

WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

Office for Judicial Complaints – Annual Report 2008 – 2009

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice

With the concurrence of the Lord Chief Justice, I have today published the Annual Report of the Office for Judicial Complaints (OJC). The OJC provides support to the Lord Chief Justice and myself in our joint responsibility for the system of judicial complaints and discipline.

I welcome the publication of this report, the third produced by the OJC, which details the work undertaken by the OJC in the past year, and the complaints with which it has dealt.

The OJC's 2006 – 2007 report marked the first occasion on which comprehensive details of complaints received about Judicial Office Holders had been made available to the public. I am pleased to note that the OJC continues to build on this foundation and believe that this report highlights the continued progress made by the OJC in delivering a high quality, effective and transparent service to all of its complainants.

The Lord Chief Justice and I are keen to ensure that the disciplinary process for judicial office holders is both transparent and accountable. As we announced in April 2009, we have agreed that, where a judicial office holder has been removed from office following disciplinary procedures, there should now be a presumption that both the identity of that judicial office holder, and the reason for their removal, should be made public. Whilst mindful of this presumption, we will nonetheless continue to make decisions about disclosure on a case-by-case basis.

Where a judicial office holder has been subject to a lesser sanction than removal, this presumption does not apply, however, we will continue to give consideration to the disclosure of relevant information in cases that have attracted a high degree of interest from the public and media.

Copies of the report are available in the libraries of both Houses, the Vote Office and the Printed Paper Office. Copies of the Report are also available on the Internet at <http://www.judicialcomplaints.gov.uk/publications/publications.htm>.