



House of Commons  
Justice Committee

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**Appointment of the  
Chair of the Office for  
Legal Complaints:  
Government Response  
to the Committee's  
Seventh Report of  
Session 2007–08**

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**Third Special Report of Session  
2008–09**

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## The Justice Committee

The Justice Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Ministry of Justice and its associated public bodies (including the work of staff provided for the administrative work of courts and tribunals, but excluding consideration of individual cases and appointments, and excluding the work of the Scotland and Wales Offices and of the Advocate General for Scotland); and administration and expenditure of the Attorney General's Office, the Treasury Solicitor's Department, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Serious Fraud Office (but excluding individual cases and appointments and advice given within government by Law Officers).

### Current membership

Rt Hon Sir Alan Beith MP (*Liberal Democrat, Berwick-upon-Tweed*) (Chairman)  
David Heath MP (*Liberal Democrat, Somerton and Frome*)  
Siân James MP (*Labour, Swansea East*)  
Daniel Kawczynski MP (*Conservative, Shrewsbury and Atcham*)  
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Andrew Tyrie MP (*Conservative, Chichester*)  
Dr Alan Whitehead MP (*Labour, Southampton Test*)

### Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the Internet via [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)

### Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House.

All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the internet at [www.parliament.uk/justicecom](http://www.parliament.uk/justicecom)

### Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Fergus Reid (Clerk), Dr Rebecca Davies (Second Clerk), Ruth Friskney (Adviser (Sentencing Guidelines)), Hannah Stewart (Committee Legal Specialist), Ian Thomson (Group Manager/Senior Committee Assistant), Sonia Draper (Committee Assistant), Henry Ayi-Hyde (Committee Support Assistant), Gemma Buckland (Public Policy Specialist, Scrutiny Unit) and Jessica Bridges-Palmer (Committee Media Officer).

### Contacts

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## Third Special Report

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The Justice Committee published its Seventh Report of Session 2007–08 on the Appointment of the Chair of the Office for Legal Complaints on Friday 31 October 2008, as HC 1122. The Government response was received on 17 November 2008 in the form of a letter from Bridget Prentice MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice, to the Chairman of the Committee which is appended below.

### Appendix: Government response

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I would like to thank the Justice Committee for its report published on 31 October regarding the appointment of the Chair of the Office for Legal Complaints (OLC).

As the Minister in charge of the legal services reform agenda, I read the report with great interest. As you are aware, appointing the Chair of the OLC was the first pre-appointment hearing for both the Ministry of Justice and the Committee and I am delighted to learn of the support and endorsement contained in the report of the chosen candidate, Elizabeth France, CBE.

The questions posed by the Committee on a number of key issues relevant to the appointment have firmly cemented Ms France's suitability as Chair of the OLC and I note that the Committee is entirely satisfied that she meets the criteria necessary for the role. This approval of the appointment is a significant milestone for the scheduled implementation of the Legal Services Act 2007 and begins the building of a new organisation that will inspire public confidence.

The Chair of the OLC will play a significant role in protecting the public's rights and I thank the Committee again for its consideration of this significant appointment.

*Bridget Prentice MP*  
*17 November 2008*