



Ministry of JUSTICE

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Christine Darrah
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5 March 2012

Dear Mrs. Darrah,

REVIEW OF JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Thank you very much for your letter of 3 February seeking my views.

The changes introduced in 2009 had the effect of transferring some appointment processes to the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission. They also removed the previous position whereby the Lord Chancellor could ask the NIJAC to review its choice and clarified that The Queen's power to appoint a person to a listed judicial office is exercisable on the recommendation of the Lord Chancellor.

I have no specific comments to make on these changes that have been in operation for a relatively short time but I would like to draw the Committee's attention to my recent consultation paper on judicial appointments and diversity and the key principles it contains. Our proposals covered all fee-paid and salaried judicial office holders in the Courts and Tribunals of England and Wales, together with the UK Supreme Court. Of particular interest to you will be our proposals in respect of the Prime Minister where we are suggesting that we remove his role and proposals that extend part time working to the High Court and above and limiting the period of fee paid service to a maximum of three terms of five years.

Our consultation closed on 13 February. We will issue our formal response in April on the consultation proposals and the findings of the Lords Constitution Committee inquiry into judicial appointments process which we expect to appear in March.

I will ensure that our response is copied to you as soon as it is available and I look forward to seeing your report in due course.

KENNETH CLARKE QC MP