



Judicial Conduct Investigations Office

Ms V Baird QC
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Our ref: 19524/2014

7 October 2014

Dear Ms Baird

Complaint about His Honour Judge (HHJ) Moorhouse

I am writing further to your recent letter concerning Judge Moorhouse, endorsed also by Mr Ron Hogg and Mr Barry Coppinger.

In summary, you have complained that Judge Moorhouse gave a 12 month suspended sentence to Mr Anthony Bruce who admitted assault occasioning bodily harm.

You have attached a newspaper article from the Daily Mail dated 24 September which relates that Mr Bruce's case was heard on 23 September 2014 in front of HHJ Moorhouse at which Mr Bruce admitted assault occasioning bodily harm and a charge of witness intimidation for which he received a 12 month jail sentence which was suspended for 12 months.

You complain that the sentence passed demonstrates that HHJ Moorhouse has no understanding of domestic abuse and its impact on women and children and that the sentence is unduly lenient as it does not reflect the seriousness of Mr Bruce's actions. Mr Bruce has subsequently bragged about the sentence he received and you believe that HHJ Moorhouse must be accountable for his actions and to understand that his conduct is not acceptable.

Having considered your complaint I must inform you that the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office (JCIO) is unable to accept your complaint for consideration. This is because your complaint does not contain an allegation of misconduct on the part of a judicial office holder that this office can investigate. Rule 8 of the Judicial Conduct (judicial and other office holders) Rules 2014 requires that your complaint meets this criterion if it is to be considered as valid.

I note that this case falls outside the categories of cases that are reviewable by the Attorney General. However, this matter also falls outside the remit of this office as it relates to HHJ Moorhouse's judicial decision in respect of Mr Bruce's sentence. This office has no authority to determine whether the decision made by HHJ Moorhouse in relation to Mr Bruce's sentence was correct or otherwise. This is because judges are

independent and must be free to make decisions without interference from government ministers, officials or even other judges unless they are presiding over the case.

Judicial Appointments and Conduct Ombudsman

If you are unhappy about my handling of your complaint, you should contact the Judicial Appointments and Conduct Ombudsman, Sir John Brigstocke KCB. The Ombudsman can consider complaints about how I have handled your complaint, but he does not have the power to investigate your original complaint to the JCIO.

The Ombudsman will consider a complaint if you write to him within 28 days of our decision. After this time, he will consider whether he is able to investigate it. You can contact the Ombudsman:

- in writing at: *13th Floor Tower, 13.51, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ;*
- by e-mail at headoffice@jaco.gsi.gov.uk; and
- by telephone on 020 3334 2900.

For further information about the Ombudsman see www.judicialombudsman.gov.uk.

If you require anything further, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Clarke
Caseworker – JCIO