



Controversial CPS boss Alison Saunders will leave with £1.8m pension and go to 'magic circle' private firm Linklaters as a partner 'on a seven figure salary'

- Alison Saunders will stand down as Director of Public Prosecutions in October
- She had been under scrutiny over scandals including the collapse of rape trials
- QC will enjoy £1.8million taxpayer-funded pension pot despite 'disastrous' reign
- Statistics show every category of victim-based crime has increased since 2014
- She's already secured a top job at 'Magic Circle' international law firm Linklaters
- CPS boss said it was her decision to step down and a five-year term was normal

The five-year tenure of Britain's top prosecutor has been branded 'disastrous' by critics as she prepares to leave her role for 'a seven-figure salary' as a partner of an international law firm.

Alison Saunders will enjoy a £1.8million taxpayer-funded pension when she is replaced as Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) later this year, after it was revealed she will not be reappointed for a second term in office.

Under her leadership, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has come under extreme scrutiny over a raft of scandals, including the collapse of several high-profile rape trials.

But despite facing criticism for 'not being up to the job', the QC, who has been with the CPS since 1986, has secured a top role at 'Magic Circle' law firm Linklaters, starting in the autumn.

She is expected to earn a salary in excess of seven figures, with the average pay of equity partners at Linklaters surpassing £1.5million last year.

Michael Bennett, Linklaters' global head of dispute resolution at Linklaters, told MailOnline that 'Alison's credentials speak for themselves'.

'She will be a fantastic asset to the team, and to our clients,' he added. 'She is an excellent fit for Linklaters' dispute resolution ambitions.

'She has a wealth of prosecution experience and is accustomed to dealing with regulators and counterparts at the highest level globally.'



The five-year tenure of Alison Saunders (pictured) as Director of Public Prosecution has been branded 'disastrous' by critics

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Mr Bennett added that Mrs Saunders would join Linklaters' business crime team and would be based in London.

Mrs Saunders told Radio 4's Today programme that it was her decision to stand down from the £250,000-a-year role and that 'five years was a good term to serve'.

Yesterday she denied claims the organisation had failed under her watch – insisting her prosecutors were performing as well or better than ever before despite budget cuts. She called criticism 'insulting'.

An ally of Mrs Saunders praised her for doing well within a limited budget and said she had done a 'pretty reasonable job'.



Under Mrs Saunders leadership, the Crown Prosecution Service has come under extreme scrutiny over a raft of scandals, including the collapse of several high-profile rape trials

Meanwhile, the latest figures show that every category of victim-based crime has increased on her watch, with all crime going up by a third since 2014.

Most shockingly, sexual offences rose by 89 per cent from the year ending September 2014 to the year ending September 2017.

The streets of London are now more deadly than New York, with the capital recording a higher murder rate for the first time in modern history in February.

So far this year, the Metropolitan Police has launched 47 murder investigations - eight in January, 15 in February, 22 in March and two in April.

In January, the BBC reported that the number of prosecutions in England and Wales that had collapsed due to a failure by police or prosecutors to disclose evidence had jumped 70 per cent, from 537 in 2014/15 to 917 in 2016/17.

Last month Mrs Saunders facing criticism after a father was acquitted of female genital mutilation charges - the third time prosecutors have brought an FGM case to trial but failed to secure a conviction.

Other controversial, and failed, prosecutions include VIP child-abuse charges and cases against journalists.



The case against Liam Allan (pictured), who was accused of rape, was dropped days before he was due to stand trial after evidence including his accuser's diary was uncovered

Mrs Saunders' most recently faced criticism following the collapse of rape trials.

In December, the case against Liam Allan, 22, was thrown out after it emerged police had failed to hand over text messages from a woman that proved he was innocent.

In January, Oxford student Oliver Mears, 19, was cleared of rape after spending two years on bail, with police facing fierce criticism for a delay in handing over evidence.

Radio host Paul Gambaccini, who was arrested in 2013 for baseless accusations of historical sex offences, celebrated her departure with glee, describing her as a 'zealot' and a 'true nemesis' in an email to the Daily Telegraph.

Among the most tragic stories that emerged during her tenure was that of 17-year-old Jay Cheshire, 17

He killed himself after being accused of rape only for the complaint to be withdrawn two weeks later.

Jay's mother Karin, suffering from depression after his death, then hanged herself a year later on the anniversary of her son's passing.

The collapse of these cases, including several others, led to an 'urgent' review of every rape and sexual assault case in England and Wales.

Collapsing trials and suicide: The blunders on her watch

THE DISCLOSURE CRISIS

In 2014 Mrs Saunders promised to halt the decline in rape convictions.

But four years on, all rape and serious sex assault cases are under review following the collapse of several high-profile prosecutions due to disclosure blunders.

In the lead-up to criminal trials, police and prosecutors have a duty to disclose evidence that might either assist the defence case or undermine the prosecution's case. But in a series of recent cases, evidence has not been handed over.

The crisis unfolded after the rape trial of criminology student Liam Allan, 22, was halted by a judge when it emerged his accuser had sent messages to friends about her rape fantasies. The number of prosecutions that have collapsed due to disclosure errors has soared by 70 per cent in the past two years.

Yet Miss Saunders has insisted there is no one innocent in jail after being wrongly convicted because of mistakes in disclosure.

THE RAPE CLAIM SUICIDE

Eleanor de Freitas, 23, was devastated when the man she accused of sexual assault launched a prosecution against her for allegedly lying.

Terrified at the prospect of intimate details of her personal life being picked over in court, the vulnerable graduate killed herself at her family home in Fulham, West London, in April 2014 – just three days before she was due to face a crown court.

