



**Law
Commission**
Reforming the law

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Dear Professor Harrington,

RECRUITMENT OF TWO LAW COMMISSIONERS

We are writing to draw to your attention a campaign that went live this week to recruit two new Law Commissioners for England and Wales – one to lead on Commercial and Common Law, and one on Property, Family and Trust Law. Full information is set out in the job advert which can be found here: [Role details – Law Commission x 2 Commissioners – Apply for a public appointment – GOV.UK \(apply-for-public-appointment.service.gov.uk\)](#)

We wanted to draw it to the specific attention of the members of the Socio-Legal Studies Association, to encourage applications for the post from those who may be interested.

We would also like to take this opportunity to explain a little further, to assist in terms of who we are looking for. We would be extremely grateful for your help in ensuring that the recruitment campaign for these roles is flagged to senior academics in your Association.

The work of the Commission

As you know, the Law Commission is an independent statutory body set up by the Law Commissions Act 1965. In order to fulfil our statutory task to keep under review all of the law in England and Wales with a view to its systematic development and reform, we need Commissioners of the necessary calibre. Every few years we draw up a programme of law reform and agree this with Government. In addition, we take on projects referred to us by Government which address some of the biggest and most complex issues of the day. At present we are working on around 25 different projects, across Criminal Law, Commercial and Common Law, Property, Family and Trust Law, and Public Law and the Law in Wales. These include Digital Assets: Which Court, Which Law?; Business Tenancies; Contempt of Court; and Disabled Children's Social Care.

The Law Commission is known for its vigorous objectivity and independence, coupled to the thoroughness and intellectual rigour that we bring to each project. This is essential in that it enables our work to be trusted by Government and Parliamentarians as well as by all those whose lives or businesses might be affected by legislation we propose. We are sometimes seen as the best way in which a workable solution to a difficult social or commercial problem might be found.

The work of a Commissioner

There are four Commissioners and a judicial Chair, working full-time at the Commission. Law Commissioners are instrumental in leading law reform in England and Wales. Each Commissioner is appointed for a five-year term, but this may be subject to re-appointment for a further five-year term. Given the centrality of the role of a Law Commissioner to legal reform, our two new appointments can be expected to play an important and influential part in the evolution of the law in England and Wales.

The role of a Law Commissioner is challenging and multi-faceted. At its core is developing law reform proposals – delivering the highest quality legal research, engaging directly and regularly with interested stakeholders, and producing consultation papers, reports and draft Bills on a wide range of topics. There is also a significant amount of external engagement – discussing proposals with Ministers, Parliamentarians and the senior judiciary across England and Wales, and playing an active role in legislation going through Parliament and the Senedd. Commissioners lead on engaging with the public, other stakeholders and the media at seminars, conferences and one-to-one meetings.

Law Commissioners also need to be good with people. Each Commissioner works closely with lawyers and research assistants, who do the day-to-day legal and policy work on law reform projects. Commissioners are therefore closely involved in leading a body of exceptionally bright and talented lawyers and researchers. The atmosphere within the Commission is supportive and collegiate.

Who are we looking for?

Commissioners have exceptional intellectual ability and a strong sense of integrity. They bring significant experience and expertise, but are also intellectually curious, willing to consider and debate alternative views, and enthusiastic about turning their abilities to new legal and policy issues. We do not expect applicants to have existing experience in law reform; rather, we welcome an enthusiasm for considering new solutions to legal and policy problems based on evidence, consultation and rigorous debate.

If there are any potential candidates who would like more information in advance of applying, they are very welcome to speak either to us, the Chair, or one of the existing Commissioners.

Yours sincerely,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'R. Patel' and the second signature on the right is 'Joanna Otterburn'.

Roshnee Patel & Joanna Otterburn