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Alison Saunders

Alison Margaret Saunders, <u>CB</u> (born 14 February 1961) is a British <u>barrister</u> and a former <u>Director of Public Prosecutions</u>. She is the first lawyer from within the <u>Crown Prosecution Service</u> and the second woman to hold the appointment. She is also the first holder of this office not to be a <u>Queen's</u> <u>Counsel</u>. She was previously the Chief Crown Prosecutor for CPS London. Her term of office ended 31 October 2018.^[1]

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Early life

Saunders was born on 14 February 1961 in <u>Aberdeen</u>, Scotland to Hugh Colin Brown and Margaret Bennett Brown.^{[2][3][4]} She attended primary school in Brixton, London and St Teilo's Church in Wales High School in Cardiff.^{[5][3]} Saunders then studied at <u>Runshaw College</u> in Leyland, Lancashire. She read law at the <u>University of Leeds</u> from 1979 to 1982. She graduated <u>Bachelor of</u> Laws (LLB hons).^[6]

Career

Having completed her <u>pupillage</u> and thereby becoming a qualified <u>barrister</u>, Saunders began working for <u>Lloyd's of London</u>.^[7] She joined the newly formed CPS in 1986.^[4] In 1991, she joined the CPS policy division.^[8] She was appointed Branch Crown Prosecutor for <u>Wood Green</u> in 1997, and Assistant Chief Crown Prosecutor of CPS London South in 1999.^[9] She took up the appointment of Chief Crown Prosecutor for Sussex in 2001 overseeing the case made against Roy Whiting, who was convicted of murdering Sarah Payne.^[7]

Alison Saunders CB Director of Public Prosecutions In office 1 November 2013 – 31 October 2018 Appointed by Dominic Grieve Preceded by Keir Starmer Succeeded by Max Hill **Personal details** Born Alison Margaret Brown 14 February 1961 Aberdeen, Scotland Citizenship United Kingdom **Nationality** British Spouse(s) **Neil Saunders** Children Two sons Alma mater University of Leeds Barrister Profession Salary £200,000-£204,999 Awards Companion of the Order of the Bath (2013)

Between 2003 and 2005, she served as Deputy Legal Advisor to the Attorney General.^[9] She then became head of

prosecutions for the <u>Organised Crime</u> division of the CPS.^[8] She was the Chief Crown Prosecutor for CPS London from 2009 until 2013.^[10] During that time, she was involved in the 2011 to 2012 retrial, and subsequent conviction, of the killers of Stephen Lawrence.^[10]

Director of Public Prosecutions

On 23 July 2013, it was announced that she would become the new <u>Director of Public Prosecutions</u> in succession to <u>Sir</u> <u>Keir Starmer</u>, taking up the appointment on 1 November 2013. She is the first head of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to be appointed from within the service and the second woman to hold the appointment.^{[10][11]}

As the Director of Public Prosecutions, Saunders has faced criticism and controversy around the handling of trials for <u>rape</u> and <u>sexual assault</u>. The CPS has been criticised for the case of <u>Eleanor de Freitas</u>, who killed herself after the CPS decided to take over a private prosecution brought against her by the man she accused of rape. Saunders said that the "evidence in this case was strong and having considered it in light of all of our knowledge and guidance on prosecuting sexual offences and allegedly false rape claims, it is clear there was sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction for perverting the course of justice".^[12] Saunders has also stated that the number of rape prosecutions being brought to court will increase by a third in the year 2015 and has argued that this increase follows improvements in the treatment received by victims by police, courts and the CPS.^[13]

In 2014, Saunders announced the CPS would be seeking to fight against criminals hiding assets abroad and appointed a team of six specialist lawyers to work with legal authorities overseas to recover assets from countries including <u>Spain</u> and the United Arab Emirates.^[14]

In April 2015, Saunders was criticized for her decision not to prosecute <u>Greville Janner</u> on child sexual abuse charges despite his meeting the evidential test for prosecution, citing his poor health, as well as for dropping charges against nine journalists as part of the <u>Operation Elveden</u> case. Saunders defended herself saying, "I'm not here to make popular decisions. I always feel under pressure to make the right decision."^[15] In June 2015, <u>The Guardian</u> reported that, following a review, the decision not to prosecute Lord Janner would in fact be overturned. <u>Simon Danczuk</u>, then MP for Rochdale, told the Guardian that "if the report is accurate, Saunders will now have to consider her position" as a result of the scrutiny that her initial decision would now be placed under.^[16] The decision marks the first time a DPP has had a major prosecuting decision reviewed and overturned. Amid calls for her resignation, she told the BBC that she would not resign.^[17]

