



STATEMENT

OJC 04/09

April 2009

STATEMENT FROM THE OFFICE FOR JUDICIAL COMPLAINTS

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District Judge Margaret Short

A spokesperson for the Office for Judicial Complaints said:

“Margaret Short, a District Judge who was appointed to the South East District Bench on 6 January 1993, has been removed from judicial office. Her removal follows a history of complaints about her misconduct in court, primarily about the way in which she behaved towards solicitors appearing before her, but including a variety of other inappropriate behaviour.

“The final decision to remove her followed a judicial investigation started in 2006. This investigation looked at various complaints and found that her behaviour had been inappropriate, petulant and rude with regard to one incident, and intemperate and ill-judged with regard to another. The investigation also identified the following criticisms of District Judge Short’s conduct:

- taking annual leave when she was asked specifically not to;
- failing on request to hand over court documents central to the investigation combined with a refusal to co-operate with it, thereby contributing significantly to the time the disciplinary process has taken; and
- failing to deal with the substantive issues or to exercise sound judgement when responding to the complaints. This included making serious allegations against support staff which were not only untrue but which it was found she knew to be untrue.

“On this basis, and against a history of earlier complaints, the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice have decided to remove District Judge Short from office under section 11 (5) of the County Courts Act 1984.”

Notes for Editors

This investigation was initiated under the old disciplinary proceedings prior to the creation of the Office for Judicial Complaints.

Media queries in relation to the OJC 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.



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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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