduct. Disciplinary action was taken in 49 cases, following a thorough investigation.

Writing in the annual report, the Head of the OJC, Dale Simon, said:

“We are committed to delivering an efficient, effective and high quality service to our customers, so over the last year we have continued to build on the foundations laid in our first year.

“We have refined our systems and developed our staff while also making it easier for the public to contact us by developing a website based complaint procedure.

The aim of the OJC is to ensure that all judicial disciplinary issues are dealt with consistently, fairly and effectively.

Out of the 49 judicial office holders subject to disciplinary action 1 was from the Mainstream Judiciary, none were coroners, 4 were Tribunals Judiciary and 44 were magistrates. This represents less than 0.5% of the 42, 000 judicial office holders.

21 of the 49 judicial office holders subject to disciplinary action were disciplined for not fulfilling their judicial duty. 12 were disciplined for inappropriate behaviour or comments, 7 for motoring offences, and 3 each for discrimination, criminal convictions and misuse of judicial status.



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The system also provides for review bodies that are able to provide the judicial office holders with an impartial review of any disciplinary decision taken. The Judicial Appointments and Conduct Ombudsman hears any complaints against the OJC itself, over its handling of misconduct complaints.

The full report can be found online at <http://www.judicialcomplaints.gov.uk/>.

Notes for Editors

Media queries in relation to the annual report and the OJC generally should be made in the first instance to the Judicial Communications Office – telephone 020 7073 4852 or via e-mail – press.enquiries@judiciary.gsi.gov.uk.

For more information about the Office, including details on how to make a complaint against a judicial office holder, you can visit the OJC website at: <http://www.judicialcomplaints.gov.uk/>

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