In 2015, a case was brought against Saunders in the <u>High Court</u>. The Plaintiff, Nikki Kenward, argued that Saunders had amended prosecution policy outside of the democratic process.^[18] Saunders released the alleged amendment in October, 2014. In it she suggested that the guidelines on assisted suicide prosecution be understood such that a doctor who is not the patient's immediate care provider, should not be as likely to face prosecution as a doctor who is the patient's immediate care provider. This prompted a backlash from anti-assisted suicide groups who argued that this was a substantial change, which would allow for businesses similar to <u>Dignitas</u> to operate in the UK. Saunders' defence was that she had only clarified the existing guidelines.^[19] Nevertheless, Kenward was granted the judicial review against Saunders in April, 2015.^[18] It went to the High Court in November, 2015 where the case against Saunders was dismissed.^[20]

As of 2015, Saunders was paid a salary of between £200,000 and £204,999, making her one of the 328 most highly paid people in the British public sector at that time.^[21]

On 2 April 2018, it was announced that Saunders is to stand down at the end of her term as head of the CPS.^[22]

Controversy

In June 2015, Saunders was accused by journalist <u>Julia Hartley-Brewer</u> of a crusade to criminalise "drunken sexual encounters".^[23] In December 2017, <u>*The Daily Telegraph*</u> journalist <u>Allison Pearson</u> called for Saunders to resign following the scandal of several high-profile rape cases falling apart or convictions being overturned due to police withholding key information regarding the innocence of the accused.^[24]

On 23 January 2018, however, Saunders was criticised by victims and survivors' groups because her words could be taken to mean that silence equates to consent.^[25]

After it was announced that Saunders would not be reappointed for a second term, *The Daily Telegraph* also reported in April, 2018 that crime statistics tracking burglary, violent crime and shoplifting all rose significantly under Saunders' tenure ever since she first became Director of Public Prosecutions.^[26]

On 29 December 2018 *The Telegraph* reported that Alison Saunders will be "the first former head of the Crown Prosecution Service not to receive a senior honour after her tenure was marked by a series of scandals". (All of her predecessor "became a knight or a dame either during their tenure, or immediately after their departure.")^[27]

Personal life

Saunders is married to Neil Saunders, a lawyer, and has two sons.^{[28][29][3]}

Honours

In the <u>2013 New Year Honours</u>, she was appointed <u>Companion of the Order of the Bath</u> (CB) "for services to Law and Order especially after the 2011 London Riots".^[30]

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External links

Crown Prosecution Service (http://www.cps.gov.uk/about/dpp.html)

Preceded by Sir Keir Starmer	Director of Public Prosecutions 2013–2018	Succeeded by Max Hill QC
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Director of Public Prosecutions (England and Wales)

The **Director of Public Prosecutions** (**DPP**) is the third most senior public prosecutor in <u>England and Wales</u> (after the <u>Attorney General and Solicitor General</u>). The DPP is the head of the <u>Crown Prosecution Service</u> (CPS), with personal responsibility for its 7,000 staff and approximately 800,000 prosecutions undertaken by it every year. The holder of the role is appointed by the Attorney General on the recommendation of a panel that includes the <u>First Civil Service</u> Commissioner.

First created in 1879, the office was merged with that of the <u>Treasury</u> <u>Solicitor</u> five years later,^[1] before again becoming independent in 1908. The Director's department and role underwent modernisation from 1944 to 1964 under <u>Sir Theobald Mathew QC</u>, and further expansion with the introduction of the CPS in 1985, which came under the control of the Director. The Director is superintended by the Attorney General, who answers for the CPS in Parliament. The current director is <u>Max Hill</u> QC.