Miss de Freitas had accused wealthy Chelsea financier Alexander Economou, 35, of raping her just before Christmas 2012, but detectives decided not to proceed with the case. Mr Economou then brought a private prosecution against her for perverting justice.

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

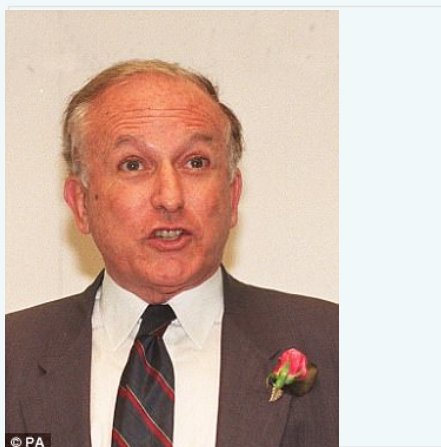
In 2014, the DPP declared FGM a priority saying: 'We are very keen to make sure that wherever possible we are looking at FGM cases.'

But last month prosecutors failed for the third time to secure Britain's first conviction for the offence as a lawyer was cleared at the Old Bailey of ordering his daughter be cut as punishment.

LORD JANNER

Mrs Saunders was forced to apologise after her decision not to prosecute Lord Janner was overturned.

A report by High Court judge Sir Richard Henriques later found police and prosecutors missed three chances to charge Lord Janner over historic sex abuse claims after allegations first surfaced in 1991. In April 2015 the CPS announced that the peer should not be charged as he was suffering from dementia, but this was overturned by a review two months later. A judge then ruled that he was unfit to stand trial and instead ordered a 'trial of the facts' to be heard at the Old Bailey. These proceedings were dropped when he died in December 2015.



Mrs Saunders was forced to apologise after her decision not to prosecute Lord Janner was overturned

Mrs Saunders has said it was 'a matter of sincere regret' the allegations were never heard by a jury.

OPERATION ELVEDEN

The £20million probe dubbed the 'biggest witch-hunt against journalists in memory' ended in failure as prosecutors failed to secure a single conviction in the largest investigation in criminal history.

Operation Elveden saw 34 journalists and editors arrested over alleged payments to public officials and 29 were charged.

But their cases were either dropped or they were cleared. Some of those accused had spent years on bail. Press Gazette editor Dominic Ponsford said that it was 'a shameful episode in the history of this country's criminal justice system'. But Mrs Saunders hit back saying: 'I'm not here to make popular decisions.'



Scotland Yard commissioner Cressida Dick said officers must investigate rather than blindly believe allegations and should keep an open mind when an alleged victim has come forward

The review further led to accusations Mrs Saunders was 'more interested in convictions than she was in people being tried fairly'.

She has been repeatedly criticised for treating those accused of rape as guilty until proven innocent, a trend that was dramatically reversed by Met Police chief Cressida Dick yesterday.

Commissioner Dick said officers must investigate rather than blindly believe allegations, and should keep an open mind when an alleged victim has come forward.

Some ministers have been less than complimentary of her tenure, with Bob Neill, chairman of the justice select committee, suggesting there were 'serious concerns' about the CPS's priorities under Mrs Saunders.

He added: 'It is not a great surprise that she is not continuing, certainly not following the problems around disclosure of evidence.'

'Perhaps it is time to have someone who is independent of the organisation and who can challenge it, someone who has presented cases in court at a really senior level and has seen how it operates at the sharp end.'



Alison Saunders will stand down as Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) in October after the Government declined to extend her contract

Conservative MP Anna Soubry went one step further and said she feared that the DPP was herself 'part of the problem'.

In June 2015, she faced calls to resign when her decision not to prosecute Labour peer Lord Janner over claims of historical child sex abuse was overturned by an independent QC.

The Crown Prosecution Service had said there had been enough evidence to merit a trial but it was not in the public interest to proceed because of his dementia.

The ruling was reversed, making Mrs Saunders the first DPP to have a major prosecuting decision reviewed and overthrown.

Lord Janner's son Daniel Janner, himself a QC, led condemnation of Mrs Saunders.

He said: 'She has been an appalling DPP. The CPS under her has fallen into disrepute as the latest collapses over disclosure has established.'

Mrs Saunders succeeded Sir Keir Starmer – now Labour's Brexit spokesman – in 2013, becoming the first DPP appointed from within the CPS.

Heartbroken mother whose son, 17, took his own life over accusations of rape went on to hang herself

A mother whose teenage son took his own life over rape allegations hanged herself a year later on the first anniversary of his death.

Karin Cheshire, 55, was so devastated by the death of her son Jay, 17, in July 2015 she kept his room the same and slept in his bed.

In the months following his death, Ms Cheshire, a mother of two, suffered a mental breakdown and was later diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

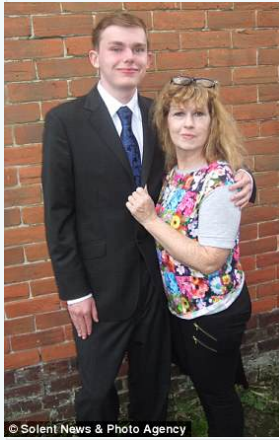
Her condition deteriorated to the point where she was detained under the Mental Health Act.

After her release she racked up huge financial debts. By the time she took her own life she also faced having to move out of the family home.

Concluding a verdict of suicide, coroner Grahame Short said the potential move was a 'major factor' in the timing of her decision to take her own life.

An inquest into his death heard how he had been left 'absolutely distraught' by rape allegations made against him. The accusations were withdrawn after he was interviewed by police.

Speaking outside court, Ms Cheshire's daughter Camellia, 22, said the rape allegations were to blame for the deaths of her mother and brother.



Jay Cheshire and Karin Cheshire pictured together in 2014, before their deaths

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