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History

A Director of Public Prosecutions was first recommended by the Criminal Law Commission in 1845, who said that "the duty of prosecution is usually irksome, inconvenient and burthensome; the injured party would often rather forgo the prosecution than incur expense of time, labour and money. When, therefore, the party injured is compelled by the magistrate to act as prosecutor, the duty is frequently performed unwillingly and carelessly." The <u>County and Borough</u> <u>Police Act 1856</u> allowed the Home Office to ask the <u>Treasury Solicitor's Department</u> to take on cases of particular importance, but this left many cases falling through the net. As a result, the <u>Prosecution of Offences Act 1879</u> was passed, which created a Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to advise the police and personally act in cases of importance; an elaboration on the 1856 Act.^[2]

The first appointee was <u>Sir John Maule QC</u>, who took up his post in 1880. Maule was a quiet, reserved and cautious man, who interpreted his powers in an unnecessarily restrictive way, feeling that he could do little more than send cases to the Treasury Solicitor's office, and that it was not the job of the DPP to prosecute cases. He came under harsh criticism, which reached a head in 1883 when he refused to authorise prosecution of a pair of blackmailers, who were instead prosecuted privately, convicted and given heavy sentences. As a result of the fallout, the <u>Home Secretary William Harcourt</u> set up a committee into "the present action and position of the Director of Public Prosecutions".^[3]

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Director of Public Prosecutions (England and Wales) - Wikipedia

The Committee concluded that the DPP's job, in which he took no practical part in prosecutions, would be best unified into the job of the Treasury Solicitor. This was accepted, and the DPP "vanished in all but name". Successors for the rest of the century held both titles, and both jobs, thanks to the <u>Prosecution of Offences Act 1884</u>.^[4] The next few appointees were unimportant and uncontroversial, until <u>Sir Charles Willie Matthews QC</u>, a man Rozenberg describes as "the first real DPP". The <u>Prosecution of Offenses Act 1908</u> repealed the section of the 1884 Act that unified the DPP and Treasury Solicitor, giving Matthews an office of his own on his appointment in the same year.^[5]

The organisation remained rooted in its Victorian origins, still operating under the 1886 Prosecutions of Offences Regulations, until the appointment of <u>Sir Theobald Mathew</u> in 1944. The youngest man (and only solicitor) to be appointed DPP at that time,^[6] Matthews modernised the office, updating the Prosecutions of Offences Regulations, introducing <u>trunk dialling</u> and using <u>dictaphones</u> to make up for the small number of shorthand typists. He reorganised and modernised the department as a whole, and many of his modifications are still in place; for example, a provision in many new Acts of Parliament dealing with the criminal law that requires the consent of the DPP for a prosecution.^[7] At the same time he battled with the Civil Service for an increase in staff numbers, securing the appointment of three new Assistant Solicitors in the late 1950s; a large leap for a staff which had previously numbered five, excluding secretaries.^[8] The <u>Prosecution of Offences Act 1985</u> created the <u>Crown Prosecution Service</u> (CPS) in 1986, a dedicated, nationwide prosecution service under the control of the DPP, then <u>Sir Thomas Hetherington QC</u>. This involved the recruitment of 3,000 new staff, which despite difficulties the DPP succeeded in doing. The CPS now handles the vast majority of prosecutions.^[9]

In 2011, the DPP was given veto power over <u>arrest warrants</u> following a 2009 warrant for the arrest of <u>Tzipi Livni</u> issued by Westminster Magistrates' Court.^[10]

List of Directors

- 1. Sir John Maule QC (1880-1884)
- 2. Sir Augustus Stephenson QC (1884–1894; also Treasury Solicitor)
- 3. Lord Desart QC (1894–1908; also Treasury Solicitor)
- 4. Sir Charles Willie Matthews QC (1908-1920)
- 5. Sir Archibald Bodkin QC (1920-1930)
- 6. Sir Edward Tindal Atkinson QC (1930-1944)
- 7. Sir Theobald Mathew KBE MC (1944–1964)
- 8. Sir Norman Skelhorn QC (1964–1977)
- 9. Sir Thomas Hetherington QC (1977-1987; first head of CPS)
- 10. Sir Allan Green QC (1987-1992)
- 11. Dame Barbara Mills DBE QC (1992-1998)
- 12. Sir David Calvert-Smith QC (1998–2003)
- 13. Sir Ken Macdonald QC (2003–2008)
- 14. Sir Keir Starmer KCB QC (2008–2013)
- 15. Alison Saunders CB (2013-2018)
- 16. Max Hill QC (2018-present)

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